

Need for non-alignment in our global world? The Non-Aligned Movement Today and Tomorrow

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The paper¹ aims at investigating the potentials in alliance formation among the industrially-technologically less developed countries of the world using the framework of the 45-year-old Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). While it will discuss the successes and missed opportunities of the first decades, especially with regard to the New International Economic Order (NIEO) of the 1970s, some reflections will be provided upon Ambassador Živojin Jazić's thoughts on the movement (published in CIR, January – June 2005, 59-66.). In a critical approach, the analysis will focus on the need and reason for existence of the NAM and its place and future role in the global international system of the 21st century. A detailed overview will be offered about the deepening problems of Africa and the attitude of the African countries towards the alliance, in particular in today's international system in which the more developed 'North' prescribes for the 'South' what to do and how to do it. Attention will be devoted to the last two summits of the NAM (South African and Malaysian) and the incoming Cuban presidency from 2006 onwards.

Key words: Non-Aligned Movement, New International Economic Order, global international system, North-South relations, Africa

1. Introduction

The need for a movement such as the NAM was born after World War II as a result of the Cold War and the process of decolonisation, as a certain vacuum had been created between the US-led West and the East dominated by the Soviet Union following first the ideological confrontation, then, the strategic competition and arms race of the two superpowers. "Some of the former colonies had become pawn of the superpowers on their global chessboard" (Fischer, 2005: 86). By the 1950s, this vacuum was

gradually filled in with a third "anti-bloc" power that tried to go against how the two hegemonic actors played the game. "The anti-bloc approach ... rejected the idea of participation in the East-West antagonism" (Benkes, 1999: 156). It was obvious, however, that the countries outside the first and second worlds, that is the group of economically, industrially and technologically less developed countries, mainly third-world African, Asian and Latin-American states wanted to efficiently enter, as well as determine economic and trading processes across the globe. Following the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and the Indian Prime Minister Nehru, who in June 1954 agreed upon the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence (Pancha Sila), these countries formulated a certain "third-way politics". "In the course of time [the prin-

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ciples] ... presented the foundation also for the Non-Aligned Movement" (Fischer, 2005: 86).

For the sake of a more efficient and global lobbying power, 29 independent African and Asian countries met in the Indonesian city of Bandung between 18 and 24 April 1955 with the aim of elaborating upon the principles of peaceful co-existence and creating the Dasa Sila Bandung (Bandung's Ten Principles). None of them wanted to join any of the blocs, therefore, they chose non-alignment, which later on, first in Cairo, June 1961, then, in Belgrade, September 1961, was extended and formalised in the form of NAM.

During the Cold War, which in ideological, geopolitical and economic aspects – just to name a few – was characterised by the total confrontation of the two blocs, a new polarisation line was drawn: the North-South division. Especially in the 1950s and 1960s when "the former colonies gained independence one after the other, it was generally thought that the new states will either follow the Eastern or the Western ideological model." (Freedman, 2002: 202). The alternative, "third way" politics and development advocated by the non-aligned attempted to redraw the limits of the playground, and to "benefit from bipolar rivalry" (Fischer, 2005: 86). The USA had the fear that the new states might not follow a democratic transition based on the ideology of the free market, but will choose the ideology of the other bloc, and put a new face on the matter by claiming that countries of the South meant a security concern. As opposed to this attitude, the Soviet Union led by Hruschev did everything to utilise the new lines of force around the "Third World". In formulating the new (Hruschev) doctrine "the aspirations of Bandung, [the NAM] offered an opportunity for validating the thesis «who is not with us, is against us», ... [looking back as far as] Lenin's imperialism theory, according to which the movement of the colonies against the imperialist oppressors must be supported." (Fischer, 1996: 179).

