

NON-ALIGNMENT IN THE 1970's

Julius K.Nyerere
United Republic of Tanzania

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, let me welcome all our guests to Tanzania. We are very happy to have you with us for this important Preparatory Meeting of the Non-Aligned Conference, and I speak on behalf of everyone in Tanzania when I express our good wishes for the success of your work.

You have a great deal to do. Obviously, the first responsibility of the Preparatory Conference is to fix the place and date of the Summit Conference, and to make other procedural arrangements for such a meeting. Yet I do not believe that any Government would have sent such high-powered delegations to this gathering if that was all it had to do. Indeed, a meeting would not have been necessary just to fix a date and place; these things could have been arranged through diplomatic channels—with a considerable saving of time and expense!

For the fact is that the Summit Conference will be the more successful the greater the amount of ground which has been cleared beforehand. If this Preparatory Conference can spell out areas of unanimous agreement, the later meeting will not have to spend time on them. And on other issues discussion can illuminate the problems involved, so that our different governments can give further consideration to these questions before the Heads of Government meeting. Then we are likely to make real progress at the Summit.

This preparation is important because the next Non-Aligned Conference has a more difficult task than either of those which have preceded it. Our first Conference in 1961 was held when the world was still divided into two fairly clear and opposing power blocs. Therefore, just by the fact of meeting and asserting their independence of either bloc, the member States of that Conference were taking an important political action. They were announcing that a refusal to become an ally of either side was not a temporary aberration of a few individual states; it was an important new international development which the Big Powers could not ignore. The Conference was saying, in fact, that a Third Force existed in the world—a group of sovereign states which insisted upon making their own judgements on world issues in accordance with their own aspirations, needs, and circumstances. The Conference members did not claim to have great armed forces, and their meeting did not mark a change in the military "balance of power". But the Conference declared the existence of boundaries to the exercise of that military power. Its members made clear that they were not going to be willing participants in the Cold War struggle. The dangerous

game of threat and counter-threat, which was being played between the two Big Powers and their "allies" or "satellites", no longer involved every nation of the world.

The 1964 Conference was a re-assertion of that same fact, made necessary by a growth in the number of Independent States and some changes within the two blocs. It enabled a discussion of the changing problems as the non-aligned States were experiencing them; and it provided a forum through which we could reiterate our own quite independent view of world affairs.

Since that time considerable further changes have taken place within, and between, the two major power blocs. They are no longer so monolithic; both the USA and the USSR have had the— for them—unpleasant experience of some of their "reliable allies" becoming less reliable! And both have, at different times, reacted with force, or by intrigue and subversion, against other members of their group. Thus, inside the power blocs there is obviously a restless movement of peoples struggling to express their own desire for peace and freedom—and indeed for a little bit of non-alignment!

Further, the two great Powers have come together for joint action on certain issues, and developments inside the People's Republic of China have made it impossible to continue to deny that country its status as an independent world power in its own right. The Cold War has thus become less simple; the so-called "Iron Curtain" has become less solid, and whether a "Bamboo Curtain" exists or does not exist, the People's Republic of China does exist. The "Power Game" has become three-sided, and those wishing to stand outside it have further complications to contend with.

These developments have not made non-alignment an out-dated concept. For it is not, and never has been, a matter of neutrality—of treading a delicate tight-rope between contending forces. Non-alignment is a policy of involvement in world affairs. It is not that we have no views, or that we wish to be available as mediators and arbitrators if the opportunity occurs. Such a role can be an honourable one; but it is not the major role of non-aligned States. Our role arises from the fact that we have very definite international policies of our own, but ones which are separate from, and independent of, those of either of the power blocs.

By non-alignment we are saying to the Big Powers that we also belong to this planet. We are asserting the right of small, or militarily weaker, nations to determine their own policies in their own interests, and to have an influence on world affairs which accords with the right of all peoples to live on earth as human beings

equal with other human beings. And we are asserting the right of all peoples to freedom and self-determination; therefore expressing an outright opposition to colonialism and international domination of one people by another.

This non-aligned role has still to be defended. Our right to it is accepted in theory now, but its practice remains difficult and dangerous for us individually—though the dangers are not now necessarily those of military invasion. For even while the power blocs have become a little less monolithic, the big states remain big states. And they clearly retain the urge to determine the policies of others in their own interests. In recent years we have seen plenty of evidence of this urge to dominate. Indeed, barely a month goes by without further evidence of externally organized or supported coups d'état, and sectarian rebellions, or of economic blackmail.

