

GUIDELINES FOR LIFTING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

At the July sessions of the Presidency, despite a host of other events, we discussed a series of important issues. The debate over Kosovo dragged on from one session to the next. In addition to constant pressure for the state of emergency to be lifted, which partly succeeded with the lifting in July of most of the emergency measures, I considered ways of improving the situation in Kosovo generally. Kosovo was not just a problem to do with relations between the Albanians and Serbs living there. It was also the least developed region in the whole of Yugoslavia. Significant investment had been made there, but to no real effect. Economic conditions were still bad. Besides the attempts to lessen the differences between the Albanians and Serbs and establish some kind of political dialogue, I proposed to the federal Prime Minister Ante Marković, and also at a session of the Presidency, that we draw up a special programme to improve the situation in Kosovo in which we would envisage measures to boost the regional economy and solutions to certain phenomena that were truly extreme, such as the exceptional demographic growth. The rapid growth of the population was totally at odds with the region's economic performance and possibilities. I

proposed that we devise the programme together with foreign experts and invite the World Bank to take part in order to ensure political neutrality as well as professionalism, since otherwise one or other party could claim that every proposal was biased. At the July sessions we also discussed the preparations for the Non-Aligned Conference, which was rapidly approaching. I tried on the one hand to prepare myself for the technical aspects of leading such a huge summit, and on the other, to contribute some points of real substance, on the basis that if there was to be a summit then something sensible might as well come of it. I proposed a special initiative for the resolution of the global debt crisis and suggested that we take a more active involvement in resolving conflicts around the world. The chairman of the non-aligned states should play his part in such crises, especially when non-aligned countries were involved, as in the Iran-Iraq conflict. I also received a letter from the Afghan president requesting mediation in the crisis in Afghanistan. However, our foreign ministry was inflexible and rather inert and avoided such issues. In addition to my proposal that we should include standpoints relating to the protection of individual human rights in the conference documents, I suggested and together with the Slovene leadership launched a proposal for an amnesty to be granted to all political prisoners before the Non-Aligned Conference. This I proposed as early as the 12 July session of the Presidency. We discussed the matter on that occasion and subsequently, and everything met with opposition from the Serbian representatives. The end result was a partial remission that was somewhere between a regular pardon and an extraordinary one. In contrast to "isolation", these cases involved "regular" political detainees convicted by a court under the existing penal code. There were no such detainees in Slovenia. Most of them were in Kosovo.

I also convened the preparations committee for the Non-Aligned Conference, the committee specially requested from me by the previous Federal President Dizdarević. It was a very formal meeting at which, in addition to the new Presidency, those present included members of the previous Presidency, diplomats, names from past decades of the Yugoslav diplomatic corps and the Non-Aligned Movement. All I heard at the meeting were the same old clichés, and nothing by way of fresh initiatives and proposals. But then I had not been expecting much.

We frequently discussed economic trends and reforms at the Presidency sessions. I often invited Prime Minister Marković so that we could discuss how to accelerate the economic reforms and prepare a package of anti-inflationary measures. Inflation was rising steeply and becoming an increasingly serious problem. We were on the verge of hyperinflation and certainly had one of the highest inflation rates in the world. On the one hand the inflation was due to the prevailing conditions in Yugoslavia, while on the other it also hindered serious economic improvement. Although the Marković government was working quite well with various reform proposals, it seemed to me that specifically on the issue of curbing inflation Marković would need special urging to prepare an effective anti-inflationary programme. I suggested we hire international experts and institutions. At the session of 26 July we discussed so-called guidelines for the lifting of the state of emergency. This was a document governing the operation and reaction of various state bodies in the event of extraordinary contingencies, including large-scale unrest such as had occurred in Kosovo earlier that year, when the Presidency of the time had declared a state of emergency, or measures to alleviate the situation. The document laid down the kind of standard provisions that all countries should have in order to ensure the functioning of the state in times of emergency; at least, that was what officials from the defence and interior ministries assured us. The guidelines had been prepared and coordinated among the republics for quite some time and had been discussed by the previous Presidency, but it fell to the new Presidency for final adoption. I put off discussing the document several times until I ran out of ways to postpone it. I was in a quandary. I did not like the fact that under my Presidency we had to adopt an act providing for such action on the part of state bodies, including those of enforcement. Yet the functions and responsibilities of the Presidency over which I presided had to do precisely with the functioning of the bodies of defence, the police and foreign affairs. I knew that the Slovene public in particular was strongly opposed. However, at that time the state was functioning and Slovenia recognised it. The end of my term in office was still a long way off, so there was no real chance of putting off adopting the act until the end. Moreover, since I was so committed to carrying through all the points of my programme and felt that despite the resistance and inertia we were making headway

