

Only a few years ago, the emphasis was on a New International Economic Order. Now the South is seeking more pragmatic ways of alleviating its problems.

John Gordon
North-South: the axis shifts



Indira Gandhi and Fidel Castro at the summit of Non-Aligned Nations in New Delhi, 8 March 1983.

Third World

The developing countries have long provided an object lesson in frustrated impotence. Half the world's population should be heard, but isn't. Ten years of efforts to change the world's economic system have got nowhere. Instead the Western countries which wrote the rules in 1945 insist the game goes on unchanged.

This and the current problems of the Third World might seem a recipe for radicalism, an invitation to the 120 poorer countries to bite the hand that doesn't feed them. Yet in recent months the mood in the South has been quietly shifting in the opposite direction. Dialogue with the North is in. Confrontation is out.

The quest for changes in the postwar economic system is being replaced by calls for a step-by-step approach to individual issues such as debt relief and protectionism. It is a change which will colour all the international conferences which crowd this summer's agenda for the diplomats

WHAT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE DECIDED:

The US Congress has decreed that a country's readiness to distance itself from the non-aligned movement should be borne in mind when weighing up US aid programmes. But that threat did not stop the 97 countries and two liberation movements — the Palestine Liberation Organisation and South West Africa People's Organisation — in New Delhi from making over two dozen attacks on Washington compared with a mere two or three on Moscow.

The political declaration prepared in New Delhi is a barometer of Third World anger at the policies being followed by the Reagan administration. It is also the best guide as to how two-thirds of the nations of the world will act in the United Nations.

The various sections of the political text were prepared separately by the regional groups most involved before being welded together and endorsed by the movement as a whole. The key elements are:

Middle East Here the US is condemned for the support it gives to the 'Israeli entity in all fields' and directly blamed for failing to protect Palestinians, a clear reference to the Sabra and Shatila massacres. But a series of denunciations still leaves the door open for the Reagan peace plan. There is a call for the withdrawal of 'all non-Lebanese forces' from the Lebanon — which means the Palestinian and Syrian forces as well as the Israeli ones.

Central America The US is condemned for its 'destabilisation efforts' against Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua. The 'intensification of imperialist interferences' has aggravated the problems of the area. The US should abandon the 'territory illegally occupied by the Guantanamo naval base and pay compensation for the considerable material loss caused to the Cuban people as a result of the blockade and other aggressive measures.' The US was also accused for infringing the 1977 Panama Canal Treaties. Puerto Rico should become independent from the US.

The Falkland!, Britain should negotiate with Argentina over the Malvinas and sovereignty should be 'restituted' to Argentina. However, the parties should take 'due account of the interests of the population of the Islands'. Britain's military activities were a 'cause for grave concern'. The conference 'took note' of the Argentine claims that Britain had introduced nuclear weapons into the area.

specialising in this recondite field. Yet it went virtually unnoticed when it was agreed on by the 97 countries and 2 liberation movements which attended the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in New Delhi in March.

Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, had organised a jamboree fit for the raj to celebrate her taking over the chair of the movement from Cuba's Fidel Castro. Mercedes cars and Jacuzzi baths were

brought in from abroad, and military bands and the ruthless Border Security Forces were deployed to deal with one of the more remarkable collection of sheikhs, kings, presidents, prime ministers and run-of-the-mill dictators that the world has seen.

Their situation was and is daunting. On the one hand East-West tension, the nuclear arms build up, an annual \$650 bn world expenditure on weapons, the war between Iran and Iraq, and increasingly

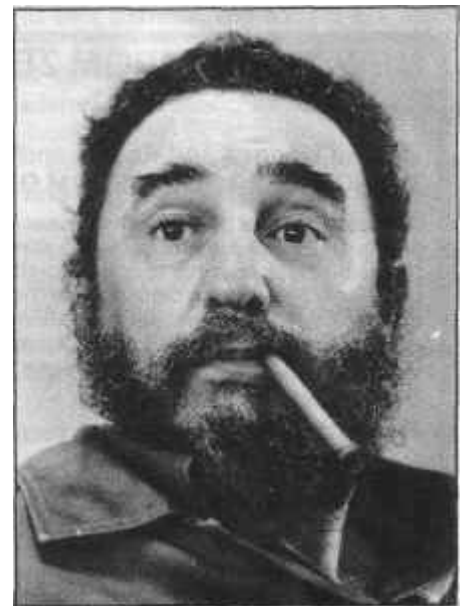
Southern Africa Full backing is given to Swapo and an attack made on the plundering of the natural resources of Namibia 'by foreign interests' — a reference to firms such as RTZ. Fury is expressed at US policies of 'constructive engagement' with South Africa, the blocking of the introduction of mandatory sanctions and the linkage of Cuban troops and a Namibian settlement. Nine paragraphs attack South Africa's destabilisation of other countries.

