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PCI TAKES TITO'S SIDE

By Kevin Devlin

Summary: In an interview on the Havana summit conference of the nonaligned movement Gian Carlo Pajetta, "foreign minister" of the Italian CP, has firmly backed President Tito of Yugoslavia as against Fidel Castro of Cuba in the struggle over the character and orientation of the movement. Rejecting the Cuban thesis that the Soviet bloc should be regarded as the "natural allies" of the nonaligned, Pajetta argues that the essence of the movement lies in "the refusal to accept the need to choose one of the two blocs."

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The sixth summit conference of the nonaligned movement, taking place this week in Havana, has been widely depicted as a struggle over the character and orientation of the movement, with the pro-Soviet Cuban host, Fidel Castro, and the veteran Yugoslav leader, President Tito, as the main protagonists. The struggle has found expression in polemical exchanges, direct or indirect, over a number of relevant issues -- notably the question of Cambodian representation (claimed by rival delegations) and Arab moves to have Egypt's membership suspended because of its peace policy. The fundamental issue, however, has been whether this loose grouping of heterogeneous states will maintain a stand of independence toward both major power blocs, or whether the nonaligned countries will follow the Cuban lead and accept "the socialist community" headed by the Soviet Union as its "natural allies" in the fight against imperialism.

In this confrontation the Yugoslavs have now received the support of the world's strongest and most influential nonruling communist party. The Italian CP has come down firmly, though without polemical heat, on the side of Tito as against Castro. This stand was expressed in a long interview (1) with the party's "foreign minister," Gian Carlo Pajetta, published in the party daily on the eve of the Havana summit.

Pajetta began by stressing the continuity of the nonaligned movement since the Belgrade conference of 1961 -- which in itself, of course, meant taking the Yugoslav side. The central problem for the Havana participants, he said, was not to settle particular issues or engage in a "search for identity": it was "how to continue on the road followed until now." He went on:

This road is not that of presenting the movement as a new bloc, nor of seeking an impossible standardization of ideology, of social structures and political positions, nor yet that of representing a kind of UN assembly for less important nations. . . . The secret of the success of nonalignment lies primarily in the continuity of the call for peaceful co-existence and the struggle against the danger of a third world war, linked with the refusal to accept the need to choose one of the two blocs but instead to be a factor making for the dissolution of the blocs.

"Natural Allies?"

Asked what he expected from the Havana summit, Pajetta said that he did not think the outcome would depend on an exchange

- (1) Renzo Foa (interviewer), "I Non Allineati alla Prova: Intesa fra Castro e Tito?", l'Unità, 2 September 1979.

of concessions, "representing a crude bipolarization among the nonaligned." He took this view because the history of the movement had shown that its ability to overcome crises and exercise a positive function in the process of détente had "always been linked to recognition of objective differences /between members/ -- historical, social, and structural -- as well as differences in political positions."

Did these "objective differences" also apply to the issue of relations with "the bloc of socialist countries?" Pajetta began his carefully worded reply to this key question by observing that he saw nothing wrong with the leaders of "socialist" states saying that they considered the nonaligned as their "natural allies"; that would actually help the movement by providing "stronger recognition of its function." But

it would be a different matter if the socialist states were to talk of a political link and raise the problem of military agreements. Then there are nonaligned countries which have special links with the socialist camp, which actually in some sense form part of it, and which consider non-alignment as being objectively allied with the socialist camp. I do not think one can deny them the right to express this opinion.

But they should not go beyond this expression of "a judgment on a historical process," Pajetta warned:

Certainly, if on the other hand they wanted to impose this position on countries which do not share it, and which stress their own propensity for a policy of independence and equidistance /between the blocs/, it would be a very different matter. Then it would be a question of seeking to impose a change of course which I consider negative as a proposal and unrealizable in practice.

I think, rather, that what the world awaits from the Havana summit is the definition of a policy of active collaboration in the process of détente and the affirmation of a role which must be independent of all blocs, precisely because its goal is the end of all blocs. Implicit in this is the rejection of a bipolar conception of international relations.

Pajetta said he had no illusions that the more acute problems raised in connection with the conference-- for example, the Palestinian question -- could be settled in Havana. These issues would be debated, and majorities would be formed. "But such question will not be settled in this forum, and still less through expulsions or through attempts to measure the quantity of effective nonalignment of countries which all claim to be nonaligned."

Another question brought Pajetta back to the central issue of the relationship of the nonaligned movement and individual member-states to the two great power blocs:

It is clear that many of the countries represented in Havana are linked with one bloc or the other, follow a policy of friendship and collaboration with it, and conclude bilateral alliances with countries that are not nonaligned. Is it a matter of restricting the movement to those who can be classified as "pure" nonaligned? Or should there be an effort to keep united in the movement even those who in some manner are linked with one bloc or the other?

Working Against Blocs

These nonaligned countries that had links with one bloc or the other should not, he suggested, be viewed as Trojan horses; instead, they should be regarded as carrying the influence of nonalignment outside the confines of the movement. "They would thus play an important role in bringing about what we consider to be the only prospect for saving humanity -- an end to blocs, international collaboration, general security, and disarmament."

In discussing the wide range of positions among the non-aligned, Pajetta touched upon the Sino-Soviet conflict (without noting that the pro-Soviet delegations in Havana were also the most bitterly anti-Chinese).

Many of the nonaligned think -- as, indeed, we do -- that one of the calamities of the present historic moment is the deep division between the Soviet Union and China; and they think that their task is not just to refuse to choose one of these two countries as against the other but to have better relations with both, and so to work for the healing of a split which has had negative, if not tragic, repercussions for some of them.

Later in the interview Pajetta suggested that, instead of thinking in terms of East versus West, the nonaligned should think in terms of North and South, with reference to economic relations between industrialized and developing countries. The goal should be "a new economic order, within a general framework of justice, balance, and participation." This would not be "the work of a day," nor would it be the "miracle of a revolution": what was required, in the first place, was "a new awareness everywhere." Again the contrast with Cuban theses, while obvious, was left implicit.

Finally, Pajetta noted that the presence of a Spanish delegation in Havana (as observers) was of great importance for

Italian Communists. "This demonstrates the reality of the non-aligned movement and its capacity for initiatives, not only in rejecting the logic of blocs but in action aimed at getting rid of them and helping others to do the same. It is not now a matter of establishing whether this is the road to be taken by all; but it is a matter of understanding that one can advance in the direction of eliminating blocs." On behalf of the Italian CP, he expressed the hope that at the Havana summit, "nonalignment may continue to move in this direction" beyond the differences, disagreements, and problems, which may even lead to voting conflicts."

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