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NON-ALIGNMENT MOVEMENT: IT'S RELEVANCE IN PRESENT CONTEXT

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Abstract

After the end of Second World War, the two power bloc was raising in world politics and the rivalry between the blocs was on top. The Cold War politics emerged as a bitter experience of international relations. Both blocs were mollifying the other countries of the world. It had to become stronger because of many newly independent countries. For the sake their independence many countries choose the third path to avoiding war and keeping their independence, they framed NAM (Non-alignment Movement). Most of these countries was belong to Asia and Africa and also newly independent. The US (United States) and European countries criticized NAM and revoked it as a group of opportunist countries. The NAM emerged as an international platform as a third alternative of two power blocs. The NAM was the international phenomenon of developing and third world countries. Non-alignment grew out of the cold war bitter relationship between US and USSR. Some developing and third world newly independent countries refused to post Second World War world politics through the eyes of their erstwhile colonial rulers. Indian Prime Minister Nehru was one of the paramount leaders of NAM since its inception. After the demise of British rule in India, India also refused to join any bloc in Cold War time. Nehru did not want to enter in two bloc politics due to India's national interests. He thought that Indian independence could diminish if India going toward any blocs and adopted Non-alignment as an instrument of foreign policy. He also made effort to discuss other world leader to formulate NAM as platform of collective voice of newly independence countries. The paper also aims to explain India's contribution to the Non-alignment Movement.

The first formal conference of NAM was in Bandung in 1961. Nehru and others NAM leaders uttered against new imperialism in Asia and Africa in Bandung Summit by the western countries. Some countries raise questions about the importance and relevance of NAM and produce it as a callous movement after the end of the Cold War. However the broader membership of NAM proved its relevance and importance. Most of the world countries adopted NAM membership due to its popularity and momentous agenda. While the Cold War strategic environment underestimates Non-alignment movement and the two power blocs tried to demoralize Non-alignment movement, however the Non-alignment movement was accomplishing their work with a greater momentum.

Non-alignment, both as a foreign policy perspective of most newly independence states of Asia, Africa and Latin America and as well as an international movement was a critical factor of

contemporary international relations. The Non-alignment movement was the collective voice of developing and third world countries since the first official meeting of its leaders in Belgrade in 1961. The policy of the Non-alignment has been being the issue of debate in international politics since its origin. In 1970's, its importance and relevance had questioned, with the emergence of détente in international relations. The US and European countries did not consider the NAM movement at that time. Both power blocs were also questioned the role of NAM in cold war era. The western countries always tagged NAM as a collaboration of opportunist countries. It was such a big thing that NAM survived in fracas of cold war. The study tried to remove skepticism on Non-alignment and NAM in post-Cold War arena. It is also suggesting a new way for making the movement effective and relevant in present context.

Keywords: Non-alignment; Movement; Relevance; Contemporary.

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1. Introduction

Non-alignment, both as a foreign policy perspective of most new states of Asia, Africa and Latin America and as well as an international movement is a critical factor of contemporary international relations. Though as a movement it started with the holding of the foreign policy orientation it was pioneered much earlier by India.¹ India is one of the founder member of Non-alignment Movement. Pandit J.L. Nehru along with Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia and Nasser of Egypt were three important leaders of this movement.

Though the word 'non-alignment' was first used in 1954, its substance had already adopted by Nehru in his first public statement on India's foreign policy on September 7, 1946. He had then said, "we propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power blocs of groups, aligned against one another, which have in the past to world wars"² he was first and greatest apostle of NAM. After the end of Second World War, the main problem in front of newly independent countries was how they maintain their independence not communism or anti-communism. These countries were a bloc of poor countries and they want to fight with poverty, food security. They did not want to play in the hand of any blocs. That was why Nehru favored Non-alignment policy. Nehru believed that the developing countries should be concerned on development and progress than power politics. In April-July 1945, while the constituent conference of the United Nations was in session in San Francisco, a number of representatives of Asia and Africa put forward the idea of amplification the unity of two continents and turned to Jawaharlal Nehru for the right initiative. It was in the response of this Nehru made a trip to South-East Asia in 1945. He received a hero's welcome. He made links with many Asian leaders, Aung San of Burma (Myanmar), Sukarno of Indonesia, Solomon Bandaranaike of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and others³ He also had taken many essential efforts to establish Non-alignment as an international movement.

