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As the Non-Aligned Movement prepares to meet in Venezuela for its 17th Summit, the founding principles of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist group seem more relevant than ever as Western neo-colonial policies continue to affect people around the world.

NAM's first summit took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in June, 1961, kicking off a major anti-imperialist movement that sought to end colonialism and fight against Western domination.

Its establishment came at a time when the colonial system was in decline and independence struggles raged across Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world.

As 120 delegations from member states prepare to meet in Margarita Island, teleSUR looks at five important facts about NAM and its history of supporting independence struggles and revolutions.

1. At Its Core NAM Is Anti-Imperialist

The founding members of the movement and its lasting leaders were some of the 19 head of states of newly decolonized nations who had come together in Bandung in 1955 in search of unity against imperialism and colonialism while also working with revolutionary leaders in other countries to help them achieve their own independence and liberation from Western colonizers.

Those leader were Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia.

The principles that would govern relations among large and small nations, known as the "Ten Principles of Bandung," were proclaimed at that Conference. Similar principles were adopted later as the main goals and objectives of the policy of non-alignment.

2. Cuba Was NAM's Only Founding Member from Latin America

While the conference in Bandung is seen as the cornerstone for the founding of the movement, the official announcement of NAM came in 1961 in Belgrade when 25 countries attended the Non-Aligned Movement's First Summit.

Cuba was the only country from Latin America that attended the conference, with all the other countries being either from Africa or Asia. The Cuban revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro had just ousted the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959.

The first Summit was attended by: Afghanistan, Algeria, Yemen, Myanmar, Cambodia, Srilanka, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yugoslavia.

Cuba held the presidency of NAM twice since its founding once in 1979 and again in 2006.

3. NAM Is a Longtime Supporter of Self-Determination for Puerto Rico

Since its founding, NAM has expressed support for the independence of Puerto Rico from the United States. Recently, the U.N.'s Special Committee on Decolonization approved a draft resolution calling on the U.S. to expedite a process that "would allow the people of Puerto Rico to exercise fully their right to self-determination and independence."

At the committee's meeting Iran's representative, speaking for the Non-Aligned Movement, reaffirmed the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence on the basis of the U.N.'s long-standing laws and regulations.

4. NAM Was the 1st International Body to Support the Struggle Against Apartheid South Africa

NAM was the leading international voice against the apartheid regime in South Africa as it took political and economic actions against the South African government and economically assisted African countries supporting the anti-apartheid movement who faced sanctions over their support.

The support was strongly felt during the 1986 NAM Summit in Zimbabwe, which put the struggle to end apartheid at the center of its agenda.

"We must be clear that the front-line states (Angola, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe) and others will suffer some damage to their economy and face harsh retaliations from Pretoria," Rajiv Gandhi, then-Indian prime minister and outgoing president of NAM, said ahead of the meeting according to a UPI report.

Gandhi also said that NAM countries should not wait for a "concerted international action" before imposing sanctions on South Africa's apartheid regime.

5. NAM Has Always Supported the Self-Determination of Western Sahara

Since 1973, NAM has supported the Western Sahara's right to self-determination before the United Nations.

In an Algiers meeting of NAM foreign ministers in 2014, the movement issued a declaration stressing its support for the process of negotiations on the regional dispute over the Western Sahara under the support of the U.N. in order to achieve a "mutually acceptable political solution."