In the 1970s the Soviet Union proved that the security dilemma generated by the US was realistic. After the military actions in Angola and Ethiopia, when the Soviet troops marched in into the territory of Afghanistan in December 1979, "many in the West interpreted this move that the Soviet Union wanted to get hold of the Persian Gulf." (Freedman, 2002: 204). Fear from a new oil price explosion was added a new dimension that was connected with the collapse of the Bretton Woods system built upon the strong currency of the American dollar. Due to the numerous problems the US had to face, for instance, the ideological and arms race with the USSR, the

war in Vietnam, or the Watergate scandal, the US was not in the position to prevent from the pursuit for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) proposed by the South.

The NIEO was drafted at the Algiers Summit of the NAM in 1973 – following the Lusaka Summit of 1970 where a declaration analysing the economic situation of the Third World, and "stressing upon [its] «economic emancipation» ... and the principle of «self-reliance»" (Horváth, 2005: 176-177) was adopted. The NIEO was praising for "greater management of the world economy by governments and international bodies and less reliance on markets to determine flows of goods and capital; the purpose was to reduce the negative impacts of imperfections in those markets for developing countries and increase their share of global wealth." (Glover, 1994: 278). As Marchand explains, "the changed global political and economic environment provided a golden opportunity for the South to replace the weakened liberal economic order with [this] new economic arrangement." (Marchand, 1994: 292). Emphasis was laid on faith in the South's own economic power and its collective utilisation with a firm stand on reducing the development gap between the rich North and the poor South, focussing "primarily on the areas of trade, resource transfer, and the international financial system." (Ibid).

The NIEO definitely had progressive ideas for the restructuring of North-South economic relations. In line with what Jazi states saying that the non-aligned countries "have achieved little, due also to their often unrealistic proposals, and forcing, in reality, confrontation instead of dialogue" (Jazi, 2005: 59), but arguing with it, at least the following two issues are offered for further discussion. First, it is beyond doubt that prior to the formation of the first alliances and platforms, such as the NAM, the G77 and the UNCTAD, available for the developing world for making their voice heard within the international community, there had been very scarce resources and opportunities for them to get into any real dialogue with the more industrialised part of the world. Second, the NIEO did contain a number of plausible prescriptions for world trade – which today have become inevitable and have been advocated also by the international institutions and the industrial powers themselves (the problem might be that it was too early to strongly proclaim them in the 1970s). As Sneyd underlines, "the South demanded that industrialised countries reduce tariffs and offer Southern exporters preferential access to their markets. ... [They also] sought to increase the control G-77 countries could exercise over their export industries ... [as well as] called for debt relief, higher

levels of development assistance, and a more powerful voice for the Third World on the boards of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank." (Sneyd, 2005: 1). Most of these are fundamental elements of the latest comprehensive package agreed at the G8 Summit at Gleneagles, together with the World Bank's Africa Action Plan of 2005, and the report entitled "Our Common Interest" published by the Commission for Africa led by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in March 2005. Therefore, despite the fact that the NIEO lost its momentum by the early 1980s, partially as a result of the increased diversification within the "group", and mainly as a consequence of the report of the Brandt Commission based on which the "then US President Ronald Reagan unilaterally declared the death of the NIEO at the Cancun Summit on International Development Issues in 1981" (Sneyd, 2005: 2), the proposals of the NAM put spotlight on the deep problems the world must face and solve.

2. Africa's deepening problems and the South African chairmanship of NAM (1998-2003)

The majority of the African countries that gained independence during the 1960s appeared in the international arena in a self-assertive and ambitious way, full of confidence about their future. As Búr underlines, "it was evident that their underdevelopment was a consequence solely of the suppression of the former colonisers, and within an appointed term after having become independent they were to reach the level of the more developed countries." (Búr, 2005: 1). In this respect, it is proven that only a couple of them have been successful in achieving their goals, and it seems that most of their expectations were far from realistic in the post-bipolar system of international relations, which in fact gave way to the rise of inequalities not only among countries of the South, but also to disparities within the societies of the developed North.

