

AUSTRALIAN Broadcasting Corporation

this is lionel martin in Havana - While the summit meeting was going on in Moscow, another disarmament meeting, that of the non-aligned nations was going on in Havan. Here is the story*

Top diplomatic officials from eight four countries of Asia, Africa nad Latin America were here in Havana for the Ministerial-Level meeting on disarmament of the non-aligned nations movement.

The countries, mostly developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, wanted the world to know that they too have a stake in disarmament. As one Asian delegates told me*: the superpowers should not think that disarmament is private domain.

One of the major documents approvaed by the non-aligned ministers praised the U.S-Soviet agreement on short and medium range missiles. But it said that disarmament must go must further and should lead to the destruction of most of the nuclear missiles in the world by the year 2000.

But the non-aligned nations showed that they have their own slant on disarmament. That slant has to do with the belief of most non-aligned nations that the huge amounts of money and resources used for military purposes could be better used to fight underdevelopment, hunger, illiteracy and desease in the world.

That was a theme heard over and over again during the non-aligned nations conference here in Havana.

Another recurring theme was that the developing nations are not in a position to pay their external debt. Basing themselves on statistical evidence, some delegates tried to show that the big, industrial powers have grown richer and richer at the expense of the poor nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

If disarmament was achieved and expenditures for defence decreased, delegates said, than the big powers would be in a much better position to help the poor nations pull themselves up.

When meeting are held in Havana, there is usually an expectation that they will get a chance to listen to the great spell-binder, President Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Dr. Castro sat through the three days of the disarmament conference but didn't say a word. -- that is -- not during the session.

But he did meet with the top non-aligned delegates outside the official agenda. For two and a half hours, the 61 year old, grey bearded leader, told the delegates about the Cuban involvement in Angola..

He said Cuban troops would stay in Angola as long as Angola wanted them too. He said the main threat to Angola comes from South Africa.

Using maps, Dr. Castro showed had Cuba and Angolan forces had turned back the attacks of South African forces in the southern most part of Angola. He said that Cuba's best Mig 23 fighter pilots were flying operations and that Cuba now had superiority in the air over southern angola.

With Cuban-Angolan forces now operating near the Namibian

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On the Ministerial Level
Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries
on Disarmament in 1988

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... argentinian (computer systems analyst)
+from the beginning i wanted the plane to go to nicaragua or
cuba because i knew there wouldn't be any problem there and if the
hijackers didn't have problems we wouldn't either.+

frank hendel -pilot of avensa beeing 727 -- +when we
were approaching cuba we contacted the control tower and
comandante 10 told them that a puerto rican revolutionary group
had taken over the plane and the cubans gave it authority to land.+

-----paula padron (stewardess on avensa flight)--when i opened
the rear door at instruction of comandante 10, armed cuban security
men were there. comandante 10 told them they would have to wait
until another plane carrying their chief, comandante 9,
landed. when it did land, they handed over their weapons and
granadss to the cubans and were taken into custody very
peacefully.+

-- on night of dec 8 cuban government issued a statment that said
hijackers were in custody and would be tried +by competent
tribunals+ the statement said that the hijackers had never planned
to go to cuba but wwere forced to do so because of the

...-in past hijackers had spent terms in cuban jails or
halfway houses in case of many of the black hijackers during the
sixties. however, last two groups of hijackers of u.s. passenger
planes were extradited to u.s. among cubans one could here
statements upon larning of the three venezuelan hijacked planes like
+its a cia provocation to involve cuba and nicaragua+

--the hijackers handed out political propaganda and armbands
which said: +el salvador vencera (el salvador will win) with
the insignia of the farabundo martin front for national libearation
(fmnl) of el salvador. (that's marti - not martin above)..the
cuban newspaper reported that the fmnl had categorically denied it
had anything to do with the hijackings.

- ----general criticism of attitude of governments of colombia,
el salvador, guatemala and honduras for treatment of hijacked planes.

---frank hendel -avensa pilot) +colombia was bad but,
guatemal was even worse. colombians used delaying tactics and were
there for eleven hours. it was hot, the passengers were nervous
and the hiajcers were tense. they did not even send us water and
food and they refused to fuel the plane as demanded by the hijackers.
they finally acceded but their conduct was wrong. the same thing
happened when we landed in guatemala.+

...the ... for ... panamericana (passenger aboard avensa 727) -in guatemala the hijackers got tense when 3 no fuel was provided. they were ready to explode their granades-- they had even taken out the pins (safety devices). Luckily the guatemalans finally sent out fuel.+

jose vidal - captain (pilot) of one of the aeropostal planes -- +i differe with the attitude of the colombian authorities. they used delaying tactics all the time. they refused fuel, water for the pasengers, food. it was hot and the hijakcers were getting jumpy. finally they acceeded and were took off from there almost nine and a half hours after we had landed. then in honduras, the authorities were even worse. they were intransigence, inhuman and insensitive. they told us =+we dont have fuel. the airstrip is clear. leave+

=-roger smith (british engineer in venezuela and passenger) +in elsalvador several trucks full of soldiers with automatic weapons drove out towards plane when it landed. one truck stopped on airstrip in front of plane and soldier jumped out of second truck. the hijackers order thep plane to take off. it got off barely on one engine and almost hit the army truck --a close shave+
+++the hijackers+++

---roger smith (see above) -- they wore masks or bandanas and white gloves. they developed a good relationship with most of the people on the plane expecially the younger guys. they share their cigarettes and passed around coffee.+

---giovanni perna (venezuelan)==they were disciplined and well behaved.+

elio huama (peruvian) == the conducted themselves +marvellously and with discipline.+

engineer jose cardenas (venezuelan :a passenger) +i have no complaints about their conduct but in reality they are locos who put the lives of dozens of people indanger (this was sentiment of many)+

--paula padron .stewardess (see above) --comandante 10 the head of the commando puerto riqueno had granades and at one point seemed ready to give the order to blow them up but said on intercom system later : +perphas i wouldn have done it because i see that the people are innocent and victims of circumstance+ (he told her that--not clear if he said it on intercom)

--motives+++

roger smith thinks they were mainly out for publicity for their cause +they)e) against the present v)e)elan policy of supporting the military junta in el salvador and were anti american for the same reason. they also spoke out for puerto rican independence and against the regime in haiti.+ d

--on leaving cuba, many of the passengers and crew carried off duty free cigars and cuban rum.

end end end. hope this is useful ..if want other things let me know. /cheers to bernie.

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