Diego Garcia and the Indian Ocean For the first time the non-aligned movement accepts that Mauritius should have sovereignty over Diego Garcia. It stresses that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace, with military presences eliminated 'from the Indian Ocean and its natural extensions' — an apparent reference to its hinterland, Afghanistan. Diego Garcia is not specifically named in the section dealing with foreign bases. During the conference there were claims nuclear weapons had been introduced to it.

Afghanistan This situation is viewed 'with particular concern'. There should be a 'political settlement on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign troops and full respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan and strict observance of the principle of non-intervention and non-interference'. The efforts by the UN Secretary General, Sr Javier Perez de Cuellar, are a 'step in the right direction'.

Kampuchea The non-aligned movement — which spent several days arguing before agreeing to keep Kampuchea's chair empty, rather than accept either the Heng Samrin regime backed by Vietnam or the coalition including Pol Pot — talked of 'the inadmissibility of the use of force against sovereign states'. It called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces.

Nuclear Weapons The movement found it 'unacceptable that the security of all states and the very survival of mankind should be held hostage to the security interests of a handful of nuclear weapon states'. There should be a freeze on nuclear weapons, finalisation of a comprehensive test ban treaty, and guarantees of no first use. As Mrs Gandhi said on this: 'The hood of the cobra is spread. Humankind watches in frozen horror, hoping against hope it will not strike!'



Fidel Castro

countries as a whole the annual GNP per head will amount to almost \$8,500, while in the underdeveloped countries it will remain under \$590 . . . At current growth rates, the poorest countries would need two to four thousand years to bridge the gap.'

Such statistics underpin the effort which the developing countries have given to achieving a restructuring in the world's economic links through a 'new international economic order'. Throughout the past decade the hope had been that an alliance between oil producers and the poor countries of the South would be able to wrest concessions from the North and change the structures set up by Keynes and Harry White at Bretton Woods nearly 40 years ago.

That hope has continually been frustrated — in particular by Britain, the US and West Germany — a point reluctantly and bitterly accepted by the countries attending the New Delhi summit. 'There has been hardly any progress towards the establishment of the New International Economic Order', admitted the economic communique. And hopes for the future

acute problems in the Middle East and Central America. On the other, recession, a series of debt problems, a collapse in the export earnings necessary to service existing debt, and a drying up in the flow of funds to the Third World. Developing countries have lost an annual \$100 bn in recent years because of such factors, they argued, around one-fifth of their total (\$529 bn) debt.

A Pragmatic Turn

On these points the tone was set by Fidel Castro who kicked off the New Delhi summit with a series of striking statistics which are worth citing at length:

'In 1959 the sale of 6 tons of jute fibre could buy a 7-8 ton truck. By late 1982, 26 tons of jute fibre were needed to buy the same truck. In 1959 one ton of copper wire could buy 39 X-ray tubes for medical purposes. By late 1982 only three X-ray tubes could be bought with that same ton . . . By the year 2,000 in the developed

were meagre. As the summit took place, Opec countries were locked in an ignominious battle in London over price cuts. The chances of any oil-based alliance against the North had disappeared. Instead, the summit decided that it would have to take some of the emphasis away from its much cherished 'global negotiations' — the call for a major conference in the United Nations which would deal with finance, food, energy and trade and, crucially, control over the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Such negotiations 'remained the most important and comprehensive endeavour of

the international community for the restructuring of international economic relations'. But 'in the meantime, the solution of the immediate problems of developing countries brooks no delay.' The new weapon forged in New Delhi and added to the developing countries' rusting armoury is called 'immediate measures'. It is to these that the Third World is now giving priority, in particular to a series of proposals in the financial field.

Aid should be increased, IMF quotas — which govern how much countries can borrow from the fund — doubled instead of the 47.5% increase agreed in February, a

major allocation of the IMF's special drawing rights (its paper currency) be made, World Bank lending increased and protectionism combated.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development due in Belgrade in June 'offers a major opportunity' for dealing with such issues. Beyond this developing countries are backing India's proposals for an International Conference on Money and Finance for Development. They have also agreed to urge all heads of state and government to attend this autumn's session of the UN General Assembly.

