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## Non-Aligned Nations

E.N.P Sowah Justice

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# INTRODUCTION

## Non-Aligned Nations

*by Justice E.N.P. Sowah\**

These articles on non-alignment are of particular importance in today's conditions. The superpowers of the world are poised for confrontation and are spending huge sums of money on armaments at a time when Third World nations are trying to salvage their economies weakened by both imported and domestic inflations. It was in such an environment of confrontation that the Non-Aligned Movement was born. Its birth could be traced to the Bandung Conference of April, 1955, which marked the first assembly of emergent nations for the purpose of defining their role in global politics. The Conference was convened by the Governments of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan and attended by 24 other Asian and African countries. The concept of non-alignment was Asian in origin.

At the end of the Bandung Conference, the communique which was issued set out defined objectives: cooperation amongst the Asian and African countries both in the economic and the cultural fields and the elimination of colonialism in all its manifestations.

It ought to be recalled that in 1955 almost the whole of black Africa was under the colonial yoke. The scramble for Africa left it divided amongst the European imperialists: Britain, France, and Portugal.

The Non-Aligned Movement called for the promotion of world peace, cooperation, and the elimination of tension in the world. The European powers, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America were stockpiling nuclear weapons and hoarding arms for common destruction.

These emerging nations were apprehensive that their independence might be compromised if there was another conflagration between the superpowers. It was their hope, as it is today, that the resources saved from the arms race would be used for their economic advancement and benefit.

The Movement also called for support of fundamental principles of

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\* Supreme Court of Ghana

† As of December 31, 1981, the Ghanaian constitution was suspended by the Military Government.

human rights and of the people and nations of the world. The foremost proponents of its policies were the late President Tito of Yugoslavia, Prime Minister Nehru of India, President Nassar of Egypt, President Sukarno of Indonesia, and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana. The infant movement thrived and made a great impact on the international scene under the able and dynamic leadership of these strong personalities.

For the first time in the history of the world the collective voice of the weak could be heard not only in the corridors but in the great halls of global power. The Movement exerted great influence because of its posture of non-commitment to either of the great blocs. It created a third faction in the interplay of global politics.

Since its inception the movement has held seven Conferences of Heads of State. The first was in Belgrade in 1961. At that time the Conference was again dominated by fears of global conflict and it was resolved to call upon the superpowers to disarm and sign a treaty for general and complete disarmament. There was a call for the rich nations of the world to remove the economic imbalance of the Third World countries inherited from colonial exploitation.

The second Conference of the Movement was in Cairo in 1964. By that time, the membership of the Movement had more than doubled. Colonialism was on the run. The various imperial powers were dismantling their empires and granting freedom to their dependencies. Almost the whole of black Africa had been decolonised. However, the attention of the Movement was still focused on decolonisation and the struggle against neo-colonialism and racism.

The subsequent Conferences of Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement were held in Lusaka, Zambia in 1970; Algiers in 1973; Colombo in 1976; Havana, Cuba in 1979; and New Delhi, India in 1981. The latest conference sought to review and appraise the role of the movement in contemporary world affairs. The remnants of colonialism in Southern Africa and racism in South Africa have still to be eliminated.

Recently, cracks in the ranks of the movement have appeared. The Asian countries are particularly disturbed by attempts to align the movement more closely to a superpower. The attempt would, of course, undermine the original goal of the Movement; namely positive neutrality, and would also undermine its influence in the councils of the world.

During the two decades of its existence, the Movement has endeavored to bring sanity into world affairs, has achieved considerable success in its decolonisation programmes, and has sought to draw the attention of the rich nations of the world to the abject poverty of some of its Asian and African members.

The areas where the Movement has met with great resistance, almost amounting to an impasse, are concentrated in Southern Africa. South Af-

rica continues to dominate Namibia inspite of U.N. resolutions calling upon it to relinquish its colonial hold and grant independence. Its obnoxious policies of apartheid are still practiced. These are the areas which will test the political strength and will of the Movement in the years ahead.

The greatest danger to the Movement is the attempt to undermine its very basis from its path of positive neutrality. It is hoped that this attempt will be resisted by all the members.

In the next decade the Movement will have to turn its attention more toward the establishment of a new international economic order than it has done in the past. The economies of most of the Third World are in shambles due to the unprecedented quadrupling of prices of petroleum products and the resultant trends of high inflation. These economies can only be salvaged and improved if the Non-Aligned Movement displays equal dynamism and foresight of their solution.

The members of the Movement, particularly those from Africa, now face imbalances in their external payments, deterioration in their terms of trade, inability to feed their own population, and inflation which has eaten into the fabric of their economies. The challenge of the next decade will be how the Movement can solve these problems which appear pervasive in all the countries of the Third World.

