

New World Information Order

—Abdul Latif

THE intergovernment conference on cooperation in the sphere of measures, requirements and programmes related to the development of communication was held in Paris from April 14–21, 1980. The prime aim of this conference convened on UNESCO's initiative was to give the developing countries assistance in the development of mass media.

The past few decades of mankind's history were marked by the unprecedented development of communication media and of the information activity as a result of the scientific and technological revolution and of the sharp growth in the political activity of the broad masses of people in different areas of the world. But practice has proved that the vast majority of the developing states proved to be "backward" in this sphere too. According to the statistics cited at the 33rd session of the UN General Assembly the developing countries which make up 75 per cent of all mankind account for a mere

20-30 per cent of world information, whereas four western agencies—AP, UPI, Reuter and France Presse actually control 80 per cent of the world telegraph news. It has been calculated that the volume of information going from the major countries of the West to the developing countries exceeds by 100 times the volume of information going in the opposite direction.

But the main thing lies in the fact that the domination of the biggest international information organisations on the market of information produces an imperialist, colonialist effect on the content of information.

The official circles of these agencies give immense support to the "information imperialism" policy, despite all the statements about their "independence" the major information concerns, publishing houses, radio and TV companies act in unison.

The mighty onslaught of the

foreign ideological influence certainly cannot leave indifferent the political circles of the developing and non-aligned states. They see the direct threat posed by information imperialism to their struggle for true national independence and social progress. It is only natural therefore, that the developing countries speak about the inseparable links between the struggle for a new international economic order and the battle for a new order in the field of information.

Some conferences of the non-aligned countries and UNESCO and the UN General Assembly adopted resolutions and decisions aimed at establishing a more equitable order in the spread of information. For example in its main document—the final declaration—the latest conference of the non-aligned countries held in Havana in September 1979 reaffirmed the necessity to struggle for a new international order in the in-

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formation sphere.

The Havana declaration proclaimed five basic conditions for implementing a new international order in the information sphere: 1. Buildup of national mass media. 2. Affirmation of national sources of information. 3. Joint moves by mass media of the non-aligned countries on the world level. 4. Training national personnel for independent mass media. 5. Development of the technical and technological basis for mass media of the non-aligned countries.

To organise a joint rebuff to the sway of the news agencies of imperialist countries and to ensure mutual support and assistance in the necessary exchange of information within their own territories, the developing states have set up international and regional information pool. At present, three pools of this kind are functioning in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The Western information monopolies watch with anxiety the establishment and operation of the pools of the developing countries, viewing them as a threat to their domination in the information sphere.

But the struggle of the developing countries against information imperialism has one essential feature. In their effort to attain their goals the developing states can base themselves on the all-round support of other countries which stand for the elimination of the sway of the international news monopolies in the developing countries. These countries' news agencies give the developing states all-round assistance in the establishment and strengthening of their national information systems. They develop extensive cooperation with a view to organising mutually advantageous, equal and just exchange of information.

It is clear that fierce struggle is in store for them on this road, and measure of its success will depend on the coordinated actions of the developing states and their friends and allies.