

but did not want to be left out of world politics. He refers to this phase as “positive neutralism” and says this was “an attempt to mediate and abate the dangerous quarrels of the great.” In its negative phase “non-alignment involved a reprobation of the cold war, an assertion that there were more important matters in the world, an acknowledgement of the powerlessness of the new states and a refusal to judge between the two giant powers.” We do not agree with the concept of “powerlessness” of non-aligned states. Actually, in its positive sense, non-alignment means freedom to decide the course of action that a country wishes to adopt in relation to world politics. In the negative sense, non-alignment implies keeping away from permanent alliances with the main actors participating in the Cold War. In the positive sense, it means refusal to allow military bases to any super power on one’s territory and keep away from military entanglement of all types. Thus, non-alignment is a concept of independence of action.

Emphasising that non-alignment is a unique policy of India to protect its national interest as well as world peace, and that it is not an attitude that shirks from international responsibilities, Prof. M.S. Rajan says that it is not a policy of “sitting on the fence”. A non-aligned country cannot be a mere spectator in the game of world politics, or be indifferent to the burning issues of the day. It seeks active cooperation and mutual friendship of nations of both the blocs. “For India, non-alignment is not, and has never been, a means of promoting her own stature in world affairs. In order to become a Great Power.”⁹ Rajan rejects the view that it is idealistic policy. He calls it a “down-to-earth” policy, which originated in the realities of post-war international society.

INDIA’S POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT

India, under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, was the first country to have adopted the policy of non-alignment. India’s policy is positive or dynamic neutralism in which a country acts independently and decides its policy on each issue on its merit. Non-alignment is based on positive reasoning. It is not a negative, middle of the road reluctance to distinguish between right and wrong. It does not mean that a country just retires into a shell. Nehru had declared in the US Congress in 1948, “Where freedom is menaced, or justice is threatened, or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral ... our policy is not neutralist, but one of active endeavour to preserve and, if possible, establish peace on firm foundations.” Commenting on India’s foreign policy, K.M. Panikkar had said, “She has been able to build up a position of independence and, in association with other states similarly placed, has been able to exercise considerable influence in the cause of international goodwill.” In a way, this policy promotes Gandhiji’s belief in non-violence. The critics in early days had said that India’s policy was to remain, “neutral on the side of democracy.”

Speaking in the Constituent Assembly (Legislative) on December 4, 1947, Nehru had sought to remove the impression that India’s non-alignment also meant neutrality. He had said:

⁹ Ibid.

"We have proclaimed during this past year that we will not attach ourselves to any particular group. This has nothing to do with neutrality or passivity or anything else. If there is a big war, there is no particular reason why we should jump into it... We are not going to join a war if we can help it, and we are going to join the side which is to our interest when the time comes to make the choice."

India wanted to prevent the third world war. Nehru said: "If and when disaster comes it will affect the world as a whole... Our first effort should be to prevent that disaster from happening." Reiterating India's resolve to keep away from power blocs, he said in 1949, "If by any chance we align ourselves definitely with one power group, we may perhaps from one point of view do some good, but I have not the shadow of doubt that from a larger point of view, not only of India but of world peace, it will do harm. Because then we lose that tremendous vantage ground that we have of using such influence as we possess ... in the cause of world peace."

India's foreign policy has always had certain priorities, viz., economic development of the country, maintenance of independence of action in foreign affairs, safeguarding country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and world peace. India has firmly believed that these objectives can be achieved only by keeping away from power blocs, and exercising freedom of taking foreign policy decisions.

Nehru was committed to western concept of liberalism and democracy. But, he did not approve of the military alliances like NATO and SEATO initiated by the United States to contain communism. He opposed western alliances on the ground that they encouraged new form of colonialism; and also because these were likely to promote countermoves and race for armaments between the two camps. Nehru was impressed by socialism and strongly advocated the idea of democratic socialism. But, he totally rejected the communist state as "monolithic" and described Marxism as an outmoded theory. Nehru was a combination of a socialist and a liberal democrat. He was opposed to the very idea of power blocs in international relations. India's policy of non-alignment, therefore, was not to promote a third bloc, but to ensure freedom of decision-making of the recently decolonized states. Non-alignment was promoted by India as a policy of peace, as against the policy of confrontation.

