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( PRIME MINISTER )

EVENT: THE 9TH CONFERENCE OF THE HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT  
OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

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TIME:

Mr Chairman

May I on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf offer you our sincere congratulations on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Ninth Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are confident that under your distinguished Chairmanship, the deliberations of this Conference will be successfully concluded. My delegation would also like to express our deep appreciation for the warm and generous hospitality accorded us as well as the excellent arrangements made to ensure our comfortable stay in this beautiful city of Belgrade.

Mr. Chairman,

2. My delegation also wish to place on record our deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr Robert Mugabe for his guidance of the affairs of the Movement during his Chairmanship. The Movement's current high standing in international affairs is a tribute to the dedication and statesmanship of Mr Mugabe.

Mr. Chairman,

3. It was in Belgrade that the historic meeting of the heads of non-aligned nations was held in 1961 to usher into a troubled world a third force to mitigate the effects of East-West confrontation. In the 28 years of its existence the Non-Aligned Movement has played a vital role to prevent the world from being completely split into two warring blocs.

4. It has been a costly role. Many of us have had our arms badly twisted, have been subverted, have been wasted by proxy wars, have had to fight and fight again to retain our independence--social, economic, political and ideological independence.

5. But we have also gained. Slowly and painfully the world has been made a more peaceful place. The East-West rivalries also served to highlight the needs of poor countries, and the necessity for helping them.

6. Today we see a vast change in the world's political scene. Although it is too soon to say that East-West confrontation is over, the fact remains that the intensity of the ideological struggle between the two blocs has abated. We see the two superpowers talking to each other. We see the elimination of some nuclear weapons and the reduction of some conventional ones. We see the changes in Poland and Hungary, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the tendency to compromise and reduce the proxy fights in third world countries.

7. We see also a trend towards peace. The ceasefire has been achieved in the Iran-Iraq war, the UN is now overseeing the birth of Namibia, the problems in Angola and Mozambique are set to end.

Mr. Chairman,

8. On the economic front, however, we see disturbing trends toward consolidation of the developed countries into powerful trading blocs. We see the centrally planned socialist countries moving away from political affinities in favour of economic benefits.

9. The lines that divide East and West are becoming blurred. The first and second worlds are no longer distinct. If the reason for the Non-Aligned Movement is to provide a third force to limit and balance the disruptive influences of the other two, what will be its role now that its principle *raison d'être* is seemingly disappearing. Should we regard ourselves as no longer relevant or is there going to be a new confrontation for which we have to prepare, a confrontation between the combined East and West in the Northern Hemisphere and the erstwhile poverty stricken nations of the South.

Mr. Chairman,

10. While we mull over the future of our movement in a less divided world we have also to consider the realities of the present. Rapprochement between East and West may reduce tension between them but many of the pressures we have been subjected to have not lessened. Indeed in many instances they have increased and taken new forms.

11. There is a distinct attempt to relegate the United Nations to an inferior role while new and exclusive for a have been formed designed to exclude the participation of the poor nations. The group of seven rich nations have taken it upon themselves to regulate the world's economy and finances. One result is that countries like Malaysia have had their debts doubled by the upward revision of the Yen we borrowed. The intention is to reduce Japanese exports, but we have to pay the price.

12. But Japan has not been made any less competitive by the

Yen revaluation. Instead it is now twice as rich and is buying up businesses and properties belonging to the other six. This can be regarded as poetic justice but unfortunately the finances of the poor have suffered as well.

13. The terms of trade are not getting any better for the third world. But now protectionism and unfair trading methods are creating havoc with the economies of the poor. While subsidies by the third world may result in countervailing duties by the rich, they themselves subsidise their industries to the point where overproduction is encouraged and the markets become saturated. Consequently the products of the poor nations have become unsaleable. Surplus food is used to deprive poor countries of their markets.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The environment is now made into a trade weapon. The thinning of the ozone layer is blamed on logging of tropical forests. The fact that the burning of fossil fuels and release of CFC into the atmosphere occur largely in the rich countries are significantly ignored. Also ignored is the logging of vast tracts of temperate forests which is still going on despite the fact that millions of square miles of temperate forests have already been cleared for development of the rich countries over the centuries.