Nehru had played a big role to mobilize developing as well as developing countries for NAM. That was the spirit of Non-alignment. Alongside many countries used NAM for setting scores with their rivals. The representatives of the 25 Asian and African countries met in Bandung

(Indonesia) on April 18, 1955 on the eve of Afro–Asian Conference in at the initiative of India, Indonesia, Burma, Sri Lanka and Pakistan discussed the common tribulations of the two continents and outlined the ways and means by which the newly liberalized nations wanting to promote economic, cultural and political co-operation and defend their right to sovereign independence.⁴ The NAM was an international organization of states taking into account themselves not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. There were two power bloc led by US and USSR in Cold War era.

The 1955 conference led by Indonesia's independence hero Sukarno galvanized global stalwarts like Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, whose famous 'Panchsheel' doctrine was incorporated in 10 principles of international peace and cooperation in declaration.⁵ The Asian-African conference declared its aims and objectives of fully commitment to establishment of international peace and stability. The Non-alignment Movement places equal emphasis on disarmament since its origin. NAM's commitment to peace predates its formal institutionalization in 1961.

Belgrade Declaration(1961) also drew the attention towards the stabilization of peace which demanded that "attempts at domination and interference in the internal development of other peoples and nations is ruled out" and it insisted that the great powers take more determined action for solving various problems by means of negotiations, displaying at the same time "the necessary constructive approach and readiness for reaching solution which will be mutually acceptable and useful for world peace."⁶ India also participated in the 1961 Belgrade conference that officially established the Nonaligned Movement, but Nehru's declining prestige limited his influence.

The Belgrade conference had against the background of mounting international tensions, worsening relations between the United States and Soviet Union and the continuing struggles of nations for liberation and racial equality in a number of countries. It addressed itself to all these problems, extending its sympathy to the peoples of several countries which were still struggling for their freedom, condemned the policy of apartheid, called for general and complete disarmament, the abolition of foreign military bases. It had appealed to the Heads of governments in United States and the Soviet Union to start a dialogue among themselves with a view to reducing international tension and safeguarding world peace.⁷ India concentrated on internal problems and bilateral relations, while retained membership in an increasingly factionalized and radicalized movement. During Havana Summit 1979, New Delhi worked with moderate nations and reject Cuban President Fidel Castro's proposal of 'socialism' (USSR) was the natural ally of Non-alignment Movement. New Delhi also organized NAM conference in 1983 under Indira Gandhi she was first women Prime Minister of India.

During 1983-86, India continued to be active and vigorous advocate of non-alignment Movement. As the Chairman of the Movement, New Delhi remained actively engaged in consolidating and strengthening the unity of NAM. It was focused to support enthusiastically Nuclear Disarmament, NIEO, Stability and Peace for all. India was largely successful its efforts to keeping NAM united and dynamic.

2. India's Role in NAM

The term “non-alignment” owes its origin to India, “It should be understood in the foreground of the ways of thinking of the Indian people who have been expressing a whole lot of positive and constructive ideas through negative expressions such as Ahimsa and truth”. The basic idea of Non-alignment was also communicate non-violent and peaceful co-existence with other power. India used non-violent as a Gandhian method of peacefully conflict-resolution.⁸ The paramount concern of India at the time of independence was to consolidate its freedom, to keep intact its option open, to be able take decisions according to their own interests not because of other choice. India often used NAM values to deal other countries in the world politics. The Indian concept of NAM is value-based and dynamic in contemporary global scenario.

Non-alignment has been the bedrock of India's foreign policy since its inception. In the demise of Cold War, when the world is no longer divided between two power blocs, the NAM has a renewed role to play in the new world order. On the eve of the 15th NAM Summit held in Egypt, India's Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh underscored the relevance of NAM in the post Cold War era. He said “India will play its part in strengthening the NAM”.

From the time of its establishment till the present times, India has immensely contributed to the movement. India was the founder member of it and Nehru was the apostle of NAM. India adopted NAM as a feature of its foreign policy. India always remained actively engaged in consolidating and strengthening the unity of the Non-alignment Movement. India would play its part in strengthening NAM to regain its moral high ground to address international problems which are the direct concern and relevance to developing countries such as global warming, terrorism and more democratizing in international institutions.