on fundamental points – on alleviating the state of emergency in Kosovo, including the lifting of internment, on further democratisation and the implementation of a European orientation – it seemed to me a pity to jeopardise that out of an unwillingness to act in all the areas I was required to as Federal President.

There was another consideration, however, which finally made up my mind what to do with the act. There already existed guidelines for operation in a state of emergency. And the existing provisions were a good deal worse than the new ones. The purpose of the new version was to make improvements. The basic difference was that all non-state bodies and sociopolitical organisations were deleted from the new document. The previous document had been passed jointly by the Federal Presidency and the Presidency of the League of Communists. It was then that I came under the most intense pressure to continue the practice of the previous Presidency, to consult with the leadership of the League of Communists, attend its sessions and invite its president to sessions of the Federal Presidency. I rejected all that. It was therefore logical that we should formalise such a situation, which represented a significant step forward from the previous system, in acts governing the functioning of the Presidency.

Predictably, I was subsequently attacked and criticised by certain political opponents in Slovenia for having signed an act governing the functioning of state bodies in a state of emergency as Federal President. The criticism was baseless. No repressive measures were introduced as a result of the act.

We gradually ended the state of emergency that had been declared in Kosovo during the term of the previous Presidency. And we did not declare a state of emergency later, when amid mutual tensions the measure could have been used or abused against particular republics. The existence of a valid, revised act then proved very important, since considerations of legality, especially in relation to the JNA, sometimes prevailed at critical moments.

TRIP TO VENICE

I had already gone ahead with the visit to Paris in clear opposition to the interests of the Serbian lobby, and bypassing foreign minister Lončar. It always seemed to me that there must be some connection here in that both had an interest in curbing my international activity. I had the impression they were exchanging information and coordinating things in the background. If I told Lončar I wanted to visit some Western European country, he would conjure a whole series of obstructions. It seemed to me that was how it would always be and that they would try to steer me towards the non-aligned countries and international contacts that were not so important and which the public was not especially interested in. I began to consider it necessary to use other avenues, including bypassing the usual channels at the foreign ministry. For example, the deputy federal prime minister, Slovene Živko Pregel was leaving for some gathering in Rome, and he and I agreed that he would pass on our interest in a meeting with Italian President Francesco Cossiga, either by his visiting us or by my going to Italy. This was some time in mid-July. The reply was swift. The Italians proposed that we meet in Venice on 8 August.

