

EIGHTH CONFERENCE  
OF HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT  
OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES  
Harare, August-September 1986  
SPEECH BY  
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT,  
THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,  
COMRADE ROBERT GABRIEL MUGABE,  
AT THE COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY OF THE  
25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE  
MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES  
Harare, International Conference Centre,  
1 September 1986

Your Majesties,  
Distinguished Heads and Representatives of State or Government,  
Excellencies,  
Honoured Guests,  
Comrades and Friends.

It is a great privilege to me to address you on this historic occasion, commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the founding of our Movement. We, in Zimbabwe, are deeply conscious of the honour the observance of this commemorative session in Harare bestows upon our country. We thank the member States for granting us the privilege to serve the Movement in this manner. It is an honour that truly humbles our young Republic.

Majesties, Excellencies, Comrades and Friends, exactly a quarter of a century ago, leaders of 25 emergent countries met in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, to exchange ideas on the international situation with a view to contributing more effectively to world peace and security and peaceful co-operation among peoples. Theirs was no easy task. They were meeting against the background of the breakdown of colonial empires and in the context of the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, racism and all forms of alien domination. The Cold War had polarized international relations and the world was divided into two antagonistic political-military blocs. The countries these leaders represented were just emerging from foreign occupation, often after bitter struggles for national independence, and they suffered from weak economies and fragile political and social

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institutions. The temptation to allow matters to take their own course and let themselves and their countries be pulled into one orbit or the other of the two contending power blocs must have been nearly irresistible.

But these were men of vision, equal to their task. They also fully comprehended the worth of the prize they sought. The freedom they had just won for themselves and for their countries could only be secure in a larger freedom - the freedom of all peoples to determine their own future and the right of States to choose their own systems of governance and their own political, social and economic systems without outside interference. The future of peoples, of nations and ultimately of the world itself could not be secure in an international system divided into rival political-military blocs and in a climate characterized by acrimony and the arms race. These leaders sought to freeze the spread of the military blocs and to bring about greater relaxation of tensions, relying not on might but on reason and the justice of their goals in order to achieve their objectives.

So it was that on 1 September 1961, the 25 leaders met in Belgrade at a conference convened by men whose names have since adorned the pages of world history: there was the host of the Conference, Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia; from Africa, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt; from Asia, Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia and twenty other fighters for freedom from around the world. These were men of great vision, architects of a great world idea. It was at the Belgrade Conference that the

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heritage we call the Non-Aligned Movement was concretized and its principles and character laid out. If we ask ourselves today, what motivated these men, the founders of our Movement, and what gave them their inner drive and sense of mission, the answer must surely lie in the circumstances that had nurtured them: the reality of foreign domination, oppression, racism and exploitation, and their experience in fighting these evil forces. Part of the answer must also be found in the objective environment in which they found themselves - the relative weakness of the countries they led in economic, political and military terms, as compared with the bellicose disposition of the big Powers and their espousal of the politics of division and mutual recrimination. Much of the answer, however, must lie in their dream - the vision they saw of a future world of freedom and well-beingv for all people, of equality and co-operation among nations, a world characterized by peace and progress, allowing the genius Of each individual, each nation and the world itself to reach its highest fruition.

It was to secure these ends that the Belgrade Conference decided, under its agenda item entitled "Exchange of views on the International Situation: Establishment and Strengthening of International Peace and Security", to consider subjects such as respect for. the right of peoples and nations to self-determination, struggle against imperialism, liquidation of colonialism, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States; racial discrimination and agartheid; general and complete disarmament; banning of nuclear

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tests; problem of foreign military bases; peaceful coexistence among States with different political and social systems; role and structure of the United Nations and the implementation of its resolutions, problems of unequal economic development and the promotion of international economic and technical co-operation.

These were admirable ends then and remain admirable ends today; and so will they be tomorrow. They are the quintessence of non-alignment. To ensure their attainment, it was essential that the Movement make up in loyalty, commitment and unity what it lacked in economic and military power; The 25 leaders, therefore set out the criteria member states were to abide by in order to ensure the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the Movement. To be a Member of the Movement, they decided, a country should have adopted an independent policy based on the coexistence of States with different political and social systems and on non-alignment or should be showing a trend in favour of such a policy; the country concerned should be consistently supportive of the movement for national independence; it should not be a member of a multilateral military alliance concluded in the context of great Power conflicts. If a country has a bilateral military agreement with a great Power, or is a Member of a regional defence pact, the agreement or pact should not be one deliberately concluded in the context of great Power conflicts; and where a country has conceded military bases to a foreign Power the concession should not have been made in the context of great Power conflicts.