NEW TITLES FROM ZED

Donald Hodges and Ross Gandy MEXICO 1910-1982: REFORM OR REVOLUTION?

'The authors have achieved the unusual feat of producing a highly original and useful book on Latin American politics that is highly accessible to non-specialist readers. Where they break new ground is to demonstrate the ideological and methodological links between the Mexican Revolution and all subsequent "revolutions" in Latin America, including the Bolivian and Cuban experiences.' *Latin America Weekly Review*

£16.95 hardback £5.95 paperback

Tom Barry, Beth Wood and Deb Preusch DOLLARS AND DICTATORS: A Guide to Central America

This book is about that part of the Third World most deeply shaken today by guerilla wars against repressive régimes on the one hand, and the counter measures the United States is taking to crush revolutionary movements on the other.

'Dollars and Dictators makes a comprehensive and detailed contribution to our understanding of U.S.-Central American relations and provides a meaningful basis for political action.' *Professor James Petras*

£14.95 hardback £4.95 paperback

Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road
London N1 9DN
Telephone 01-837 4014



Situations Vacant



IVS volunteers work to
raise living standards
increase self-reliance
and promote peace by improving understanding between people

Vacancies in Third World Development:

BOTSWANA: Librarian for refugee settlement; Water Technicians; Coordinator for Pit Latrine Project; Nursery/Infant Teacher.

MOZAMBIQUE: (requiring 2 years post qualification work experience): Agriculturalist; Foresters; Agricultural Engineers; Water Engineers; Small Dam Engineers; Sawmill Managers/Technicians; Skilled Artisans e.g. Fitters, Welders; Building Supervisors; Topographers; Economists; Planners; Architects; Accountants; Science Teachers; Doctors; Nurse-Tutors; Medical Laboratory Technicians.

SWAZILAND: Plumber/'Handyman' for small-scale water supplies; Building Supervisor for rural health clinic; Building Instructor for training unemployed young people; Agriculturalist for Poultry Hatchery Management; Agriculture Teachers for rural secondary schools; Graphic Designer/Printer.

2-year contracts including modest living allowance and flights.
Regret no funding for dependants.

Write for details including a short c.v and s.a.e. to:
International Voluntary Service, MX2, 53 Regent Road,
Leicester, LE1 6YL

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN PRESENTS

Quilapayún IN CONCERT

ALL TOUR DETAILS & TICKETS
FOR LONDON CONCERT ONLY
FROM CSC, 129 SEVEN SISTERS ROAD,
LONDON N7,
TEL. 01-272 4298

PORTSMOUTH

29th April Guildhall
Tel. 0705-824355

LONDON

with BOYS OF THE LOUGH
1st May Dominion Theatre
Tel. 580-9562

BRISTOL

3rd May University
Victoria Rooms.

SHEFFIELD

4th May City Hall
Tel. 0742-735296

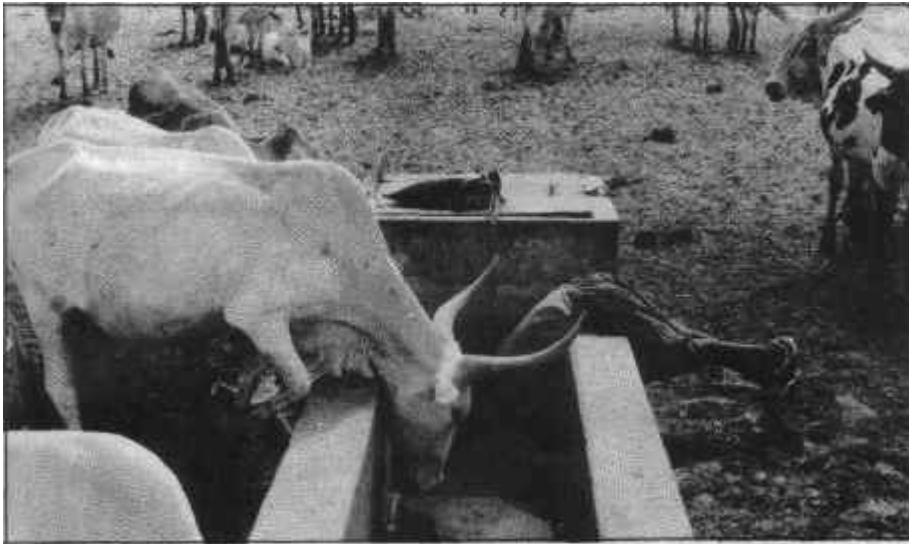
New New New (or just out, whichever you prefer!)