I departed on this state visit along with the tourists on a passenger ferry from Portorož. Gianni de Michelis, the Italian foreign minister, was waiting for me at the quayside in front of a guard of honour, and we set off by motor boat for the island where President Cossiga awaited us. Our conversation covered the usual topics, the situation in Yugoslavia, the possibilities for acceptance into Europe. Over lunch President Cossiga became talkative and revealed a close knowledge of affairs within Yugoslavia in the recent past. Gianni de Michelis was rather peripheral and reserved, and cut a very different figure from his later appearances. He had then only been in the job of foreign minister a short time. The meeting in its Venetian summer setting was interesting, exotic and also well publicised. I had taken another step towards Europe despite the best efforts of the Serbs and the federal diplomats. I had travelled to Portorož and on to Venice from Brioni, where I had combined some protocol engagements with a few days' holiday. Among those who came to Brioni was Cuban foreign minister Malmierca. Cuba was competing with Yugoslavia in the Non-Aligned Movement at that time. I had the feeling Malmierca too had come to see who would now be chairing the non-aligned countries. I had previously objected to Brioni, it being Tito's most notorious residence. It was a sort of symbol of his era and synonymous with grand state opulence. But since tourism there was still very limited the island was very peaceful and ideal for a rest. I now realised that a president cannot go anywhere on holiday. He is not accepted as a tourist but is always treated as a head of state. On Brioni I was shown three large protocol buildings that Tito had used but that were now vacant, although very well maintained. However, I preferred a smaller house by the sea and only went to Tito's villas to receive foreign politicians. I was offered Tito's boat, the Podgorka, which was moored at Brioni. Apparently no one had dared use it since Tito's death. But I declined the offer. I preferred to go jogging round the island. I had the general impression that Brioni was somehow stuck in Tito's era and that the people there were nostalgically dwelling in the past - a magnificent past in its way, but so remote from the realities of the present.

THE CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED STATES IN BELGRADE

The Belgrade satirist Zoran Nikolić said: “The only job harder than being President of the SFRY Presidency is to be chairman of the non-aligned countries. And I know a man who does both.” During those months the Conference of Non-Aligned States hung over me like the sword of Damocles. I was rather worried about how I would manage everything, since the conference was a huge event with massive participation. One hundred and seventy delegations were expected from 102 member states, as well as 18 guest countries and the same number of observer countries, plus international organisations, all at a very high level, together with around 70 heads of state. It was one of the biggest international conferences in history. It became clear that this was an event of great importance for a sizeable part of the world. There were more and more requests for interviews from various Third World countries, and also from the West. There was also an increasing amount of jostling for places on the Yugoslav delegation. At the same time intensive preparations were underway to complete the conference facilities and hotels. Before the conference opened I visited Belgrade, talked to the mayor and others and inspected the main buildings, and

everything was given prominent media coverage. At the Sava Centre, which was to be the main conference venue, I gave a press conference. On TV Belgrade I said that, besides attempting to solve global problems as the presiding state of the Non-Aligned Movement, we would not be able to neglect seeking solutions to our own internal problems. The situation was altogether rather unusual. Personally I would have given almost anything to be spared the duty of presiding at the conference and to devote myself to other matters. Meanwhile, others were doing their best to get as close as possible. It seemed Ante Marković was also keen to play as big a role as possible at the conference, while Lončar was also clearly expecting the same for himself, as indeed were the rest of the Presidency, which now included the Macedonian representative Vasil Tupurkovski and Bogić Bogičević of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Formally, the members of the Presidency were not included in the Yugoslav delegation, which I was due to head, but they would attend various bilateral meetings with conference participants. There also arose a major question of protocol with regard to the seating arrangements at the opening session of the conference. The Presidency wanted a special place to sit as collective head of state; Pančevski, the president of the League of Communists, wanted a seat next to the Presidency; there was the question of which prominent Yugoslav figures of the past and present to invite to the opening session; and these questions dominated the discussion at the Presidency's preparatory session. I myself insisted that the boss of the party had no business being in the state delegation and should just sit in the gallery with the others. That is indeed what happened. Right up until the last moment it was unclear to me what the mechanisms of the conference would be. Lončar avoided me, and although I received a kind of technical memo in English that was supposed to help me lead the conference proceedings, many questions were left unresolved and the programme was not fully worked out. It was clear I would have to improvise to some extent. Needless to say, that was unlikely to be easy considering that there would be 6,000 participants and a huge number of journalists from around the world, that the opening session would be beamed by satellite and that it would be utterly inconceivable for anyone at such a conference to risk getting things wrong in full view of the whole world, especially the one who was leading the whole thing, i.e. me. Yet personally I had been so

little involved with non-alignment, I had never had anything to do with it, and in terms of organisation I had not really been given any proper guidance or help. And this was the first big international conference I had been involved in.

