

NON-ALIGNMENT — IS IT ANTI-AMERICAN?

(Paul Gregorios)

Non-alignment as a concept is often misunderstood, mainly in two ways: as an attitude of neutrality towards big power conflict, or as equidistance from the Soviet Union and the U.S.A.

Neutrality means non-involvement. The non-aligned nations cannot be neutral or non-involved in the power conflicts that affect the human race. Two-thirds of the world's people live in the 130 non-aligned countries. Power conflicts between major powers directly affect their destiny; how can they afford to be neutral or uninvolved? The non-aligned nations are committed only to make their own decisions, on the basis of justice and in the interests of peace and progress for the human race. They give no prior undertaking to be aligned with the policies of one major power bloc or another. Even among the members of the non-aligned group, there is no prior commitment to support the policies of each other in all matters. Each nation retains the freedom to judge any conflict anywhere, whether it be between major powers, between a major power and one of its own members, or between two members of the non-aligned group of nations.

Equally mis-leading is the concept of equidistance. There is no commitment in the non-aligned movement to view the two major powers—the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.—on the same level. The concept that both major powers are imperialist cannot stand examination. The U.S.A. is committed by its present policy to world exploitation and military and economic domination of the world. It makes open and public statements about defending by military force its interests in the Middle East and in Latin America, Asia and Africa. To this policy the non-aligned nations have to be resolutely opposed. The U.S.A. has a record of seeking to suppress the progressive forces in Cuba and Chile, in Iran and Palestine, in Afghanistan and Vietnam, to mention only a few of the better known instances of direct or indirect U.S. intervention. The U.S.A. supports reactionary regimes in Chile, south Africa, Kampuchea and Israel. In the U.N., it has consistently used its power and influence to obstruct all progressive moves.

It is in this context that the accusation against the non-aligned movement to be biased against the U.S.A. has to be examined. There is no prior commitment on the part of the non-aligned nations to be anti-American. On the contrary when the actions of U.S.A. are in support of the forces of freedom, justice and dignity for all, the U.S.A. can expect full support from the non-aligned countries.

On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. and the Socialist Countries have a different record. They have consistently supported all movements for liberation and de-colonialisation in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They have actively assisted the liberation movement in Southern Africa and supported the movement of the Palestinian people for self-determination and a homeland of their own. They have consistently opposed Israel's illegal occupation of Arab-territory and South Africa's illegal regime in Namibia. They have helped Cuba

to resist the mighty power of the U.S.A in the latter's attempts to subvert the Cuban Revolution and to make Cuba subservient to American interests. They have supported Vietnam in its opposition, first to French Colonialism, then to American illegal aggression, and more recently to ~~be~~ the outrageous Chinese attack on a struggling socialist country just beginning its recovery from the ravages of brutal American aggression.

In such a situation, how can anyone expect the non-aligned nations to maintain a position of equidistance from the U.S.A.. and from the U.S.S.R ? Non-alignment is not neutrality. Non-alignment is not equidistance from the major powers. Non-alignment is commitment only to fight anti-human forces wherever they appear- fascism, imperialism, hegemonism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, apartheid, ~~zinn~~ zionism, oppression and exploitation. Non-alignment can be equidistant from two nations only when both nations are equally guilty or equally innocent.

The super-power ideology, propagated by reactionary circles in the western world and China, seeks to subvert the principled commitment of the non-aligned nations. It tells us that we must be equally opposed to U.S.A. and U.S.S.R irrespective of the policies and action of the two nations. Too many two-third world intellectuals are brainwashed by the super-power ideology and insist on treating the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. alike. It is the responsibility of all clear thinking people everywhere to expose the super-power ideology as a new anti-communist play, calculated to confuse and mislead.

Both U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R are powerful. But ~~is~~ it is not against their power that the non-aligned nations contend. What matters is the way power is used. When power is used in support of anti-human forces, the non-aligned will condemn such use of power, and resist it with at least moral force.

When the policies and actions of the U.S.A. become more pro-human and supportive of progressive forces, the non-aligned movement will also become pro-American. It is up to the people of the U.S.A. to see that this happens.