Forward Ever!

Three years of the Grenadan revolution: Speeches of Maurice Bishop

228 pages £4.95 pbk, £9.95 hbk.

From bookshops or Pathfinder Press — 47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL. (complete catalogue on request)



Men and animals drink the same water at the same wells in Senegal.

Influence and Limitations

All this adds up to a relatively coherent and reasoned approach to the future. Indeed, India's taking the chair of the non-aligned has marked a clear change in tone from the confrontational stance adopted by Cuba during its 40-odd months at the head of this strange body.

Its influence comes from the part it plays in co-ordinating Third World policies at the UN. The non-aligned summits held every three years or so have become the occasion when the developing world formally defines its strategy for the future. In the economic field tactics are usually left to the Group of 77, a body which meets at lower level and more often, and which now has around 120 members. But it is the non-aligned movement which has played a 'pivotal and catalytic role in the field of international economic relations,' or so it claims.

The formation of Unctad, calls for self-reliance by the developing world, the appeal for the New International Economic Order, the launching of global negotiations — all these have issued from the non-aligned summits.

This short list, taken from the non-aligned's description in New Delhi of its successes, shows clearly its strengths and its limitations. Look further and the limitations become more evident. Tucked away in its 90-odd pages of economic texts is a reference to the non-aligned countries 'particular interests' in a study on the feasibility of a bank for developing countries — a polite way of saying they still planned to do nothing about an idea first mooted about ten years ago. 'South-South co-operation' remains more slogan than reality.

The origins of the non-aligned movement

go back over two decades. The Bandung conference of 1955 included both China and US military allies such as Turkey, the Philippines and South Vietnam. It was only in 1961 that Nasser, Nehru and Tito got the non-aligned movement formally off the ground.

Those invited to its first summit, in Belgrade, had to meet four main criteria:

- an independent foreign policy based on co-existence and non-alignment or a trend in favour of such a policy
- support for national independence movements

- # non-membership of military alliances or defence pacts concluded in the context of great power rivalry
- no lease of bases in the context of great power rivalry

Delegates involved in the process say there was agreement to keep China out.

Neutrality

There has since been a continuing battle over whether the non-aligned should also be neutral. For John Foster Dulles neutrality was 'an immoral and short-sighted concept'. But the non-aligned have rarely followed neutral policies. They attack colonialism and 'racism, including Zionism', and call for 'self-determination of peoples under colonial and alien domination'. Their philosophy is closer to that of the Soviet Union than that of the US, and Cuba did its best to have the movement accept the Soviet Union as its 'natural ally'.

Such policies cause Singapore to warn that the movement is witnessing its 'slow-motion hijacking' so that it will wake up one day to find it has 'docked in a Soviet port'. Adding fuel to this argument is the way that around one-quarter of the

members of the non-aligned movement can be counted on to vote with Moscow' on almost any issue at the UN while no Third World country — not even Singapore — votes with Washington in a similar manner. US policies in the Middle East, South Africa and Central America assure this — as does the fact that the non-aligned are seeking to change an economic system benefiting West rather than East.

But Mrs Gandhi speaks for the majority of the non-aligned when she insists that it has neither natural allies nor natural enemies — a point confirmed in the New Delhi tests. In her view, the movement has its own interests, and these it will follow. She argues that the economic problems of the West mean that it would be well advised to reconsider its policies, and look South.

Common Crisis was the title which the Brandt Commission gave its second report on North-South issues, published in February. Its talk of the need for an emergency programme is very similar to the call for immediate measures which has emanated from New Delhi. But the argument of the common interest of rich and poor has yet to win the day. There is general agreement in Washington and, say, Mali that a decline in capital flows reduces the developing countries' ability to buy goods from the West in the way needed to stimulate recovery in the West. But whereas the US says that international recovery, like charity, must begin at home, the South calls for a major increase in world liquidity to stimulate that recovery. New Delhi has not bridged that gap. On the contrary the gulf remains as huge as that between living standards. The frustration seems set to continue.