Before the conference, besides numerous other interviews, I spoke to a group of French journalists. I spoke in French and they were so enthusiastic that Thomas Schreiber, a well-known correspondent for Radio France International, subsequently wrote a special article about it and published it in the main Belgrade newspapers (*Borba, Večernje novosti*, 2 September 1989). In it he wrote: "Mr Drnovšek struck us as a straightforward and discreet man, quite unlike the apparatchiks and other sacred cows and stars. The author of these hurriedly-penned lines has had a good deal of experience of interviews with well-known figures from many countries. Talking to the current President of Yugoslavia he had the pleasant feeling of having finally met a man of deeds rather than an ideologue. The head of state can be assured that he has at his disposal the capital of good will and sympathy so important for the fulfilment of his arduous mission, if we consider how serious the situation is." At that time such support was precious to me. It was highly unusual for a well-known foreign journalist to write such an article for the Yugoslav press. Once again the opening speech caused me problems. I did not like the draft text I received from the foreign ministry. It was too clichéd, too "non-aligned" in a way that public opinion had objected to for some time, full of phrases and devoid of real substance. I began to revise it and worked hard at it for a week or so. I changed it, polished it, omitting some things, adding others. I mentioned the global debt crisis as usual, I raised the issue of the environment, a first for the Non-Aligned Movement, and also spoke of human rights, which was even more unprecedented. I shortened the speech somewhat so that it should last no more than 20 minutes. It had already been agreed that the speeches by the heads of state would be no longer than 20 minutes each, although many of the speakers after me spoke for longer. I myself had long since developed an aversion to long speeches, both in Yugoslav politics and at various non-aligned gatherings. Yet the speeches were nevertheless shorter and the conference rather more dynamic than usual. This was confirmed by newspaper reporters from countries outside the Non-Aligned Movement. *Svenska Denslatblat* reported: "The summit has

managed to break with the ideological inertia that has prevailed until now." *Tribuna Ludu* commented: "There has been a turnaround. This summit brings greater pragmatism, dynamism and openness." Before the opening of the conference and before my opening address I received some of the foreign statesmen participating at the conference. I met with Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe and the previous chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. I found it interesting that he talked about Tito a great deal and in very positive terms. At that time almost no one in Yugoslavia spoke of Tito any longer. I think Mugabe knew that and therefore stressed his positive role all the more. The great leaders of the non-aligned states watched what was happening in Yugoslavia with interest and some surprise. Yugoslavia was one of the movement's founders, one of the big three along with Egypt and India. The trio of Tito, Nehru and Nasser were the great trinity of the Non-Aligned Movement. This was the ninth non-aligned meeting - a summit was held every three years. Now, in Yugoslavia, a totally unknown young man had emerged as Federal President, chairman of the conference of heads of state and government and chairman in the subsequent period. In its own way it was like a dream, and probably rather alarming for some. I often thought how ironic it was that I of all people, having often made critical remarks about Yugoslavia's non-aligned policy, should now wind up in such a role. No doubt similar questions crossed the minds of statesmen from the non-aligned countries such as Mugabe, Gandhi and Mubarak when they met me. Even in interviews I gave before the conference for foreign newspapers and television stations – such as Indian television – my attitude to the Non-Aligned Movement was probed through questions about European integration. I wanted to demonstrate the consistency of my programme and my attitude towards Europe, and to show that I would try to act properly as chairman of the non-aligned states and make the event as useful as possible. Certainly, my replies and my conference speech were far more down-to-earth than any previous public appearance or statement by a Yugoslav representative. I tried somehow to find a *raison d'être* for the Non-Aligned Movement, to proclaim it as a form of international coordination that could be useful, that could help solve particular international conflicts such as those between Iran and Iraq or Vietnam and Cambodia. Discussing the significance of the movement of non-aligned states – mainly

Third World countries – I tried to stress the economic aspects as much as possible. I also found a way out by bringing up the question of human rights, which was one of the points of contention within the movement, since critics from Western countries in particular often accused particular Third World countries and particular leaders of flagrant human rights abuses. I myself explicitly presented the doctrine of the defence of human rights as a fundamental value within the Non-Aligned Movement, as elsewhere. Until then even official Yugoslav policy had advocated within the movement the notion that economic rights were more important, and that fundamental human rights were being infringed in the Third World through the economic exploitation of these countries by the developed world.