But it is no longer enough for non-aligned states to meet and complain to each other and to the world about international bullying. Everyone now knows that this goes on. And we have already declared our intention of standing up to such behaviour, and of refusing to become permanent allies of any big Power. Also, we have declared our opposition to colonialism until it has become a series of hackneyed clichés.

Our non-alignment exists. It has already had, and it still has, a tremendous importance in the world. It has been a factor in the restlessness of peoples in satellite states; it has been a factor in smudging the edges of the Cold War; it has been a factor in reducing the imminence of violent confrontation between the Great Powers. And it has prevented the division of the whole world into two—or even three—powerful and bitterly hostile groups.

All that we have already achieved. Simply to meet and to repeat our goals and intentions is therefore meaningless. Worse, it would imply that we have doubts about ourselves, and our ability to continue along the path we have chosen. For a big man does not keep shouting that he is big; a clever man does not keep shouting that he is clever. It is the small and stupid who constantly reiterate their claims to size and intelligence, hoping to convince themselves if no one else—and, of course, earning derision in the process.

The next Non-Alignment Conference, therefore, will achieve less than nothing simply by its assembly. This time the Conference has to lead to a development of non-alignment; it has to lead to action which will help non-aligned states to protect their non-alignment. And it has to do this in the context of the world as it exists in the 1970s.

Yet how can our Conference achieve this? The member countries have adopted different ideologies, and pursue different internal policies. We even differ in our foreign policies—and sometimes quarrel among ourselves! Only on opposition to colonialism and racialism do we all agree, yet even on that issue we differ on the tactics which should be pursued. In other words, we are not ourselves a "bloc". And if we tried to become one we would split, and split, and split again.

For non-alignment says nothing about Socialism, or Capitalism, or Communism, or any other economic and social philosophy. It is simply a statement by a particular country that it will determine its policies for itself according to its own judgement about its needs and the merits of a case. It is thus a refusal to be party to any permanent diplomatic or military identification with the Great Powers; it is a refusal to take part in any alliances or to allow any military bases by the Great Powers of the world.

And the fact is that the non-aligned nations differ in almost every conceivable way as regards the circumstances they have to deal with. Some of us have to live with a powerful neighbour; some of us have to live next door to a nation dominated by a Great Power; some of us live in places where none of the big nations have yet shown any interest in pushing us around—or in our economic development either! Some of us border colonial states where freedom fighters are operating; some of us have mineral resources which depend on one or other of the big nations for their development and marketing; and so on. Indeed, all that the non-aligned nations have in common is their non-alignment; that is, their existence as weak nations, trying to maintain their independence, and use it for their own benefit in a world dominated politically, economically, and militarily, by a few Big Powers.

Let us be honest with ourselves. We can do virtually nothing about these facts of geography and history in military terms. We cannot fight the giants on equal terms. And to talk of alliances between us for mutual defence in modern terms, is to talk of dreams. That is a brutal fact, and it is as well to accept it. Even together we do not have the capacity to mount the kind of defence system which could make an attack on one of us be similar in its nature to an attack by one developed country on another. And in any case, we are scattered over different continents and separated from each other by states which have chosen a different path from non-alignment. Nor do we have that degree of mutual knowledge, understanding and political agreement which are essential to realistic combined defence arrangements.

It is a fact of our life that if any of the big powers attacks us with military force, our only hope is to wage a prolonged guerilla warfare; and as yet very few of us would be very proficient in waging

such a war. A neighbouring non-aligned state is unlikely to be able to give us effective help without endangering its own existence,—although again, it may be able to support our guerilla activities. If, on the other hand, we asked an opposing Big Power to come to our aid, we are taking another risk. For occasionally they may help and then go away again, but very often such a request would really mean that we were simply choosing our masters; our real independence would have been surrendered in exchange for the assistance against other aggressors. And even the United Nations would be unable to help us if any of the Big Powers is involved and uses its veto.

This is the military position which has always existed for non-aligned states. We knew it when we chose this policy. For it is a function of our size and our power, and has nothing to do with non-alignment. Indeed, it is a position which applies just as much to small powers which have allied themselves to large powers. Our liability to military invasion is not increased by non-alignment; if anything, the experience of the 1960s would suggest that small aligned nations have developed a healthy envy for the non-aligned nations! I would add, incidentally, that there is need among the non-aligned nations for sympathy and understanding towards the small aligned states.