3. NAM 2.0: A Foreign & Strategic Policy of India: The Future Perspective

The buzzword or mantra amongst the Indian strategic establishment of recent times has been ‘strategic autonomy’. India will not be cajoled, enticed or coerced into actions that would jeopardize its standing as a responsible and restrained regional power with the potential of emerging as a major power to reckon with in the years to come.⁹ Most of expertise had not satisfy with the current image of India in the changing post-Cold War scenario. In the Indian foreign policy there are many loopholes. It is always diverged India's interest, India do not reacting as a world power. NAM 2.0 policy would be used by India to fulfill its national interests in changing security scenario. It would be used by India to counter regional and global challenges of 21st century. India will refine its foreign policy with the mixture of ‘soft power’ and ‘hard power’ to combat new challenges of 21st century.

India is the paramount power in the region; this poses a strategic security challenge. On the One hand it is the economic powerhouse that will be latent to lift its neighbours to better economic performance and social development. On the one hand, we cannot wish away the fact that the history of inter-state relations in South Asia is such that India's neighbours fear it or scrape at its perceived superciliousness. The veracity of these perceptions matters less than the strategic challenge they present. South Asia is a strategic importance because it falls in the realm of

collective moral psychology as much as conventional tactic¹⁰ The policy of NAM needs to be understood in terms of political realism.

The core objective of a strategic approach should be maximum India's options in its relations with the outside world-that is, to enhance India's strategic space and capacity for independent agency-which in turn will give it maximum options for its objectives of non-alignment in a changing world order. Therefore this policy can be described as 'NONALIGNMENT 2.0'. The fundamental principle of Non Alignment were to ensure national interests or a approach to world politics in terms of ideologies and goals that had been set elsewhere; however India retained maximum strategic autonomy to pursue its own developmental goals; and this is considerable for building national power as the foundation stone for creating a more curative and equitable global order¹¹ NAM 2.0 was formulated by twelve expertise of International Relations, Defence and Foreign Policy of India in 2012. It appeared a prescription for India's foreign and strategy policy over the next decade. It was an attempt to identify the basic principle that should guide India's foreign policy in further future. It was the mixture of basic principles, national goals, values and interests. The NAM 2.0 comes within the context of India emerging as a major power in globalised world and its deeds change according its national interests. The main aim of NAM 2.0 is to utilize NAM international platform to fulfill India's national interests. India would be used NAM as a means to profiler its national interests in the 21st century. India used this platform to strengthening its international image in developing world in future. India wants more democratic to international organization like, UN, IMF and WTO with the help of NAM countries. NAM 2.0 is a multidimensional and pro-active approach of India to tackle regional and global problems. It is more applicable and relevant than old NAM. It is high time to used NAM Movement as a conflict-resolution on international platform. There is not denying the fact that all the NAM countries are facing various regional and international problems such as terrorism and refugee crisis. Terrorism is a long-standing problem, India would build 'international consensus' to eradicate terrorism with the help of NAM countries.

4. Implications of NAM in post-Cold War Era

Finally Non-alignment has often compared with isolationism (Monroe Doctrine)¹² a policy had been adopting by the US to deals its Latin American neighbours. The Monroe Doctrine was adopted by the US President Monroe in 1823. US used Monroe Doctrine as an instrument of its neighbourhood policy to counter domination of European countries. The US feared European intervention in Latin American region. The US criticized and rebuked European countries to intervention in Latin American region. Latin American region was important for US security and its global aspiration. The US introduced rules and regulations towards Latin American regional non-alignment strategy. The US approached indirectly regional non-alignment policy vis-à-vis to Latin America.

After the demise of Cold War, some expertise of international relations raised the questions of relevance of NAM in changing world order. The real fact is that the NAM has formulated broader area and scope. Due to USSR collapse, the political bitterness in the relationship between the two blocs was end, but the Russia and China are more active against US and its western partner. That is why; we can say that the end of Cold War did not distress its relevance and scope. There is not denying the fact that after the demise of Cold War, the US is trying to

align with the NAM countries. Many NAM countries are trying to deepen bilateral relationship with US. The US is reacting as a superpower in one-polar world order. The US hegemony is affected the sovereignty and independency of Non-align countries. US criticized the NAM countries and trying to isolate many NAM members.

