

*Redefinition
of non-alignment
to match changes
in world relations*

organize protest votes as respectably as possible by way of opposition or abstention. Against the pressure of the non-aligned majority, these efforts achieved only mixed results.

The fifth summit conference of non-aligned countries, held in Colombo (Sri Lanka) from August 16 to 19, 1976, focused on the contentious issue of defining non-alignment in the light of the major changes in world political and economic relations since the last summit meeting in Algiers three years earlier. Its 15-point draft agenda embraced a wide range of political and economic issues — some of them highly divisive. They covered southern Africa, the Middle East and the Palestinian question, Cyprus, Korea, Latin America, the Indian Ocean "peace-zone" idea, disarmament and the implications of *détente*. Economic issues centred largely on the demand for a new international economic order; the Colombo participants urged greater economic solidarity and cooperation among non-aligned countries, especially with "countries subjected to foreign economic pressures".

Reservations

Several states circulated specific reservations on elements of the final communiqué, e.g. on Korea and other political questions. Despite some moderate voices, extreme anti-Western resolutions emerged with nominal consensus support. While they may be prepared to express reservations, many members appear to adopt a passive attitude, allowing one-sided resolutions to be passed by consensus as long as these do not conflict with their own particular interests. Such a nominal consensus suits the extremists, allowing them to present a united front in favour of their resolutions. Majority voting, introduced at the Georgetown foreign ministers' conference in 1972, was short-lived, having exposed serious differences, notably on the seating of Indochinese liberation movements and the decision to hold the subsequent summit meeting in Algiers.

The diversity of membership aroused some fears that the movement was being "diluted" or "adulterated". Concern was expressed over the observers and guests invited to Lima in August 1975 and over applications for observer status from Portugal, Romania and the Philippines — respectively members of NATO, the Warsaw Pact and SEATO (the Philippines also has a bilateral defence pact with the United States). Although some countries argued for admission of any state with an independent foreign policy and sympathetic to the non-aligned movement, the

foreign ministers' meeting that preceded the summit meeting decided to relegate these countries to "guest" status. Pakistan's membership of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) has been consistently held to debar it from membership.

(In response to this, Pakistan's Prime Minister Ali Bhutto, following the Colombo conference, called for a full World "summit" to signal "the turning away from the threat of a simmering, potentially disastrous confrontation to the promise of global partnership . . . to rectify the position of Third World countries . . . and enable [them] to take their rightful place in the world's economic community . . . whether aligned or non-aligned Communist or non-Communist . . .")

The impact of the Colombo summit meeting has already been seen at the thirty-first session of the General Assembly. It is readily apparent from the conference documents circulated at the request of the Sri Lanka permanent representative (UN Document A/31/197) that Third World solidarity and direction shaped at Colombo will be critical factors in several areas — e.g., on Middle East and South African issues. Naturally, the summit meeting is, as was its predecessor, also an important guide to probable trends in the economic realm in general and of special interest to Canada, in the context of the CIEC.

Basic line

Essentially, in review, the summit conference seems to have maintained the basic line of the non-aligned movement, though it began to evolve after 1973 at Algiers. Aimed ostensibly at dialogue and cooperation, the confrontation and rhetorical aspects of the movement, particularly directed at Western and industrialized states, have been further institutionalized but in a relatively moderate fashion. That, while direction is given (e.g., on collective attitude towards Israel), specific details remain somewhat vague. It seems, however, that the "purist" neutralist line (espoused especially by Yugoslavia) is losing even more force and that the movement may well be reshaped in more radical terms. One indication of this is, perhaps, the choice of Cuba as the host for the summit meeting. Also noteworthy in connection is the fact that, in contrast to its experience at earlier non-aligned summit meetings, the Soviet Union emerged virtually unscathed, tarred only indirectly with the brush of big-power hegemony and military presence in the Indian Ocean etc., whereas the major Western nations, in particular the U.S. and France, face