India's policy of non-alignment was against the *status quo* situation in international relations. That meant opposition of colonialism, imperialism, racial discrimination and now of neo-colonialism. India wants a world free from these evils. Secondly, non-alignment rejects the concept of superiority of Super Powers. It advocates sovereign equality of all states. Thirdly, non-alignment encourages friendly relations among countries. It is opposed to the alliances that divide the world into groups of states, or power blocs. Non-alignment advocates peaceful settlement of international disputes and rejects the use of force. It favours complete destruction of nuclear weapons and pleads for comprehensive disarmament. It supports all efforts to strengthen the United Nations. India's policy of non-alignment emphasises the social and economic problems of mankind. India has been fully supporting the demand for a new international economic order so that the unjust

and unbalanced existing economic order may be changed into a new and just economic order.

Reasons for Non-Alignment

India had adopted the policy of non-alignment as it did not want to lose its freedom of decision-making, and because India's primary concern soon after independence was economic development. The policy has been sustained for five decades. Professor M.S. Rajan had mentioned seven reasons for adopting this policy initially. Firstly, it was felt that India's alignment with either the US or the USSR bloc would aggravate international tension, rather than promote international peace. Besides, the Indian Government felt later that in view of size, geopolitical importance and contribution to civilisation, India had "a positive role to play in reducing international tension, promoting peace and serving as a bridge between the two camps."

Secondly, India was neither a great power, nor could she allow herself to be treated as a nation of no consequence. India was, however, potentially a great power. Non-alignment suited India's "present needs to keep our national identity" and on the other hand not to compromise "our future role of an acknowledged Great Power."

Thirdly, India could not join either of the power blocs because of emotional and ideological reasons. We could not join the Western (American) Bloc because many of its member countries were colonial powers or ex-colonial powers, and some still practised racial discrimination. We could not join the Eastern (Soviet) Bloc because communism, as an ideology, was completely alien to Indian thinking and way of life.

Fourthly, like any sovereign country, India, who had just become sovereign, wanted to retain and exercise independence of judgement, and not to "be tied to the apron-strings of another country." It meant that India wanted freedom to decide every issue on its merit.

Fifthly, according to Professor Rajan, once India launched economic development plans, we needed foreign economic aid "it was both desirable politically not to depend upon aid from one bloc only, and profitable to be able to get it from more than one source."

Sixthly, non-alignment is in accordance with India's traditional belief that "truth, right and goodness" are not the monopoly of anyone religion or philosophy. India believes in tolerance. Therefore, the world situation, called for tolerance and peaceful co-existence of both the systems, with India not aligning with any of the blocs, nor being hostile to them.

Lastly, the domestic political situation was also responsible for the adoption of the policy of non-alignment. According to Professor Rajan, "By aligning India with either of the Blocs, the Indian Government would have sown seeds of political controversy and instability in the country ..."

Whatever the actual reasons that may have promoted Nehru and his Government to adopt the policy of non-alignment, it is obvious that the people of India by and large supported the policy. Many other countries found it in their national interest to adopt this policy which led to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement.

India was largely responsible for launching the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961. It was initiated by Nehru, Yugoslav President Tito and Egyptian President Nasser. Twenty-five countries attended the first NAM Conference held at Belgrade and presided over by Tito. Invitations were sent out by Nehru, Nasser and Tito after careful scrutiny of foreign policies of proposed participants of the first NAM Summit. The five criteria for joining NAM were: (i) the country followed independent foreign policy based on non-alignment and peaceful co-existence; (ii) the country was opposed to colonialism and imperialism; (iii) it should not have been a member of a Cold War related military bloc; (iv) it should not have had a bilateral treaty with any of the Super Powers; and (v) NAM should not have allowed any foreign military base on its territory. It has grown both quantitatively and qualitatively. There were as many as 118 members of NAM in 2006. Its summits are periodically held in which issues concerning international politics are discussed, and attempts are made to evolve a common approach to various issues. Since the number of members has grown very large, it often becomes difficult to adopt an approach that all countries can follow. Fourteen summits were held between 1961 and 2006. The last five Summits were held after the end of Cold War, disintegration of the former USSR, completion of decolonisation with the independence of Namibia and the end of apartheid in South Africa. The NAM lost some of its fervour after the end of Cold War, though its relevance is claimed by various leaders.¹⁰

Different Phases of Non-Alignment

The history of India's policy of non-alignment may be broadly divided into five periods, viz., (i) 1946 to 1954; (ii) 1954 to 1962; (iii) 1962 to 1971; (iv) 1971 to 1990; and (v) post-Cold War period: 1990 onwards.