I met the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. With him, too, it was my second meeting since Paris. He was pleasant and very courteous and I liked him, especially early on. I soon found out, however, that he clearly had big ambitions to become head of the non-aligned states, and even at this summit, at which he was not presiding, he wanted to play a special role. I remember that he wanted an urgent meeting with President Mubarak of Egypt and myself at midnight after the second day of the conference, but that nothing special, urgent or dramatic transpired. As my subsequent experience of large international gatherings has confirmed, it is typical at such conferences for various experts and diplomats to get together in preliminary meetings and coordinate all the resolutions that the summit then adopts, for them to argue endlessly, sometimes for whole nights, over individual words, for this still to be going on during the conference right up until the closing documents are adopted, with much tension generated in the process, and for things to be dramatised, only for the conference declaration or document to be almost universally forgotten about the moment it is approved. I slowly realised during the session itself that the main topic of discussion among the heads of state was where the next summit would be held. There was much lobbying and scheming over this issue. Tunisia, Venezuela and Ghana were candidates. The conference initially elected an Executive Committee comprising 21 heads of state. Lončar, the Yugoslav foreign minister, told me before the conference and subsequently that this committee, which I was due to head, was merely symbolic and that it would not convene at all during the conference. He was equally

unforthcoming on other matters. I had the feeling throughout that Lončar and certain other Yugoslav diplomats were deliberately trying to lead me into a situation I could not control. In a way I found this understandable. They had devoted their entire lives to the Non-Aligned Movement and had progressed step by step over the decades, but now, with the summit meeting of the non-aligned states in Yugoslavia, along came someone with no track record as if from nowhere and suddenly became head of state and chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, and what was more, he obviously did not properly appreciate this. Preparing my speech before the conference I grappled with another problem. What language should I use? I was in a quandary over whether to deliver it in Slovene, Serbo-Croat or English. As in the case of other big public appearances I gave the matter a great deal of thought before finally opting for Slovene. This was a highly sensitive issue in Yugoslavia in the circumstances of the time. My speaking Slovene came as a real shock to the Presidency and those watching in the rest of Yugoslavia. It was unprecedented for such a high-level public appearance – presiding over the Non-Aligned Conference in the middle of Belgrade and delivering the opening speech in Slovene. That morning before the start of the conference and my opening speech I rose early and went for a jog. Then I gathered my concentration. There was a throng of people around the conference entrance at the Sava Centre congress hall; most people had assembled by the time I arrived. Before the start of the conference I met and greeted numerous heads of state. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the secretary-general of the United Nations, had also come. The atmosphere was solemn and the hall was packed. There were huge numbers of television cameras and press photographers. Robert Mugabe was scheduled to speak first as outgoing chairman and then hand over to me as his successor, which the conference was to confirm. I was to be followed by UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar.

I began to speak in Slovene. There was palpable tension. Between sentences I looked around the hall and saw the members of the Yugoslav Presidency, who were seated together, begin to exchange glances and shift in their seats, while some donned earphones and listened to my speech in translation. The speech was carried by Yugoslav television and many foreign stations.

The speech was over, the opening was over, I had chaired the introductory session in English and now the working chairmen were taking turns to chair the various plenary sessions. Henceforth my main task was to hold as many bilateral meetings as possible with the heads of state who had come to Belgrade. In the course of four days I had a huge number of bilateral meetings, up to fifteen a day. By the end it was like a conveyor belt. Sometimes the whole thing seemed unreal. I spoke mainly English, but also a fair amount of French and Spanish. There was a kind of one-upmanship among the presidents, premiers and monarchs who came to Belgrade, each of whom wanted to meet the conference chairman as soon as possible. A great deal of effort therefore went into planning whom I would meet when, and there was resentment when I met such and such a leader ahead of another. Later, for example, I heard that one president had taken umbrage after we put him off until the following day. Some of the meetings were fascinating, others were a trial. I was very pleasantly surprised by some of the Arab kings and emirs. King Hussein of Jordan and Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia impressed me with their very cultivated bearing. The Kuwaiti Emir Al-Sabah was interesting, as was Indonesian President Suharto.