In order to accelerate development, countries of the South formulated strategies, which by strengthening internal markets and extending external market access tried to induce dynamism in the economic sector. Already in the 1960s certain countries of different parts of the continent formed regional alliances for supporting intraregional trade. In East Africa, for instance, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania launched the East African Community (EAC), which due to a number of factors after its first decade gradually disappeared from the long-term thinking of the national strategies of its members – as it happened in many

cases of similar initiatives.² One of the examples of lasting alliance, but on a national level, is the United Republic of Tanzania established in 1964 after the independence of the former territory of Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar – even taking into account the sometimes bloody activities of the opposition group on the semi-autonomous island against the ruling political elite of the federation. As Fage and Tordoff point out, "the process of industrialisation ... had unanimous limits ..., as only a few states had such a large population that could provide a sufficient internal market. In most countries this market could operate only some smaller, secondary industries." (Fage & Tordoff, 2004: 426). The former colonising powers knew it well that it was necessary to bring the colonised territories under alliances, larger political and economic units so that their markets produce the profit they expected. With the newly independent African states leaving these alliances the number of functioning markets with a proper volume of trade drastically dropped. The problems worsened when the oil price explosion hit the weak economies of the African nations in the 1970s because they "had to pay the more developed countries more for capital goods and manufactured products, which they heavily relied on for their own development. ... [Parallel to this,] due to the global economic crisis, the industrially more developed countries bought less raw materials from the Third World." (Fage & Tordoff, 2004: 427). All these processes have led to a swiftly vortical debt spiral which has ruined almost all the developing countries – except for the Arab states which became rich exactly because of oil. By the 1980s and 1990s "according to almost all indicators it has been obvious that ... Africa is on the decline even compared with its performance from previous times." (Búr, 2005: 2).

Towards the expected ascension – at present only on the level of rhetoric – the non-aligned established their platform within the United Nations and the final documents accepted by the summits emphasise that reforming the international financial institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank would contribute a lot to accelerating the pace of development for the developing world. Undoubtedly, there is a problem with the prestige of these two institutions as they have lost face since the end of the 1980s "because of the Structural Adjustment Programmes that were forced to be implemented by the African countries and their obvious failure" (Búr, 2005: 2); the programmes themselves and the institutions behind are considered as the major obstacles of real development on the continent.

The XII Summit held in one of the leading economic powers of the developing world, the Republic of South Africa, laid special emphasis on the necessity to deepen South-South relations. As it was reported by many journalists and experts, however, "when the chairmanship of NAM was given to South Africa in 1998, it obviously raised lot of hopes, but nothing of significance as a contribution to the international community was witnessed." (Poulose, 2003: 1). The sounding phrases and statements should be warmly welcomed, but real, concrete steps and actions are needed on a daily basis for the sake of a jump in development.

With its 116 members, the Non-Aligned Movement, as the largest grouping of countries outside the United Nations, inevitably has a significant task in today's ever globalising international order: to "take a leading role in sensitising the world public opinion for eliminating poverty, hunger and famine from the world and for the creation of a more egalitarian and democratic international system." (Poulose, 2003: 3). In this respect, the XIII Kuala Lumpur Summit and the XIV Ministerial Meeting of NAM accepting the Mid-Term Review of the Malaysian chairmanship (Durban, 17-19 August 2004) took a serious overview of a number of key issues, among which three major are mentioned here. First, the NAM has its firm grounds coupled with ethical, political and moral strength to embody "the principal forum representing the interests and aspirations of the developing world." (2004: 6). There is an increased need for re-launching at a greater pace the North-South dialogue promoting a more dynamic and co-operative framework between countries of the North and those of the South. Second, the promotion of multilateralism was re-emphasised, mainly through strengthening the United Nations. The then chairman, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad exhorted the member nations to work for a "new world order, where democracy is not confined to the internal governance of states only but to the governance of the world." (Poulose, 2003: 2). Second, taking into account that there are fast and tremendous changes in the world economy as a result of globalisation, NAM ministers stated their concern about the "adjustment burden" that affect the developing world in a highly disadvantageous way regarding their share in world trade, for example. They urged the international financial institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to implement new, innovative financial mechanisms serving the successful long-term development of the South. Third, the need for a "New Global Human Order aimed at reversing the