The First Phase (1946-1954): The policy of non-alignment was initiated and vigorously pursued by Nehru during 1946-54. It has been stated earlier in this chapter that soon after assuming office as interim Prime Minister, Nehru had announced in September 1946 the broad framework of the policy of non-alignment. He had made it clear that India had no desire of joining any of the two emerging power blocs. But, in the initial phase, our non-alignment was allegedly tilted towards the West, particularly the United States of America. India remained generally quiet on the ongoing anti-imperialist struggles in Malaya and Indo-China, and supported the UN decision that North Korea had committed the aggression (June 1950) against South Korea. The Soviet leader Stalin clearly expressed his displeasure on India's approach to international problems. The USSR was critical of India's support to UN on Korea, but when India criticised the United

¹⁰ See V.N. Khanna, *International Relations*, Vikas, New Delhi.

States for invading North Korea and menacingly moving towards China (after clearing south of the aggression), Soviet Union became appreciative of India's stand. Nehru had visited the United States in 1949, and had indicated his liking for Britain. There were a number of reasons for India being more inclined towards the American bloc during this phase. Firstly, India was largely dependent on Britain for its defence equipment; secondly, our armed forces had been organized on the British pattern; thirdly, the Indian intelligentsia as well as political leadership was influenced by the ideals of Westminster model of government; many of our national leaders, including Nehru, had been educated in British institutions of higher learning, and had received training in parliamentary democracy; fourthly, our trade relations were mostly limited to western countries and we depended on western economic assistance for our economic development; and lastly, the Soviet policy at that time was not very favourable to the developing countries, as all non-communist nations were considered to be anti-communist. Nehru admitted in the Parliament in 1952 that India's relations with Britain and the United States were more cordial, and that this was the outcome of our legacy.

Despite its pro-West attitude, India's policy was generally non-aligned. Nehru's India tried to act as a bridge between the East and the West. As mentioned above, India did accept the UN decision that North Korea was the aggressor, yet it opposed the entry of the UN forces into the North. India played appreciative role in bringing about an end to the Korean crisis. In 1949, India had recognised Communist China, yet so long as Stalin was living mutual understanding could not develop between India and the former Soviet Union. However, when India refused the US invitation to join (anti-communist) South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) the Socialist Bloc began seeking greater cooperation with India.

The Second Phase (1954-1962): By this time two important changes had taken place. The tenure of US President Truman had come to an end in early 1953. Soviet leader Stalin died (1953) and he was succeeded by Khrushchev as head of the Communist Party. Nehru's policy of friendship with all helped in reassessment of the policy of non-alignment both in the US and USSR. Meanwhile, relations with Communist China continued to develop smoothly and in 1954 India and China concluded the famous *Panchsheel* agreement (see Chapter 4). India also played a significant role in the resolution of the Indo-Chinese conflict leading to India's appointment as Chairman of a Commission set up to restore normalcy there. Pakistan became a member of US-led military alliance SEATO (India had earlier declined joining it). This threatened India's security because an unfriendly Pakistan was likely to be militarily strengthened with the American backing and the US arms to be supplied to her. America rejected India's objection to the supply of US armaments to Pakistan. India was assured that US armaments would not be used by Pakistan against this country. This 'tilted' India towards the socialist bloc. After the "*Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai* agreement" of 1954, India got an opportunity to receive two top Soviet leaders: Party Leader Khrushchev and Prime Minister Bulganin. This was the first ever visit by any Soviet leader to India. The warm welcome given to them enabled

the two countries to come closer in the spirit of peaceful co-existence. Two international crises occurred in 1956. Egypt was subjected to an aggression, on Suez Canal issue, by Britain, France and Israel; and a Hungarian uprising against Soviet domination was ruthlessly crushed by USSR after Soviet intervention in the fellow socialist neighbour. India condemned and bitterly criticised Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt, but half-heartedly objected to the Soviet action in Hungary. This discriminatory attitude made the West unhappy.