This does not mean that none of us faces, or may face, a threat of military attack from a big power. It simply means that we have to deal with such a possibility in the context of our real situation. And the basic reality of that situation—the thing which is itself the cause of our military circumstances—is our economic weakness. Further, the truth is that this economic weakness very often enables the Big Powers to impose their will without using their military strength at all. With much less difficulty to themselves—and less danger of getting themselves bogged down in endless anti-guerilla activities—they can use their economic strength for the same purposes of reducing our independence of action.

The real and urgent threat to the independence of almost all the non-aligned states thus comes not from the military, but from the economic power of the big States. It is poverty which constitutes our greatest danger, and to a greater or lesser extent we are all poor. We are certainly all trying to develop. We are all short of capital, and many of us are short also of the expertise which is just as vital to development. It is in these facts that lies the real threat to our independence. For in seeking to overcome our poverty we each inevitably run the risk of being sucked into the orbit of one or other of the Great Powers.

Each of our States needs to look outside for some capital investment. We try to lay down conditions so that it will not bankrupt us, nor jeopardise our future independence. But we also have to

are conditions about the rates of interest, sometimes about marketing, sometimes about exclusive purchase from, or sale to, the "donor" country, or sometimes they involve receiving goods which we can sell in order to raise development money. These are all conditions which we have to consider; we accept them or reject them according to their nature and our general circumstances. If we accept them we do so knowing that we reduced our field of economic choice—our economic independence of action. That is a price we have agreed to pay—it is a deliberate and economic decision.

But then we sometimes find that the aid, or the loan, or the personnel, is dependent on other factors which we had not agreed to. We are told they will be taken away if we make a particular political decision, which the donor does not like. Alternatively, it happens that when we are seeking support for economic projects, we find ourselves being encouraged to act in a certain manner because aid will be forthcoming if we do so. At every point, in other words, we find our real freedom to make economic, social, and political choices is being jeopardised by our need for economic development.

It is pointless to answer that we can refuse to sell our freedom in this manner. We all say that our nations and our policies are not for sale. And we do stand up against the most open and blatant attempts to intimidate us with economic weapons. Many of the nations at this Conference can give examples of aid being withdrawn as a result of their political decisions. But the fact is that every one of us agrees to little compromises here and there when we are conducting supposedly economic negotiations.

We have no alternative. The world supply of disinterested altruists and unconditional aid is very small indeed. And however self-reliant we try to be in our economies and our development, we are up against the fact that progress out of poverty has everywhere, throughout history, required some outside injection of capital or expertise. Even the largest states of the world have used outside resources; small ones have to use more. It becomes a question of how far we will go, and what kind of compromises we will make. We cannot refuse to make any. For our own people will refuse to accept poverty without hope of change. We must have economic development or we have no political stability; and without political stability we have no political independence either, but become playthings of any other nation which desires to intervene in our affairs.

The fact is that our political independence depends upon the degree of our economic independence, as well as the nature of our economic development depending upon our political independence.

These things are inter-linked in the modern world. And because of that inter-dependence, our economic relationships with one another, and individually with the Great Powers of the world, are matters with which the Non-Aligned Conference must be concerned.

For it is through these questions of trade, and of aid, that our action in world affairs can be influenced, if not controlled. A nation which sells 90 per cent of its exports to one foreign power—to take an extreme example—has to think many times before taking action which might provoke that purchaser to declare an economic boycott of its goods. A nation which gets even 50 per cent of its economic assistance from one allied group of powers has to consider very carefully the effects on its growth of a decision which that alliance will consider unfriendly.

Yet I repeat; we cannot respond to these facts by denouncing all aid, all foreign investment, and all technical assistance. In so far as these are essential to our development, and cannot be replaced by a re-allocation of our internal resources, we each have to seek for them, and accept them, on the best terms we can get. All that any of us can do, individually, is to try and avoid becoming dependent on any single Big Power, for our total economic advance—and even this is not always possible. It is in these facts that lies the real threat to freedom, and to non-alignment.

But in economic matters we non-aligned states, as a group, can help ourselves and can reduce the danger to any one of us. Economics is not the same as defence. We can help to bolster our freedom from economic domination by working together, by co-operating for our mutual benefit.

There are many ways in which this can be done, and I do not believe we have yet given to these possibilities a fraction of the attention that they deserve. We even find ourselves being pushed into joint undertakings by outside forces—by those to whom we go for capital. Very often the most economical use of money and skilled manpower—the very things we are desperately short of—requires joint projects by two, three, or four under-developed states—whether these are non-aligned or otherwise. Often the economies of scale make it absurd to build separate manufacturing units for a single domestic market in each of neighbouring states; together they could build one factory which would serve them all at much lower cost. Yet instead of seeing these things for ourselves, and taking the initiative of working out joint schemes which will meet all our needs, we wait for some big capitalist to come along and take the initiative. Consequently we lose at least part of the advantage of the joint action. Instead of going together as a united

of 1949, to negotiate for the capital and the expertise, we allow others to come and deal with us separately. We even allow them to act as 'go-between' when sorting out the many problems involved in our international economic co-operation.