growing disparity between rich and poor, both among and within countries through, inter alia, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development" was put high on the agenda of the coming years. In this regard, the ministers "called for strengthened solidarity and the elaboration of consensus for action, with specific measures and clearly defined timeframes." (2004: 50). As one of the major obstacles for development, debt was also discussed in detail. In the global sense, the acceleration and extension of debt relief programmes, especially in the case of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)s³ must be supported, in parallel with encouraging investment into developing economies, both internally and in terms of FDI.

3. Durban – Kuala Lumpur – Havana: Before the forthcoming XIV Summit in Cuba

The new Millennium seems to bring the badly needed fresh blood into the movement. It is a natural consequence of global processes that the advancements in technology foster the professional functioning of any such international organisation. Building upon the achievements of the South African Chairmanship, Malaysia continued refining the place and role of the NAM in the global system also with the help of the new technologies.

In the era of e-democracy and e-governance, it is a prerequisite for international co-operation to utilise the opportunities offered by the Internet. Although the NAM does not have any central website, which is a mistake but can be corrected, the Malaysian government having been responsible for the management of the movement since 2003 set up several sites for smooth communication and other media-related purposes. The aim of <http://www.e-nam.org.my/>, for instance, is to function as the E-Secretariat of the NAM in the form of an interactive portal which, among many activities is capable of "soliciting views, knowledge sharing, information dissemination, ... [and] will enhance services delivery system of NAM, improve decision-making processes, store and retrieve documents efficiently." Such tools unanimously guarantee continuity in terms of documenting the steps taken and the measures planned.

Drawing upon one of the latest reports of the Malaysian chairmanship from the end of 2004, it can be confirmed that the non-aligned rightly and con-

tinuously stress upon the complexity of the global threats our planet need to face and understand. As the document says, "The NAM side urged the Panel⁴ to adopt a broader and more comprehensive definition of the term «Threats» than its traditional meaning, which is usually linked to security. We requested that the Panel also consider non-security related sources of threats, such as poverty and other socio-economic factors." It is of utmost importance that the referred socio-economic factors are kept top on the international agenda, especially, when they are mentioned together with security. Security, among many crucial issues of our interdependent world has numerous faces. It is surely a "global term", with dimensions interweaving the planet and our everyday lives. It is certainly not just about military capabilities to defend a country or the desire for peace and prosperity in any human community; economic stability, social security, the elimination of wars or war-like conflicts, the fight against terrorism, multinational co-operation among nations for the betterment of daily life, and many similar aspects are to be taken into consideration when approaching this multi-faceted notion. This is the reason why it is relevant and worth supporting that the NAM articulates its position on such global problems.

In light of global threats, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his message to non-aligned ministers of September 2004 strongly underscores that "our era, an era of accelerating interdependence, demands effective collective policies and institutions. ... and as this process intensifies, [the Secretary-General] will count on [NAM's] strong support, based on the shared ideals and goals of [their] respective organisations." As for the threats, Annan pointed out the deepening problems connected with AIDS, environmental degradation, terrorism and weapons proliferation. He is convinced that "NAM's mission remains of great relevance," as the movement remains – as seen from the reports and statements of the last summits and ministerial meetings – concerned "about entrenched poverty, underdevelopment and the inequities of the global trading system."