As Nehru, Nasser and Tito were preparing to launch non-aligned movement, India had to act and get Goa liberated from the Portuguese colonial rule. Indian Army had to act to get Goa vacated and liberated, from the Portuguese, by force. Indian action in Goa was described as 'naked aggression' by West, but India's Defence Minister V.K. Krishna Menon said that colonialism was a permanent aggression and that Portuguese colonial aggression had to be fought with military action. Doing that was in India's national interest.

Despite the charge that India's non-alignment was being compromised with pro-Soviet stance, India continued to work hard to strengthen non-alignment. India played an active role in the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian nations in 1955 which become a forerunner of the first NAM Summit later (1961) held in Belgrade. India sent its troops for maintenance of peace in Congo on the request of the United Nations in 1960.

The Third Phase (1962-1971): The Chinese aggression against India proved to be a rude shock not only to India's international prestige, and morale of the people and armed forces of India, but also to the policy of non-alignment. The Soviet Union did not lend us support that we expected from a friend in the hour of need. Most of the fellow non-aligned countries did not condemn the Chinese aggression. But, unexpectedly Britain and the United States offered help and assistance to India. The Chinese betrayal of the *Panchsheel* raised a storm of protest against China in India. Also a large section of opinion builders in India seriously questioned the validity of non-alignment in the changed scenario. The policy was questioned by senior leaders like C. Rajagopalachari (former Governor-General and Home Minister of India), Acharya Kripalani and others. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan was happy that India had now adopted a soft approach towards the West. The former Congress President and veteran leader Acharya J.B. Kripalani expressed satisfaction that India was no longer non-aligned "in favour of the Communist Bloc", mentally and emotionally, as India (according to him) was before the Chinese aggression. It was felt that India compromised non-alignment in favour of the West because of the acceptance of Western arms help. Rajaji went a step further and argued that India might formally abandon the policy of non-alignment and move closer to the West.

Michael Brecher drew two conclusions from, what he called, "non-alignment under stress" during 1962 war. For him, India's policy changed (a) from "equidistance" in relation to Super Powers to "equal proximity" to Moscow and Washington; and (b) "from an active, dynamic involvement in world politics, that is, 'neutralism' in its original

Nehru-Menon conception, to a more passive ... non-alignment." He concluded that "non-alignment was almost toppled as the pillar of India's foreign policy. The term was retained but it became an empty shell"

It was pointed out by the critics of non-alignment that this policy was not a guarantee against aggression. This view was supported even by the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan who said that the Chinese aggression on India demonstrated that "neutrality" was no guarantee against aggression and that "neutralism" was unrealistic as a policy of international affairs.

Nehru, even after the Chinese aggression, refused to give up the policy of non-alignment. He argued that India could take economic assistance from both the blocs, not in charity but as loan or on easy payment, only if we remained non-aligned. India would lose this freedom if she gave up the policy of non-alignment and joined one of the two blocs. The Prime Minister even went to the extent of saying that to give up non-alignment would be a "terrible moral failure." But, as M.S. Rajan rightly said, "To treat it as a moral principle is wholly an error; it is simply a political policy" It was indeed a mistake to confuse non-alignment, which is only an instrument of our foreign policy, as a moral imperative. Even as India stood solidly by non-alignment, once again there was a shift towards the West.

Nehru died in 1964. His successor Lal Bahadur Shastri appointed a regular Foreign Minister. During Shastri's brief tenure of 18 months, India passed through severe food shortage. America wanted India to support its Vietnam policy as a price for its help to India to meet the food shortage. When Shastri refused to oblige President Johnson, the latter insulted Indian Prime Minister by seeking postponement of Shastri's scheduled visit to the United States, which was to take place in response to Johnson's invitation to Indian leader. Shastri refused to be bullied and declined to agree to a visit on renewed invitation. Pakistan waged a war against India in September 1965 in which both USA and China gave moral support to Pakistan. This naturally moved India towards the USSR. India inflicted a crushing defeat on Pakistan. This enhanced India's prestige. Within three years of humiliation by China, India had shown to the world that she had the potential of becoming a big Power. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Shastri died soon after signing the Tashkent Agreement with Pakistan President Ayub Khan in the presence of Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin.