5. Recent Developments

India's foreign policy has finally ridden itself of Cold War power politics trappings in favor of a comprehensive rendezvous with super powers. Several reasons can adduce India's budge from non-alignment to multi-alignment foreign policy especially after the cold war. Undeniably, policies adopted by India since the beginning of this century had helped generate a climate of trust across the gamut of warring nations and long-time antagonists. A spirit of accommodation and productive solutions to major regional and international challenges had also made India more acceptable to most nations. The Indo-US Civil Nuclear Agreement in the first decade of this century was in this respect truly a "game changer". India is looking as a positive, stabilizing influence as far as the global as well as regional concerned. Non-alignment clearly had left no place in this milieu¹³ Nowadays the most of countries are formally members of NAM, but all these countries are involved in alignment with any other power blocs. It will provide a noteworthy chance to the developing countries for deepen its bilateral relationship with any other world power such as US, Russia and China in the changing global arena. The emergence of China as an economic power, it is providing a big alternative to the NAM countries for engaging with the Dragon. The NAM countries engaged in some recent developments;

- a) Criticism of US Policy & Hegemony
- b) South-South Cooperation
- c) Reforms in international organizations like, UN, IMF and WTO
- d) Anti-Zionism
- e) Cultural Diversity and Human Rights
- f) International Terrorism
- g) Climate Change
- h) Sustainable Development
- i) Platform of Developing & Third World Countries

6. Relevance of NAM in Present Context

"Non-alignment has been responsible to ever changing international relations and that it has been permissive of diversity and multiplicity of approaches consistent with a hard-core unity on same irreducible, minimum principles."¹⁴ Since the end of the Cold War and the formal end of colonialism, the Non-aligned Movement has been forced to redefine itself and reinvent its purpose in the current world order. A major question has been whether many of its foundational ideologies, principles can be applied to the contemporary issues. The NAM has emphasized its principles of multilateralism, equality and mutual understanding in attempting to become a stronger voice of developing and third world countries as well as an instrument that can be utilized and promote the needs of member countries.

The concern of NAM since the beginning has been with the world peace in view of the nuclear arms race and the dangers of nuclear war, instead of solving problem, it has been mostly

aggravated them. In the initial years, concern for international peace so overshadowed their politics, that their other efforts for development were virtually ignored.¹⁵ The NAM had always opposed the disarmament and nuclear expansion. We cannot ignore the role of NAM in recent time. They represent nearly two third of the UN members and comprise 55% of the world population. Many of US and USSR former ally partner are became a members of NAM. All these factors indicated the importance and relevance of NAM in post Cold War era. The NAM is an international platform of developing and under developing countries. The NAM produce a platform as 'dialogue table' for developing world and it has done lot of for united these countries. These countries discuss their mutual problem and find a way to resolve these problems. In the last NAM conference in Tehran, many countries criticized neo-colonialism tactics of the major powers.

The Way Ahead

The Nonalignment platform could play a meaningful role for developing countries. This platform is the common voice of third world countries. It is considered as a positive and constructive movement in across the world. India's efforts for non-aligned countries has appraised by everyone. Therefore, we can say that Non-aligned agenda has immense important for future.

7. Conclusion and Suggestions

The termination of cold war doesn't mean that an end of world power domination/ hegemony. The NAM is too relevant in present context because the third world countries are being subjected to supremacy and exploitation on all kind of issues from economic to political and cultural. The aspirations of these countries are being crux down. Economic relations having become more essential in these days and the inner contradictions in G-8 groups, the NAM as a grouping can create a space for itself. The NAM would be proved a platform of developing countries in bargaining with the developed countries. There is not denying the fact that India considered NAM as a powerful force to reform the international system. India should try to utilize NAM as a voice of developing world. The NAM countries should adopt a constructive approach to combat Islamic radicalism across the world. It is high time for NAM countries to sort-out long-standing regional and international problems by international consensus. India should play a positive role to strengthening the NAM as a global movement. India needs to utilize NAM forum as a 'collective consciousness' of developing and third world countries. The current unstable international security architecture posed a big challenge for NAM countries. The NAM plat forum can fulfill the aspirations of developing and third world countries. The NAM countries should not join any military alliance and must be abiding the agenda of NAM. The NAM countries should not have neutral against any ill-deeds of Superpowers. The NAM countries should have pro-active vis-à-vis to global challenges. The NAM countries should tackle problems with coordinative approach. That is why; we can say that the importance and relevance of NAM is growing day to day. We should not have undermined the expansion of NAM as a global movement.

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