During the Malaysian chairmanship, negotiations with the European Union continued as an important institution of the non-aligned, the Troika of the current, former and incoming chairs, i.e. Malaysia, South Africa and Cuba, met with the Troika of the EU. The meeting covered a number of issues and topics of mutual interest such as the reform of the United Nations, Human Rights, including the International Criminal Court, non-proliferation, fight

against terrorism, the question of the Middle East and the situation in Palestine, member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Concerning the upcoming events within the alliance, a ministerial meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau will be held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, the end of May 2006, preceding the XIV Summit in September 2006, in the city of Havana, Cuba. On behalf of the next chair, both President Castro and his Minister for Foreign Affairs Felipe Pérez Roque gave an emphasis to the necessity to speed up the process of revitalisation, which will enable NAM "to recover the dynamism and strength required to take up the challenges and dangers of today's world," as Fidel Castro put it at the Kuala Lumpur Summit. Stressing the increasingly complex international scene and its global problems, the Cuban foreign minister when addressing the XVIII Arab Summit in Khartoum, 26 March 2006, called for a strengthened Southern unity, solidarity and cohesion "with a view to exerting effective influence on international affairs." This may be seen rather idealistic taking into account the fairly weak position of the South, as well as the diverse interests that are inherent within the grouping of the countries of the South, however, concrete steps, practical tools and mechanisms are realistically desired to be able to harmonise positions and formulate joint actions along a common strategy for the coming three-year term. "At the Summit in Havana," explained Felipe Pérez Roque, members will discuss "a Political Declaration of the Movement, a Plan of Action to guide the work for the next three years, a document on methodology and another on South-South co-operation." It is hoped by many that all these will lead to a stronger voice of the less developed South for the sake of a more balanced and equal globalised world of the 21st century.

4. Conclusion

It is beyond doubt that more than fifty years ago, in April 1955, the city of Bandung, in the words of Nehru, "became the capital of Asia and Africa" for a week. The conference of Bandung offered an opportunity in diplomatic terms for almost thirty countries to meet and lead talks over certain heavy issues affecting continents in a polarised world in a way that had not been possible earlier. The event itself had contributed to attaching greater value to the diplomatic significance of Asian and African countries and to allowing them to step into world politics as key factor with their "third-way" proposals.

Similarly to the very heterogeneous picture of the South as far as economic and technological advancement is concerned, having been on different levels of development, members of the Non-Aligned Movement have always had the challenge to find consensus on issues on their agenda. Several members, such as India and Pakistan, for a long time have not been able to eliminate constant conflict and the threat of military action from their bilateral relations, as opposed to the very principle of "peaceful co-existence" that lies in the heart of the movement since its foundation. Missing a strong and professional coordinating management – it is only the Co-ordinating Bureau located in New York that has such a central role – it has proven to be even more difficult to formulate a unified, concerted action or appearance in the international arena. It was an inescapable problem during the Cold War that countries are "dissolved" in one of the blocs, which in the life of NAM meant the first test at the Belgrade meeting of foreign ministers in 1978 when "the split of the movement was imminent ... countries standing for the Western line of conduct (Somalia, Egypt, Sudan, Zaire, Tunisia, Kuwait, Gabon and Togo) getting into confrontation with those closer to the Soviet trends (Cuba, Ethiopia, Vietnam). Yugoslavia and India tried to balance between the two poles hoping that they would be able to accommodate a «middle-of-the-road-type» political practice that could keep the movement in balance for the sake of unity. In the long run, however, the movement could not resolve ... its internal antagonism." (Benkes, 1999: 159).

Problems are worsened as a result of the deepening inequalities among different parts of the world, which according to many, can be characterised by a neo-colonial global disorder, which is in favour of maintaining disparity as such. It seems that most of the countries of Africa get bogged in poverty and corruption, while Asian states are on the rise. "Where is the Afro-Asiatic solidarity today?", asks Claude Arpi in an article published in April 2005. Did the philosophy of non-alignment ever really exist? According to Matthew Quest when giving a review of Richard Wright's *The Color Curtain* forty years later, "non-alignment was clearly a tactic, not a philosophy,"⁵⁵ especially when during the Cold War skilful diplomacy was needed in manoeuvring among bloc interests.