Indira Gandhi, who became Prime Minister in January 1966 (and remained at the helm of affairs for 11 years), tried to reorganise the unity of Afro-Asian countries. Later, a summit of three pioneers of NAM took place in Delhi when Tito, Nasser and Indira Gandhi discussed the progress of the movement. India gave full support to the Arab nations in their fight against Israel in 1967. This displeased the West. In 1968 despite India's protest, the Soviet Union supplied armaments to Pakistan. But, when Soviet intervention took place in Czechoslovakia in 1968 itself, India did not join the West in criticising the Soviet Union. The critics in India again demanded that the policy of non-alignment be given up. India was invited to attend the Rabat Conference of

Islamic countries in November 1969, but, India's delegate Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was not allowed to attend the conference. This was a severe blow to our foreign policy and humiliation of the country. Next two years were full of challenges for the Indira Gandhi Government.

The Fourth Phase (1971-1990): Mrs. Gandhi won a landslide victory in the Lok Sabha elections held in 1971. Immediately after that her government had to face a serious situation in Pakistan. In the parliamentary elections held in Pakistan, Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman won a clear majority. The Awami leader belonged to the then East Pakistan. He was denied the Prime Ministership of Pakistan and was arrested and detained in a jail in West Pakistan. This caused unprecedented uprising in East Pakistan. As the Pakistan Government began ruthless suppression in East (now Bangladesh), about one crore people entered India as refugees. The situation became so bad and Indo-Pakistan relations turned so hostile that eventually Pakistan forced a war on India, which Pakistan lost miserably. With the active help of India, Bangladesh was born as a sovereign state. Before the war, Pakistan was fully supported by the United States as well as China. US President Nixon even warned Mrs. Gandhi that US would intervene and support Pakistan in the war. India was left with no alternative but to sign a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union in August 1971. This treaty proved to be a deterrent for USA who threatened, but did not intervene, though it gave big moral as well as military assistance to Pakistan. Communist China also backed Pakistan on the Bangladesh issue.

The events of 1971 changed the course of India's foreign policy. India came as close to the Soviet Union as Pakistan was to the United States, although it did not sign any military pact or alliance. But Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 invited sharp criticism against India. It was said that non-alignment had been turned into alignment with the USSR as the latter pledged help to India which we badly needed. The treaty provided that both countries would respect the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the other; that no country shall "enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party"; and that each country undertook "to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other party." The critics of the Treaty could not carry the people with them. Indo-Soviet relations improved considerably and Indo-US relations reached an all time low. India remained non-aligned, but our tilt towards USSR became clear and apparent.

The Janata Government at the Centre in 1977-79, did not alter the policy of non-alignment. Foreign Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Morarji Desai Government, assured people of genuine non-alignment by correcting the unnecessary tilt towards USSR. But, even Vajpayee did not turn against the Soviet Union. In fact he tried to improve and normalise relations with China and Pakistan (see details in chapters 6 and 7), even as Prime Minister Desai refused to yield to the threat by US President Carter, and did not agree to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which is discriminatory in nature. Signing it would have been against India's national interest.

India remained non-aligned even though Janata leaders were generally pro-West, but the Government gave no evidence of deviating from Indo-Soviet friendship. Indira Gandhi, in her second tenure (1980-84) and Rajiv Gandhi's Government (1984-1989) maintained very cordial relations with the Soviet Union, so much so that India's stand was often taken to be a compromise with non-alignment. India continued to adopt anti-Israel posture (which annoyed America), refused consistently to sign NPT, and did not criticise the Soviet Union during her intervention in and occupation of Afghanistan (1979-88). Nevertheless, India continued to actively participate in non-aligned movement, and hosted the 1983 summit in New Delhi. India was earlier criticised when she did not oppose Cuban President's announcement (at Havana Summit, 1979) that Soviet Union was a natural friend of the non-aligned movement. But, then in 1979 India had only a caretaker Government headed by Charan Singh, who did not attend the Havana Summit. By 1990 the Cold War had ended and a question mark was put on the continued relevance of non-alignment in the post-cold war period.