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Such, then, is the legacy of Belgrade. It has since been refined and enriched through the successive Summit Conferences from Cairo through Algiers, Lusaka, Colombo, Havana, New Delhi and now Harare. The distilled wisdom garnered from all those Conferences forms the character and doctrine of our Movement today.

It is perhaps appropriate at this stage to ask ourselves how well the Movement bequeathed to us by our "founding fathers" has functioned and to what extent the world of their vision has been realized.

To the extent that the world around us is still afflicted by some of the ills the founders of our Movement sought to eradicate in their own time, we can understand those sceptics who sometimes question our success to date. Pockets of colonialism persist here and there. One quickly calls to mind in this regard the glaring cases of Namibia, New Caledonia, Puerto Rico, the Malvinas Islands and Micronesia among others. Imperialism and neo-colonialism, foreign domination, interference and intervention in the internal and external affairs of States are on the resurgence. Racism, especially the most virulent forms that our age has known, i.e. apartheid and Zionism, continue to oppress and dispossess their victims and to threaten international peace and security. The world is still divided into rival political and military blocs and the arms race, especially the nuclear arms race, threatens to blow the world apart and with it obliterate the whole of mankind. Furthermore, there is growing evidence

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of a retreat from multilateralism and an onslaught on the United Nations system by some developed countries who wish to use economic power to gain control of it and subvert its purposes and democratic nature. A new international economic dispensation has not materialized, the North-South dialogue remains interrupted and the establishment of the New International Economic Order appears as remote today as it ever was.

In such an environment we can excuse those other than ill-wishers who really wonder wherein we see our success. However, to these genuine seekers of truth we say: do not only ask yourselves how the world is today with non-alignment, but rather, what it would be without it.

Without the Movement, the world would have been much more sharply divided with an arms race of an even more ferocious intensity. The role of the United Nations would have been greatly diminished as it would have become a mere football ground for two contending teams rather than the forum for judicious and reasoned discourse that it is meant to be. Peace and peaceful coexistence based on universal detente among States would be that much more difficult to strive for and war, global war, would be much more likely to break out. In brief, non-alignment has been a positive force for global relaxation of tension; for the promotion and support of the independence struggles, disarmament, the upholding of the principles of the United Nations Charter, the accelerated economic development of developing countries, and the struggle for a new world order based on equality, justice and peace.

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The fact that we have not yet achieved all our aims and objectives is evidence not of our failure or the failure of non-alignment, but rather of the intractable nature of some of the problems. Our hopes for the future, however, rest on the fact that, unlike our fore-runners, we enjoy one vital advantage; we inherited a Movement whose efficacy has already been tested and whose effectiveness has drawn under its umbrella the vast majority of States and peoples. With a membership of two-thirds of the number of States on this planet, representing two-thirds of its population, we have potential strength and influence. This is a real basis for facing the future with confidence. Therefore, on this occasion of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the founding of our Movement we re-dedicate ourselves to the goals set at Belgrade and elaborated upon through Cairo, Lusaka, Algiers, Colombo, Havana and New Delhi, of self-determination and independence of peoples, of sovereignty, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States, of the indivisibility of peace and active peaceful coexistence among States based on universal detente and the freedom of all States to determine their own political and economic systems and pursue their social, economic and cultural development without intimidation, hindrance or pressure; we recommit ourselves yet again to fight imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid racism, zionism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, hegemony, interference and intervention as well as great Power and bloc policies tending to perpetuate the division of the world into blocs; we reject

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categorically such outmoded doctrines as spheres of influence and balances of terror, and dedicate ourselves once again to uphold the principles of non-use or threat of force in relations between States; and reaffirm our commitment to work for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the development of international co-operation on the basis of equality, justice and equity, and the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

These principles of our Movement are a vital forte for the well-being of peoples and for peace. They are of relevance to the entire international community which can only benefit from their implementation and prevalence. To ensure that this is so, it is essential that we, the non-aligned countries, resolve to strengthen our action-oriented unity through abiding faithfully by the authentic and genuine principles of non-alignment in our relations with each other and between ourselves and others. Following in the footsteps of the founders of our Movement, let us have the courage of their and our convictions, ready at all times to uphold good and to oppose wrong regardless of the source. But more than all, let us march forward in unity, friendship and solidarity.

Thank you.

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