15. In the deserts of America underground water is pumped up to water golf courses and create lakes to build luxury hotels on. Yet the water can easily reforest the deserts to reduce the gases which destroy the ozone layer as well as creating the green house effect. Instead poor countries are being forced not to extract wealth from their forests in order to keep the environment safe for the rich.

16. The developed countries have now appointed themselves the arbiter of human rights worldwide. In the name of human rights they have applied all kinds of pressures on countries unable to defend themselves. Every now and again new forms of human rights are invented and any country found defaulting is subjected to vile publicity and other repressive measures.

17. Having been responsible for the killing and torture of millions in the past, they now adopt a holier than thou attitude and want to impose their new-found ideas on human rights on the rest of the world. Although the missionaries have largely disappeared, they have now been replaced by the equally fanatical 'crusading environmentalists' and 'self-appointed human rights fighters' who would rather have disruptive civil wars in the poor nations than permit them to 'violate the latest in human rights'.

18. In Malaysia a campaign is being waged by outsiders to

force a primitive jungle tribe, the Penans, to remain primitive on the grounds that this is their right. That the people live a miserable life, without the amenities that other Malaysians enjoy, is not given any thought. That these people suffer from all kinds of diseases and consequently have a shorter life-span is ignored. The outsiders want to retain the so-called picturesque way of life of these unfortunate people forever. They are to remain museum pieces.

19. The sympathy for the Penans is hypocritical. All these so-called environmentalists are interested in is to prevent tropical timber from competing with temperate softwood.

20. Yet reforestation is a natural process in the rain-drenched countries of the tropics. These forests regenerate without need for replanting and trees grow the whole year round. The debt for nature offer will still not solve our long term development needs. Besides, the shifting slash and burn cultivators whom we are prevented from resettling will still destroy the forests. The rich should spend their money to reforest their own lands and the world's deserts. Reduce the use of space-wasting motor vehicles and increase mass transport systems. Ban the use of CFCs and go back to squeezing rubber bulbs or hand pumps to spray. All these can be done immediately and there should be rapid improvements in the environment. Stop making poor countries to pay for the quality of life of the rich.

Mr. Chairman,

21. Many poor countries are now so much in debt that they can never repay without surrendering their independence. When a borrower overborrows, the fault is not entirely his. The lender is equally to be blamed as he has made an imprudent loan. He must therefore pay for his indiscretion.

22. Schemes to collect debts from some of the most extensively indebted countries are simply not going to work. Refusing to lend anymore and bankrupting countries is not going to help anyone. Nor should the people of a country be punished as society punishes debtors.

23. The only real solution to the debt crisis is to write-off the whole or very nearly the whole of the debts owing. The lenders must admit they were indiscreet and must pay for it. Commercial banks and Governments alike must accept the losses. The Governments of the rich countries will not be bankrupted because of the write-off. And their banks can still be rehabilitated.

Mr. Chairman,

24. The countries of the South have formed a South-South Commission to look into ways of solving the problems of

the poor countries through South-South cooperation. The willingness of poor people to help each other is limited. But the potentials of the poor are not so limited. We have, if nothing else, our huge populations which can be harnessed for our development rather than being only migrant workers in the North. Instead some labour intensive industries should be relocated in the South to provide employment and contribute towards its economic growth. Induced brain drain to the North should be stopped.

Mr. Chairman,

25. Democracy is being preached by the liberal democrats of the West with religious fervour. Everyone must accept liberal democracy or have their countries destabilized, civil war fomented or at the very least economic sanction and vilification by the media.

26. We are all for human rights and for democracy. But human rights and freedom must begin with the right to be free from hunger and disease, malnutrition and illiteracy. Human rights as defined by the West is meaningless if there is no roof over our heads, no food on our tables and no schools for our children. The Western liberals must understand that we cannot practise their brand of democracy and human rights overnight. Nor do we want a carbon copy in their own image. The democratic system requires an advanced degree of sophistication among the masses practising it. The people must know the limits of freedom if anarchy is to be avoided. Only a vague boundary separates the exercise of freedom and the excesses of anarchy.

27. Countries which for thousands of years had only known authoritarian rule cannot become democratic overnight. Sudden freedom will result in disruptions, which in turn will retard the progress towards a more liberal and open society. The liberal democrats of the west should cease trying to force the pace. They should let the people concerned work things out for themselves.

