

Dr M: NAM still alive

WHEN we last met at Jakarta in 1992, we were caught in the euphoria following upon the end of the Cold War. We raised questions over the relevance of our Movement, including the very name itself. That euphoria has dissipated. The international situation has relapsed into the old state of uncertainty. International leadership, be it by the major powers or the United Nations, has become fuzzy as confrontations at the interstate and intra-state levels increased. Questions have again been asked over the role and relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement. Our inability to collectively stand against the nuclear weapons states over the Non-Proliferation Treaty last June has been cited by our detractors as marking the beginning of the end of the Movement.

NAM was forged 40 years ago to be the third force between the two superpower blocs. NAM was designed to play the pivotal role in liberating the world from those who dominated it through colonialism and other forms of hegemony. NAM was expected to promote democratic relations among states and to help the growth of developing countries, through enhanced South-South and North-South relations.

The political struggle has not been without achievements: especially against colonialism and apartheid. But the domination of the world by a select few remains. This is evident in their control of the international institutions that deal with issues of world security and economy. The Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions remain under the firm grip of a few countries. The domination now manifests itself in efforts to impose their values and standards in total disregard for the cultures and traditions of others. And so the fundamental challenge to our Movement remains that of addressing the domination of the world by a select few, now no longer divided into blocs, whose decisions are primarily motivated by their own narrow national interests.

Let us at Cartagena send a

resounding and unequivocal message to our detractors that NAM is still alive and cohesive and will play a major role in facing the challenges of the post-cold war era. NAM is a major forum for consultations and coordination of positions on crucial political and economic issues among the developing countries. It is still the only forum where Heads of State and Government of the South can meet to take stock of developments which affect all of us. NAM, on behalf of the South, will continue to champion the just cause for a new world order based on the principles of justice, equality and democracy in international relations.

Apart from successfully fighting colonialism, apartheid and other forms of racism, NAM has historically stood for disarmament, both nuclear and conventional. We must join forces with those outside our move-

the disposal of chemical weapons and atomic waste in the Irish sea after the War is already creating problems for the littoral states. Improper disposal of massive quantities of nuclear material and weapons may cause a disaster of frightening proportion.

Admittedly, the South, which this Movement represents, was never a single monolithic entity. It was a grouping of nations with widely differing interests, united largely by a common colonial past. Despite becoming independent and sovereign, many of us in the South continue to be economically weak and dependent on the North. Political freedom has not cut loose the economic chains. High levels of poverty - manifested by low levels of life expectancy, literacy and per capita income - pose the greatest threat to the very existence of many of us.

Before the South can col-

tion-building in the South.

Many of us have spent billions on armaments and weapons of destruction when we should be fighting the roots of poverty - malnutrition, illiteracy and disease. The goal of sustaining national integrity is better pursued through effective dispute settlement mechanisms, preferably at regional level, without external interferences nor an excessive reliance on destructive armaments.

It is actually in the interest of the more prosperous states of the world to help the most destitute. Economic deprivation and social misery which destabilise poor nations will result in massive migrations which may not always be possible to stop. But we in the developing countries cannot depend on the prosperous nations to help us against this fate. We have seen them fail too many times to rely on their enlightened self-interest. We have to do the right things for ourselves.

Fortunately, for us the debilitating stranglehold of political ideologies has been relaxed. The main concern for everyone now is economic development and the well-being of our people. All of us have some kind of economic resource or another. The exploitation of these resources is relatively easy, now that ideology no longer dictates and hamstring the process. We can institute internal reforms aimed at re-

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ment and continue to struggle for total nuclear disarmament. NAM must be at the forefront of humanity's efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons, as chemical weapons have been outlawed. We must ban nuclear weapons now for we doubt the future capacity of the nuclear powers to defuse, decommission and destroy these weapons. Already we are seeing the rusting nuclear warships probably with nuclear weapons abandoned carelessly at their bases. We know some nuclear submarines have been disposed of by sinking them in the sea. Looking at Chernobyl and the \$4 billion bill for making it safe, we truly fear that the owners of these weapons may not have the will or the means to defuse them safely later. It should be noted that

lectively demand that it be taken seriously as a partner, and a player in the international arena, it must confront and overcome its own weaknesses. A shared colonial past cannot permanently guarantee the unity and cohesion of the South.