The first day of the conference was very strenuous. In the afternoon, after the opening and the speech earlier in the day, we gave a reception for all participants. I greeted the guests at the top of the stairs in the Palace of the Federation. A huge queue of people, presidents and delegates, had built up and I tried to say a few words to everyone. Everything was being televised. The greetings and handshakes alone lasted an hour and a half. In the evening I continued with the bilateral meetings and attended a special meeting with a group of presidents that lasted late into the night. Gadafy, the Libyan leader, was a story unto himself. He arrived in Belgrade with three aircraft and a large entourage. He had brought three camels, which he presented as a gift to the chairman – to me. Later we left them in Belgrade. Even his arrival was surrounded by complications. I was awaiting some guests at the airport. For each head of state there was to be a military ceremony, inspection of a guard of honour, the playing of the national anthem, greetings and statements, and large numbers of journalists and cameras were at the airport throughout. In view of the great number of guests we divided them up so that some of them could be welcomed by other members of the

Presidency. By the time Gadafy flew in I had left and been replaced by Presidency members Riza Sapundžija of Kosovo and Bogić Bogičević of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They called me from the airport to tell me the Libyan ambassador was distraught at my not being there to greet Gadafy, and that he begged me, implored me to come, for there was no knowing what would happen to him otherwise, since he would be finished. I said that that was not my concern and that the two Presidency members should welcome him. They phoned me back a further two or three times. Gadafy would not land unless I came to the airport. The planes circled above Surčin for a while. I was having lunch, but they phoned me and pleaded with me to come. I stubbornly refused, and it was only when they told me the Libyan ambassador was inconsolable, that he was sitting staring into space and repeating that he was finished, dead, that I decided for his sake to go. Gadafy touched down and appeared in the doorway of the plane in a white outfit and red boots. He carried an imperious air. Slowly he descended, I greeted him in English, he returned the greeting in Serbo-Croat and we conducted the welcoming ceremony. I later met him again at a bilateral meeting in parallel with the conference. He had a rather distracted manner and I did not know what to talk about with him. He answered very tersely. He took female security agents around with him, even when he entered the Palace of the Federation. Four female bodyguards wanted to accompany him to where the talks were held. Our security agents did not let them pass at first, there was pushing and shoving and one of the women even bit one of our men on the ear. Then we just left them alone. Some of them were actually quite charming, despite their uniforms. Certainly the highest-profile guests at the conference were Gadafy, Daniel Ortega, the Nicaraguan president who went everywhere in uniform, and of course Yasser Arafat, who wore his traditional dress. Interestingly, they stuck together a lot of the time. My conversations with them were in some ways the hardest. President Mubarak of Egypt and I got on very well. He urged me to visit him in Egypt, and I did so a few months later. At the time we were trying to resolve the Iran-Iraq conflict and I had met Iranian foreign minister Velayati before the conference. The talks with the Vietnamese President Vo Chi Kong, a veteran of the wars with the French and the Americans, were interesting. We spoke as two men from different generations, different civilisations and different

environments, and with different experiences. After the Non-Aligned Conference was over I had another official bilateral talk with the Vietnamese president and with Nigerian President General Babangida. On that occasion the Vietnamese president officially announced to me in my capacity as chairman of the movement of non-aligned states the withdrawal of Vietnamese units from Cambodia. The conference gave me my first meeting with Carlos Menem of Argentina, who had recently become president, and this was a very cordial encounter. I am sure my knowledge of Spanish again had something to do with it. We have met on many other occasions in the years since then. Indeed, I met many other presidents on a variety of subsequent occasions, including after the collapse of Yugoslavia, and for many I remained chairman of the non-aligned countries, even if Yugoslavia no longer existed as a presiding state for the movement. In many countries the Non-Aligned Movement was taken very seriously, much more so than by most of the Yugoslav public at the time. After the summit I, too, no longer underestimated the movement. Many serious people had taken part and we had begun to deal with problems in a much more pragmatic way. In this way it had been possible to do something useful without grand, ideological rhetoric.

