

RAD Background Report/129
(Yugoslavia)
7 June 1979

NONALIGNED MEETING IN COLOMBO; TITO'S ANTI-CUBAN "CRUSADE" CONTINUES

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Summary: The foreign ministers of more than 60 nonaligned countries began meetings in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on June 6, during which they will prepare the agenda for the sixth nonaligned summit scheduled to take place in Havana next September. On the first day they did not succeed in resolving the problem of who should represent Cambodia: the deposed regime of Pol Pot or the newly installed government of Heng Samrin. The Yugoslavs have continued their anti-Cuban "crusade" trying to prevent Fidel Castro from taking over the leadership of the nonaligned movement. During his recent visits to Algeria, Libya, and Malta, President Tito defended the nonaligned movement as an organization not belonging to either of the two military and political blocs.

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The ministerial meeting of the nonaligned countries which began yesterday in Colombo, Sri Lanka, opened at a time when the nonaligned movement is overshadowed by serious internal conflicts, mostly provoked by Moscow which hopes to make the movement its own instrument. The meeting in Colombo will prepare the agenda for the sixth nonaligned summit scheduled to take place in September of this year in Havana. Together with the dispute among the nonaligned countries about whether their movement should be considered "a natural ally" of the communist world (a Cuban idea supported by Moscow), there has also been the problem of who should represent Cambodia both in Colombo and in Havana: a representative of the deposed Pol Pot regime or one of the Vietnamese-backed Phnom Penh government of Heng Samrin. Furthermore, Iraq and Syria (and, according to the Yugoslav media, Algeria and Libya also) want to have Egypt excommunicated from the nonaligned movement following President Sadat's signing of an agreement with Israel, while Somalia would like to see Cuba expelled over Cuban military intervention in Africa. At the first session on June 6 the foreign ministers of the nonaligned countries could not reach an agreement concerning either the representation of Cambodia or the expulsion of Egypt.

As can be seen, the Colombo meeting, in which more than 60 non-aligned countries will take part, will have to overcome some very difficult obstacles. Speaking at a communist party meeting in Skoplje, Macedonia, Aleksandar Grlickov, a member of the Yugoslav CC Presidium in charge of relations with the ruling communist parties, complained that "efforts have been made to remove the nonaligned movement from the international stage as an independent factor." Without mentioning Cuba by name Grlickov said:

The real reason for concern about the future of the nonaligned countries' action capability . . . is the fact of foreign interference, which is a sign of real danger. (1)

Grlickov also said that "every nonaligned meeting" had been confronted with serious difficulties because "various bloc factors have claimed the nonaligned movement for themselves, trying to reorient it and interpret it in a one-sided manner."

A similar attitude seems to have been maintained by Indonesia. A Belgrade weekly recently quoted Indonesian Vice President Adam Malik as rejecting the possibility of boycotting the sixth summit in Havana over Cuba's pro-Soviet activities. According to Malik:

It is well known that some African countries have reservations about Cuba's role in Africa and that some Asian countries condemn Vietnam's actions. However, a boycott of the summit [in Havana] would give a free hand to those forces who wish to impose great power interests on the nonaligned movement and introduce unacceptable divisions within it. For this reason we must go to Havana and fight for the reassertion of the basic principles of nonalignment. We must know that we are not alone, that we have many allies, and that it is only in this way that we will succeed in defending the right to nonalignment. (2)

Tito and Qadhafi Do Not Completely Agree

Before the June 6 nonaligned meeting in Colombo began, the 25-member Co-ordinating Bureau met on June 4 and 5 at ambassadorial level. Together with the draft agenda for the Havana summit, the bureau discussed the problems of Cambodia, Cuba, and Egypt. The Yugoslavs have firmly insisted for years that "no sovereign governments" should be ousted by foreign troops, especially if these troops belonged to a nonaligned country. But they have also been adamantly against any expulsions from either the international communist movement or from the nonaligned movement. Belgrade has been sharply attacked over this attitude by both Moscow and Hanoi. In a recent commentary dealing with anti-Yugoslav attacks in the Vietnamese papers (reproduced in Moscow) to the effect that Yugoslavia "had been neutral in the Chinese-Vietnamese conflict," a Yugoslav journalist said:

(1) Vjesnik (Zagreb), 2 June 1979.