The Fifth Phase (Post-Cold War Period): The Cold War ended when US President George Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev met at Malta in December 1989. Its end was formally announced at Malta. Thus, the year 1990 commenced as the beginning of post-cold war period. India has been saying that non-alignment is still relevant as a policy aimed at economic development and international peace. While Warsaw Pact and other military alliances have been dissolved, NATO still exists. At foreign policy level, non-alignment continues to determine the attitude of 118 members of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). A new world order has not really emerged, though the world order created after Second World War has collapsed. In an emerging unipolar world, India continues to insist on the policy of non-alignment.

Relevance of Non-alignment in Post-Cold War Period

In view of the developments that took place in the world during the last decade of the twentieth century, students of international politics wondered as to what type of world order would emerge. The Cold War ended before January 1990. The process had begun soon after Mikhail Gorbachev became Soviet Communist Party General Secretary in 1985. He introduced several changes in the domestic politics and economics, which misfired and led to disintegration of the USSR. But, he and US President Reagan also initiated talks that led to the end of Cold War. The two top leaders met four times in four years (1985-88), and in 1987 signed the INF Treaty for the elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Short Range Missiles. It was ratified at Moscow in 1988. When new US President Bush and President Gorbachev met in December 1989, the tension of Cold War had gone, and they formally declared the end of Cold War. The Berlin Wall, that had divided Berlin into two, was pulled down in November 1989, and next year the two Germanies were unified under the American umbrella. By the end of 1991, the once mighty Soviet Union had disintegrated, and 15 erstwhile Republics became sovereign states who joined the United Nations. Russian Federation was recognised as a successor

state of USSR and consequently retained the permanent seat in the UN Security Council. By 1992, bipolar world had changed into a somewhat unipolar world with the United States remaining the only Super Power.

As Germany and Japan had emerged as economic giants and were likely to challenge the US Super Power status, the world was perhaps heading towards multipolarity. Professor Satish Kumar wrote in 1993: "The United States has emerged as the most dominant military and economic power, although Germany and Japan have seriously challenged its economic supremacy." He added: "The countries of the South have been marginalised in world politics, and the world is repolarised along the North-South Axis instead of the East-West Axis." Thus, international system is in a flux. Muchkund Dubey also expressed similar views. He wrote: "Although the United States is militarily the only Super Power, as far as economic matters are concerned, we are living in a multipolar world."

In this new emerging world order, serious doubts have emerged as to the relevance of India's policy of non-alignment. If, as is generally believed, Cold War gave rise to non-alignment, this policy should have become redundant when the Cold War ended. It has been often said that non-alignment was a specific response to a specific situation when the world was divided into two blocs. At that time it was courageous and pragmatic for India to adopt the third course. But, as was repeatedly said by Nehru and other Indian foreign policy experts and NAM supporters, the policy of non-alignment is in effect a policy of independent foreign policy decision-making, which means freedom to take foreign policy decisions in New Delhi, rather than receive dictation either from Washington or Moscow or London. Secondly, it also opened possibilities of getting aid from different quarters for economic development. Lastly, non-alignment is aimed at international peace and peaceful settlement of disputes. As all the three objectives still exist, the relevance of non-alignment remains undisturbed. It was a coincidence that non-alignment had emerged during the Cold War and bipolarity, its continued relevance even after these two contexts cease to exist is significant, for the three reasons mentioned above.

Narasimha Rao¹¹² had in June 1991, reaffirmed India's adherence to the policy of non-alignment. Later, in a speech made in Tokyo in 1992, Prime Minister Rao said:

"The pursuit of a non-aligned policy is even more relevant today than ever before. Non-alignment basically consists of the espousal of the rights of nations to independence and development, regardless of the bloc phenomenon. Whether there is one bloc or more at a given moment, the urge of a non-aligned country would continue to be to maintain its independence, to take decisions according to its rights, not tagging itself in advance to others."