Really, is it not absurd that small, weak, and non-aligned nations should allow representatives of the Big Powers to make our joint action a condition of their help? If they make the proposals, and seek the support of each of us, the joint project may still be viable and beneficial to us all. But it is likely, to say the least, that if we have taken the initiative ourselves and worked out the proposals ourselves, we shall be able to obtain outside financial or manpower support on a rather better basis. Our real freedom will be greater at the end because we have worked together voluntarily. For together we are an attractive proposition for financialists and can get better economic terms. And together we can less easily be intimidated by political conditions, or blackmailed at a later stage.

There are very many things in which the non-aligned powers can work together for their mutual strengthening. Indeed, there is usually no reason why non-aligned powers should not also co-operate with other undeveloped nations which have chosen a different policy, because their weakness is the same as ours. Neighbours can join together for the development and extension of electric power. Nations selling a particular primary commodity—or ones which are to a degree interchangeable—can organize joint sales operations on a co-operative basis instead of competing in the world market. Air lines, shipping lines, international road transport undertakings, can be jointly owned and run. Research into agricultural, industrial, and even health problems in tropical countries, could be organized jointly. And in all these matters the initiative can be taken by us; then, as a united group, we can seek outside support if this is still needed.

Some of the nations represented here have begun to organize this kind of co-operation between themselves. But we are not yet taking it seriously enough. It must be extended. And it need not be confined to co-operation between neighbours, although for certain projects geographical propinquity is obviously essential. Indeed, the past six years have seen a considerable expansion of this kind of joint negotiation, with the weaker nations acting together on one side and the developed nations on the other. The most obvious example of this is seen in UNCTAD, but there are many others.

We must go further. We assume too easily that we have nothing to sell each other, and nothing to teach each other. When one of our nations needs to import something—whether it is consumer goods or capital goods—do we always examine first what other undeveloped or small nations have to offer? Or do we go automati-

cally to the traditional suppliers or to other old industrial nations? If the lack of credit availability is a problem, do we ever investigate the possibility of a barter arrangement between ourselves? And when we are trying to expand a new sector of our economy, do we always have to go to the developed nations for training and expertise? Is it not a fact that each of our nations has gained experience in some field or other which the rest of us could learn from?

I believe it is essential that our next Non-Aligned Conference should consider the question of how we can help to strengthen non-alignment by economic co-operation. This is the field in which we can really effect changes in our vulnerability to outside pressure. It is one which we can do something about if we work together.

Of course, economic co-operation is not easy. All of us have now had sufficient experience to realize its difficulties. We must face up to them—they will not disappear as a result of grand words in conference resolutions.

In particular we have to acknowledge that within the underdeveloped world there are the poor, the not so poor, and the very poor. There are nations which have begun to make a little progress, and those which still flounder in the morass for want of a stick to hold on to. And each of our nation states has to deal with its own problems—each Government has to cope with the urgent needs of its own people, even when it is aware that a particular action might have adverse effects on its often poorer neighbour. Do these facts of nationalism, and of degrees of poverty, mean that we really cannot work together at all?

Does the clever, or the lucky, worker do better as a member of a Trade Union, or does he benefit personally by trying to ingratiate himself with his employer? What security has he individually, and what happens to his human dignity when he stands alone? Do the unskilled and the semi-skilled workers benefit more by fighting each other for the division of the wages the employer is offering, or by combining in opposition to that employer? For really, these are the real analogies of our position.

Some of us are lucky—for geographical or historical reasons; we have minerals or some other asset which the developed nations are prepared to pay for at the present time. Some of us have already developed the simplest industries—such as textiles—and fight to prevent others getting these things for themselves. Yet our luck, or our development, is only comparative to those even worse off than ourselves. And it can disappear for reasons quite outside our control—new technological developments in the rich nations, or new mineral discoveries elsewhere.

When we really consider the modern world, and its division between the haves and the have-nots, not one member of this Conference is anything but a pauper. And like paupers, we shall really win a decent and secure livelihood, and maintain our dignity and independence, only if we act together.

The fundamental question we have to answer, therefore, is whether we recognize and accept that the progress of each member of the Non-Aligned Conference depends on the progress of all. For this is the truth which we reject at our peril.