(2) NIN (Belgrade), 3 June 1979.

We should like to remind people that we were not "neutral" in the Chinese-Vietnamese conflict, as we were previously not neutral in the Vietnamese-Cambodian war. Yugoslavia condemns in principle every aggression. Yugoslavia insisted that the Chinese soldiers should withdraw from Vietnam (which they did) and also insisted that the Vietnamese should withdraw from Cambodia (which they did not). (3)

It appears, however, that there were also disagreements between President Mu'ammarr Qadhafi and Tito, who paid an official visit to Libya between May 31 and June 3 (when he left for Malta). Qadhafi spoke of "certain difficulties which accompany Libyan-Yugoslav bilateral co-operation and whose removal would make possible a more all-round development of mutual relations." (4) The Libyan foreign minister, Aly Abdeselam Treiky, also referred to these "difficulties" in separate talks with the Yugoslav foreign minister, Josip Vrhovec. He stressed, however, that they were "not such as to influence the quality of relations between the two countries." Vrhovec is said to have concurred with this view. (5)

Otherwise, Tito and Qadhafi agreed on all other points, especially on the fact that the "nonaligned movement can successfully continue to fight for the independence and comprehensive emancipation of countries and peoples throughout the world from colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, racism, and apartheid, and all other forms of domination, hegemony, and exploitation." (6) The last phrase refers to Soviet hegemony. According to the Yugoslav media, this formulation should also be included in the draft document prepared for acceptance both in Colombo and Havana.

Yugoslavia and Indonesia Agree

A Yugoslav radio commentator, Milika Sundic, said in a recent broadcast that "both the course and the outcome of the sixth summit [in Havana] will depend to a considerable extent on the successful course and outcome of the ministerial meeting in Colombo." Sundic said that "it is hard to believe that anybody would dare to call into question the sixth summit, not merely its success but also its taking place." Sundic continued:

Any reorientation of nonaligned policy is out of the question, as is the involvement of the movement to the benefit of any policy which is incompatible with the movement's principles. This applies equally to the tendencies about the so-called "natural alliance" as to the attempts to obtain the backing of the movement for some kind of action contrary to the principles of nonalignment. Both are equally unacceptable. (7)

- (3) Vjesnik, 2 June 1979.
- (4) Tanjug, 2 June 1979.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) Ibid.
- (7) Radio Zagreb, 2 June 1979, 1500 hours.

Sundic spoke out against all "foul compromises" in Colombo and said that even "a partial success would be equivalent to failure." During the recent visit to India of Josip Vrhovec, an unnamed Yugoslav official was quoted as having said that it would be up to Cuba to demonstrate in Colombo its "true nonalignment." He said that "if it fails, there will be a very strong body of opinion that says the summit meeting of the heads of state should not be held in Havana, and that the Cubans should not be allowed to take over the leadership." (8) President Tito's tour of Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, and Jordan last February and his recent visit to Algeria, Libya, and Malta were aimed at preventing the division within the nonaligned movement. A Yugoslav daily said recently "how far this has been successful will be seen at the meeting in Colombo and later at the summit in Havana." (9)

While in Indonesia, Vidoje Zarkovic, a member of the nine-member State Presidency, succeeded in gaining Indonesia's full support for Tito's interpretation of the nonaligned movement. A joint communiqué signed by Zarkovic and Malik says that Indonesia and Yugoslavia "came out decisively against all attempts to revise the basic principles of the nonaligned policy and the attempts to alter the nonbloc character and orientation of the nonaligned movement." Malik and Zarkovic also noted that "certain actions were directed at bringing about a division within the nonaligned movement on ideological and other grounds which are contrary to the vital interests of the nonaligned countries." (10)

Upon his return from his official visit to Malta (June 3-5) President Tito expressed his optimism about the meetings in Colombo and later in Havana. Tito stressed again that "the nonaligned movement could fulfill its historic mission only as an independent international factor outside the military blocs," (11) an attitude which has been sharply in contrast to Fidel Castro's idea that the non-aligned movement should become "a natural ally" of the Soviet bloc.

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(8) The Daily Telegraph (London), 9 May 1979.

(9) Vjesnik, 1 June 1979.

(10) Borba (Belgrade), 2 June 1979.

(11) Tanjug, 5 June 1979.