On the evening of the last day, when the end of the conference was in sight, complications arose over where the next ministerial meeting would be held. Some countries demanded a meeting of the conference's Executive Committee, which I convened. The session was due to start at seven o'clock in the evening but the non-aligned leaders, as was their wont, were late in assembling, with the result that we started an hour behind schedule. One of the things that surprised me was that the non-aligned leaders were never on time for meetings; turning up an hour or so late was taken as read. Initially the Cubans came out vehemently in favour of Ghana. The head of their delegation was Fidel Castro's brother. They were joined by certain African nations, while some, such as Kuwait, Egypt and Tunisia, objected. There were some sharp exchanges of views, and I recall Yasser Arafat and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua wading into the fray.

While a conference script had been written and planned in advance for the plenum, there was no such prearranged plan for the meeting of the Executive Committee, which was totally improvised. Lončar told me

before the start that he would help me. He sat beside me and whispered for a while, but in such a way that he was more of a hindrance than a help. When it became clear some time around midnight that the whole thing was out of hand, when certain heads of state were trading hostile remarks, Lončar suddenly got up, told me he could no longer follow and that his head hurt, and left. He left me in the lurch at the most critical point of the session. But I took things into my own hands. I chaired the session much more effectively without his prompting, issued stern rebuffs to some of the participants, and proposed a solution and an end to the discussion. Most supported me and the prevailing opinion was that I had conducted and concluded the session with great success, so that the outcome was quite the reverse of what Lončar had probably been expecting.

We then carried straight on with the concluding plenum of the Summit of Non-Aligned States, which I chaired and which was attended by all the heads of state, delegates and guests. I followed the programme envisaged for the conclusion of the conference, although again I had to turn down Arafat, who submitted additional demands for a condemnation of Zionism. However, it all ended in ovations and congratulations. The interesting thing about Arafat was that we kept meeting at the conference, and that he always had something he wanted to discuss. We argued at the committee meeting and I thought that meant we were on bad terms afterwards. But at the end of the conference, when I was being congratulated on my chairmanship and was surrounded by presidents and others, someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned round and Arafat fell into my embrace, saying: "My brother, my brother." At this conference he showed in his own inimitable style what an exceptional politician he is.

Every night, whatever the hour, I went for a jog. It was usually around two in the morning, after I had finished what I had to do the day before. I jogged in the grounds of the Beli Dvor mansion. On one occasion a guard was just about to shoot me when my Slovene bodyguard Tone stopped him. The whole conference event was very stressful but was clearly making a strong media impact in Yugoslavia, although I was not thinking about that at the time. All I cared about was somehow seeing the whole thing through to the end, and fulfilling the duty that had so weighed upon me. In the meantime, towards the end of the conference, I was due to visit the Belgrade Opera

with the presidents and heads of delegation to see a celebratory performance involving the top opera singers of the time. When I arrived, a large crowd of people was waiting in front of the opera house to greet the various heads of state with very variable rounds of applause depending on who had arrived. Thus, as was later noted in the media, the enthusiastic reception I received from the Belgrade public came as a great surprise. The surprise was due to the fact that relations between Slovenia and Serbia were at that time very strained. Yet my popularity grew strongly in Serbia too, which cannot have pleased the Serbian leadership.

The summit ended at 3 a.m. on 8 September. After my closing words, Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, doyen of the Non-Aligned Movement, read a declaration of gratitude to the organisers and devoted a long paragraph of thanks and praise to me as conference chairman.