In 2003 South-African President Thabo Mbeki, the NAM chair at the time "warned that the movement's future depended on its response to global challenges. He called on the NAM to take stronger resolutions on issues of concern."⁵⁶ Almost

the same was underlined by Josef Purnama Widyatmadja in his article entitled "The Spirit of Bandung" appeared in *The Jakarta Post* on 6 April 2005: "Fifty years after the Bandung conference ... Asian and African leaders seem to have lost their enthusiasm to fight for their aspirations. ... it is important for Asia-Africa to engage in extensive dialogue to identify the challenges and opportunities the movement has to address ... The role of Asia-Africa in promoting a just international order will depend largely on its inner strength, unity and cohesion." But is this cohesion a reality?

The majority of the critics of the movement say that in the post-Cold War era NAM remained "as a sleeping beauty." Poulouze draws our attention to the role it can play in the new global climate; this includes "involvement in global environmental issues, contribution to the emerging global water crisis, ushering in a new world trade order, ... [together with] campaign for the abolition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction," (Poulouze, 2003: 3), all helping set the international agenda focussed on issues such as poverty, democracy and fair trade. "At a time when no country, whatever its development status, can afford to go it alone," as Singapore's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Zainul Abiden Rasheed noted at the conference entitled 'Globalisation and Economic Success: Policy Options for Africa' in November 2005, organised by the Brentthurst Foundation, South Africa, "it was appropriate ... [to] reaffirm the ancient links of global commerce between Asia and Africa." (Mills et al., 2005: 87). This statement also confirms the ever increased expectation about South-South co-operation, which should be enhanced by the bigger member-states within NAM and the Group of 77 "(India, Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, as well as Arab oil-producing countries) which have reached a higher degree of development and technological advancement. ... [and] they could significantly contribute to a more balanced globalisation." (Jazić, 2005: 66).

Third-way politics, or politics of the Third World has successfully influenced the thematic setting of the global agenda in the first years of the new Millennium. Today North-South relations and the issues connected with the development of countries of the South have become one of the main inertia systems of our global world, and in formulating potential answers to global challenges, it is unimaginable that "Southern views and demands", for example, the opinions and suggestions put forward by the non-aligned, are not taken into account per se. This leads us to the obvious conclusion that there is

a need, ever increasing, for non-alignment in the sense of alliance formation and concerted efforts, and coupled with what Jazić proposes, "a fight for multilateralism, the central role of the UN and its Millennium programmes ... make the existence of the NAM no less necessary than before." (Jazić, 2005: 66). To allow this "third way" to stay as a real

alternative to global solutions, unanimous, clear and strict reforms must be carried out by the respective countries. The Spirit of Bandung lives on and will definitely embrace the necessary future steps, which NAM will hopefully take during the forthcoming Cuban chairmanship. ■

NOTES

1 This paper is based upon the author's current publication entitled "The Non-Aligned Movement 1955–2005. The 'Third Way' in world politics" appeared in Hungarian in the volume "Pécs Political Studies III" at the University of Pécs. The original study was written in February 2006 after a one-month-long Ph.D. research period spent at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb during the course of 2005 with the support of the Hungarian Scholarship Board (Grant no. MÖB 2-13-2-29-1925/2004).

2 About the development stages and expected future of the EAC see Tarrósy, I. (2005). "Past Fears – Future Hopes". An example for regional co-operation outside Europe: From the East African Community to an East African Federation. In: Tarrósy, I. & Roskogler, G. (eds). *Regional European Co-operation as Cen-*

tral European Perspective. Pécs: Europe Centre Pbc.-IDM. pp. 161-169. Can be downloaded from the Internet: http://www.publikon.hu/htmls/portal_of_social_sciences.html

3 This took place in the case of 24 countries during 2005.

4 Meaning the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, a 16-member international team of experts established in November 2003.

5 The article was downloaded from <http://www.spunk.org/library/pubs/lr/sp001716/bandung.html>

6 Mbeki's thoughts and the profile of NAM is summarised in an article published by BBC on http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/in_depth/2798187.stm

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