Ethnic, tribal and religious differences have led to the collapse of many governments, often culminating in brutal and protracted civil wars. The freedom that we gained at great cost and sacrifice has been squandered by many of us. There is no place in our societies as there is no place in any society for genocide, ethnic cleansing, or other forms of oppression. Development, eradication of poverty and upliftment of our people, must be the over-riding goals of the process of na-

and cohesive

moving some of the disincentives that are inherent in our systems. If we are prepared to do this, we would reduce our dependence on the developed nations and would be strengthening ourselves and our movement as well.

Malaysia's experience has been that moderate policies encourage investments both from domestic and foreign sources and stimulate economic growth. The result is to enhance our freedom and independence. It may bring the same results for others. But we admit that what works for one country may not work for another. So much depends on our perceptions and culture. Still the exchange of information on our experiences in development should be worthwhile.

The continued relevance of the Movement is dependent on the promotion of a collective agenda. NAM must be at the vanguard of our efforts to enhance ties between the member countries as well as with the North. In this regard the cooperative endeavours with the Group of 88, symbolised by the Joint Coordination Committee, is a welcome development. It should reduce duplication and ensure the advocacy of a common programme on behalf of the South.

The role of think-tanks in

the advancement of our collective interests and positions needs to be recognised. The South Centre under Mwalimu Nyerere, established after the work of the South Commission was completed, has rendered invaluable service to this

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Movement. We need to strengthen this centre without turning it into another bureaucracy. The South Centre should be lean yet able to reach out through the networks in our countries.

In the case of Asean countries, their institutes of international studies contributed to the work of forging long-term international relations and the promotion of understanding of the roles of the countries concerned and developed countries in general.

In a world where national

boundaries have been made porous by business flows, it is timely for the South to accord priority to the role of the business community. I applaud your initiative, Mr Chairman, to convene a Business Forum during this meeting. Business-led

South. Significant among these innovations are the Bilateral Payments Arrangements which can overcome the shortage of foreign exchange needed for trade; the South Investment, Trade and Technology Data Exchange Centre (SITT-DEC) which provides invaluable data for economic interaction between the countries of the South, the Gene Banks and the Educational Centres of Excellence for education in the South.

While South-South relations are significant, we should not ignore or downplay our historical political solidarity at the international level. NAM should not be reduced to being a forum for seeking support for our candidature. This Movement has traditionally championed the cause of a just and equitable world order. It has vigorously pursued egalitarianism and social justice in addressing the asymmetries in the multilateral system. The democratisation of the multilateral system, including the reform of the Security Council, has remained important objectives of this Movement.

For the first time, the major powers are equally anxious to have these reforms, although for different reasons. It is important therefore that the South articulate its own Agenda for

Reform of the Multilateral System. We cannot defend the status quo, which many of us had no hand in its formulation nor in its effective functioning.

The restructuring of the multilateral system should be designed to facilitate a comprehensive multilateral framework which will strengthen global peace, security, economic growth and development. The institutional structures that deal with issues of war and peace, growth and development need to be reformed taking into account the interests of developing countries.

We must ensure that the tragedies of Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia and Cambodia are not repeated. The present UN and the Security Council cannot be entrusted with the task of forestalling such tragedies. In Bosnia more than three years of brutalities and massacres by the Serbs were tolerated while the UN and NATO argued over who had more authority. But for the demand by the American Congress and Senate for the arms embargo against Bosnia to be lifted and the need for the Government of the US to justify its policies, we would not have seen the kind of action which forced the Bosnian Serbs to finally agree to settlement by nego-

tiation. Despite the delay, the US Government should be congratulated for forcing NATO and the UN to act finally. The UN and the Secretariat have been more of an obstruction to peace than upholding the principles of the UN. Clearly the UN, its Secretariat and in particular the Security Council must be reformed if the world is to be made safe from the kind of gross injustices we see everywhere today.

The South must remain united in facing the moves within the North which seeks to portray the South either as objects of pity and charity or as rising economic competitors. Some within the North have advocated the enforcement of arbitrary and unilateral conditionalities ostensibly to protect the environment and safeguard the interest of labour. These sly moves must be rejected for they are nothing more than attempts to keep the South in permanent bondage by keeping them continuously poor and unstable.

As we prepare to leave Cartagena, we must rededicate our collective determination to promote our common agenda. Our struggle for a better and more equitable world and a secure future premised on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter is far from over. We need to soldier on with unabated zeal and resoluteness of purpose if we are to realise these goals.