28. Unfortunately instigations by the liberal democrats of the west have already resulted in bloodshed and retardation of the progress of some countries. The problem is exacerbated by the attempts to apply sanctions after the foreign inspired disturbances are put down.

29. The peoples in the countries undergoing change should exercise restraint. Demanding too much too soon is counter productive. The western liberals should be ignored. With patience and judicious pressure the changes will take place. Do not be goaded into wild demonstrations which can only attract repression and delay the very change you yearn for.

Mr. Chairman,

30. Many of the world's problems are still with us and among them is the despicable apartheid system of South Africa. The efforts to eliminate the hideous system and bring about majority rule in South Africa must be redoubled. A major socialist country who has always condemned apartheid would now appear to be soft peddling the need to intensify the struggle. Negotiations are being attempted when everyone knows that apartheid has to be eliminated and in no way can it be reformed. The blacks of South Africa cannot afford even the slightest slackening of world-wide support for their cause. The white regime of South Africa must be ostracised and condemned. Sanctions must be more effectively applied.

31. We already see some results from sanctions. The white regime is beginning to make overtures, although some of the noises emanating from them are hypocritical. In Namibia, the South African regime have been forced to be more accommodating. We have to sustain the pressure if we are going to get anywhere with this throwback of the racist past. Indeed, we have to increase the pressure for the process needs to be hastened. Our black brothers in South Africa have suffered long enough.

Mr. Chairman,

32. The Palestinian problem is another example where the Movement must insist that the international community particularly the major powers own up to their responsibilities and commitments. Israel's policy in Palestinian and other Arab territories must continue to be universally condemned. The Intifada has exposed the true character of the Israelis. They are no better than their former oppressors. Yet the PLO has been courageous enough to accept reality and the need for a comprehensive political settlement. The friends of Israel must now force it to respond.

33. As regards Cambodia the conflict now has an international framework. Clearly the Cambodian factions must be mindful of their responsibilities. There must be a sharing of powers under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk. The universally condemned practices of the past must no longer threaten Cambodia nor can there be foreign armies transgressing Cambodian sovereignty.

34. As for Afghanistan, it is time that the unrepresentative Government steps down and the fratricidal fighting give way to a Government by consensus. The people of Afghanistan deserve this for their courage and unprecedented fortitude.

Mr. Chairman,

35. Malaysia has always taken a strong and consistent stand against drug traffickers. Now that drug barons are not only able to corrupt and to indulge in violence but also to

declare war on a nation, we hope that the seriousness of the drug menace to a nation's independence and well-being will be better appreciated. The war on drugs is far from being over. We will see more tragedies before the world wakes up to the need for a truly all out effort.

Mr. Chairman,

36. In the meantime we have to ensure that the revitalisation of the UN is completed. There can be no doubt that but for the efforts of the UN we would not see the more peaceful world that we are seeing today. The Iran-Iraq war, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the South African recalcitrance on Namibia, the disturbances in several African Central American countries and the problems in Asia would not be resolved or reduced but for the UN.

37. We have a duty to strengthen the UN as the sole instrument for establishing a more equitable and just world society. We must not allow exclusive organisations to take over. We owe it to ourselves and to the rest of the world to sustain and support the UN and its work.

Mr. Chairman,

38. Finally we must ensure that the Non-Aligned Movement remains relevant. The East and the West may patch up their differences. They may cease trying to drag us into their conflicts. But there is no guarantee that we are going to get a fair deal from them either separately or together. The signs are not yet propitious for a fairer deal from the North. Released from their preoccupation with each other's threat, each will have more time to cast baleful eyes on us.

39. It is imperative therefore that we stay together, that we present a united front, that we continue to strive for a more just and equitable world. We must be free to choose our own way of managing our internal affairs without outside interference. We must not allow ourselves to be harassed by crusading movements which have now taken over where their Governments have become unacceptable. No one should have a monopoly on refining the definition of rights and wrongs. Free people must be free to refine and redefine basic values themselves. Unless the deviation from basic values is flagrant, they should not be interfered with. As much as human freedom must be upheld, so must national freedom be upheld. Internal democracy without international democracy means imperialism will continue to plague this world.