On many occasions we have reminded the wealthy nations that their prosperity is bound up with our becoming effective markets for their goods. We have pointed to the lesson of history—that the bankruptcy of the poor nations leads inevitably to economic disaster for the rich. Recent world economic statistics support our case by showing that trade increases fastest among the wealthy; that both sides benefit when economic relations are conducted on the basis of real equality. The developed nations always acknowledge these truths; they bow their heads reverently when they cannot simply shrug and pass on. But they do not make any fundamental change in their economic attitudes towards the rest of us. Are we, within our own group, to act in a similar fashion? Or will we recognize our economic and political need of each other? If we are to do this, the less poor among us have to act in a manner which eases the development of the more poor, and thus allows us all to maintain a solid and united front. And the more poor have to acknowledge that these others cannot stand still in their development, but that we have to co-operate for mutual benefit, with give and take on both sides.

It is therefore not going to be easy for us all to work together and stay together. Working together will mean that each one of us may sometimes have to accept something slightly less to our advantage than we might have got—on that single occasion—by ourselves. This is the price, and the difficulty, of unity. Then, too, the Big Powers will try to prevent us from forging a real united front, and if we succeed they will constantly endeavour to break it up. They will approach us individually, offering this little concession, that little advantage. Yet if we succumb to these temptations they will continue their domination over us; they will even strengthen their control over our political freedom because they will have again demonstrated their effective power. Yet in economic unity we do have a defence for our freedom, if we have the courage to pursue it. A real determination to help each other, and to stand together on economic matters in relation to the developed and wealthy nations of the world, can lead to a new situation.

But is this possible? I said earlier that a military defence alliance between us is a dream; is talk of real and continuing economic unity any more realistic? Is this kind of "trade union loyalty" possible between poor nation states, or does our nationhood force each Government to pursue only the short-term interests of its own citizens? Will any of us be able to withstand the political bribery of some immediate short-term apparent advantage for our own people and our own economies?

The answers to those questions depend on ourselves, and our ability and willingness to defend our national independence. For independent nationhood in any real sense will become increasingly impossible for any of us unless we combine and co-operate together. Economic co-operation among ourselves is an essential part of the struggle to maintain our freedom. Without it we shall each become ever more involved in the economies—and thus in the power—of the Big States.

It is certainly true that our separate nationhood creates difficulties, as it means that each of our governments is responsible only to the people of its own State. But I believe that we can make our peoples understand that their freedom depends upon co-operation with other poor states. And we can make them understand, also, that economic strength is a greater safeguard for their freedom than such military power as would be within our capacity. For our people know from direct and personal experience that a hungry man, or a man trying to improve his standard of living, is at the mercy of those who control the food and the means of production. It is for this reason that wage-earners combine into Trade Unions in order to improve their effective power; it is for this reason that our peasants have begun to form marketing co-operatives so as to receive more for their produce. What they know, and we know, to be true for the workers and peasants of our nations, is also true for those underdeveloped nations who are struggling to be free in a world dominated by a few powerful states. We must work together, as a united group; or, one by one, we shall be forced to follow the policies determined by others.

Ladies and Gentlemen: all the member nations of the Non-Aligned Conference have recognized that it is impossible to be independent as diplomatic or military tails to a large kite. That knowledge caused us to choose non-alignment. We must now apply that same truth to economic matters. We shall never be really free while our economic weakness, and our economic aspirations, force us to our knees as supplicants or as scavengers of the world's wealth. Separately that is, and will remain, our position. We shall beg or wheedle our way towards a little development here, a little investment there—all on terms determined by others.

But together, or even in groups, we are much less weak. We have the capability to help each other in many ways, each gaining in the process. And as a combined group we can meet the wealthy nations on very different terms; for though they may not need any one of us for their own economic health, they cannot cut themselves off from all of us.

Such a change is within our power. It does not demand an economic strength which we do not have. It requires only a political consciousness, and a political will. And these depend upon our courage and the intensity of our desire for real independence.

It is this question of economic self-reliance and economic cooperation which I believe must be given special consideration at the next Non-Aligned Conference. We shall undoubtedly reiterate the truths which we have already spoken—about the need for real action against colonialism and racialism, about the need for nuclear disarmament, about the importance of supporting the United Nations, and so on. But this time our meeting must do more. It must recognize that freedom and economic backwardness are incompatible in the modern world. And it must work out a combined strategy for overcoming the poverty which now endangers the real independence of every member nation.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen: on behalf of everyone in Tanzania, I wish this Preparatory Conference great success in its deliberations.