



Written by on July 16, 2009

Non-Aligned Movement Nations Declare Opposition to Terrorism

During the second day of their two-day triennial summit at Egypt's Sharm el-Sheik resort on the Red Sea on July 16, members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) agreed to a declaration to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, while making it clear that terror should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group. (See related article on the Sharm el-Sheik summit, "Non-Aligned Movement Nations Discuss World Economy.")



The leading proponent of adopting such a declaration at the summit was India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Singh met on the sidelines of the summit with Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, who told the press that he believes his nation's relationship with India has improved, affirming that "a durable peace in South Asia is achievable."

Tensions between the two Asian nations were heightened after the attacks on Mumbai, India, by Pakistan-based militants last year. However, Gilani has promised to bring the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks to justice, and the two countries have agreed to share intelligence data on terrorists. The *New York Times* report about the meeting between the two leaders at the summit observed:

Both the length of the meeting and the fact that the two sides agreed to release a joint statement hinted at a broader progress to resolve differences between the countries. No mention was made of the thorniest of issues that divide them — the foremost being the disputed region of Kashmir — but the statement nonetheless represented a small but not insignificant breakthrough. Both countries acknowledged that terrorism was the main threat to each nation.

The NAM's anti-terrorism statement received scant coverage in the western press, with most reports about it emanating from sources in India and China. *Business Standard India* reported that the statement pledged "to strengthen NAM solidarity in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomsoever committed, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, international law and relevant international conventions."

The Xinhua News Agency — the official press agency of the Chinese government — noted that in their summit declaration, the NAM members also called for "the early finalization of the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism, strengthening the application of the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and convening a high level conference under the auspices of the United



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Nations."

The Indian newspaper also quoted from the NAM document's call for expansion of the UN Security Council: "The expeditious reform of the Security Council through its expansion and improvement of its working methods should continue to be a priority for NAM taking duly into consideration the views of all NAM members state." At the same time, however, the declaration rejected sanctions imposed on some NAM countries, calling them "unilateral" and in contradiction with international law and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

Among the members of the NAM are Myanmar (Burma), Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. The inclusion of this motley assortment of Marxist tin-pot dictatorships and officially cited "state sponsors of terrorism" in an organization purporting to combat terrorism should considerably reduce the group's credibility and the seriousness with which the rest of the world will view its documents.



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