¹¹ Satish Kumar, *Towards a Stronger and Democratic United Nations: India's Role in International Studies*, April-June 1993, p. 174.

¹² Foreign Minister of India during January 1980-July 1984 and 1988-89.

Rao dared to assert that the “chimera of hegemony must not be pursued.” M.S. Rajan argues that, “...whatever the world is — bipolar; multipolar or unipolar — non-alignment, as a foreign policy option of the small/weak states will remain continuously relevant or valid.” Dealing with the question of continued relevance of the non-aligned movement (NAM) also, he wrote that it is as much relevant today as it was in 1960s. This is because “We are still continuing to suffer (as we have been since the birth of sovereign-nation-state system nearly four centuries ago) from Great Power hegemony.” So long as this hegemony exists, non-alignment as the vital principle of India’s foreign policy will remain relevant. Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral, in the Deve Gowda Government (1996-97), also confirmed India’s continued belief in non-alignment. There is no possibility of the policy of non-alignment becoming irrelevant in the near future.

It is now generally believed that non-alignment has little relevance in political sense, because now every nation is indeed taking independent foreign policy decisions. India took very strong and independent stand on the question of signing of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, CTBT, in 1996 first at Geneva Conference on Disarmament, CD, and later in the UN General Assembly. India refused to sign the CTBT despite all kinds of pressures. However, in economic sphere, developing countries have to cooperate with each other to retain their leverage in the face of globalisation of economy. This cooperation can still be wonderfully provided in the NAM forum. Thus, non-alignment cannot be easily wished away even after the end of twentieth century. It remains valid as an instrument of economic development and social change, even if its relevance in the political context may be much less 45 years after NAM was launched and 60 years after India had adopted the policy of non-alignment.

According to J.N. Dixit, a former Foreign Secretary, “Being non-aligned means retaining the freedom to take decisions related to your interests without external influence to the extent possible.” This implies a nation’s freedom in the conduct of its foreign and defence policies. Thus, India continues to be non-aligned even if the relevance of NAM as a movement is being questioned. Dixit added, “Being part of non aligned movement ... presumes ideological and operational commitments to the concept of non-alignment based on the conviction that it is the most effective approach to meet individual and collective national interests.”

Some of the issues that had united the non-aligned countries in the Movement were decolonisation, anti-imperialism, fight against racial discrimination and the question of Palestine. The first three are no more issues of concern. Palestine is being tackled outside NAM. Even during the Cold War, NAM’s role in regard to these issues was limited “to focus attention and give general political and moral support to actions and impulses which led to the solutions.” NAM as such did not solve them.

In the post-Cold War world, unity issues are not of same concern as they were till 1989. It is, therefore, believed that NAM should mainly concern itself with contemporary issues by creating global consensus on areas such as global violence and terrorism, global economic inequalities, global concern for human rights and human environment. Many

of the objectives of NAM are now being pursued through regional organisations such SAARC (see Chapter 11), ASEAN and APEC.

The profound technological and economic changes that have taken place in the Third World are not uniform. This has resulted in inequalities and different levels of prosperity and quality of life amongst the non-aligned nations. According to J.N. Dixit, "If the Movement is to have a future role, it must move away from its orthodoxies and repetitive hortatory pronouncements. It must focus on new challenges to developing countries on transfer of technology and investments, social and educational issues, human rights, and about meeting the political implications of new strategic and power equations dominated by the great powers which affect the UN functioning, and evolving international economic arrangements."

Another former foreign Secretary M.K. Rasgotra felt that the world today is not really unipolar. The US was always a premier power even during the Cold War. Besides, Russia is bound to bounce back as a major Power once it sets its house in order. Germany and Japan are emerging as new economic giants. Thus, NAM may still be relevant. According to Rasgotra, since the essence of non-alignment is independence in decision-making, India would continue to follow the policy of non-alignment. But, as far as NAM is concerned it should now takeover issues like drug abuse, exploitation of women, poverty, disease and environmental degradation.

The doctrine of non-alignment, says K. Subrahmanyam, "had a contextual significance and was not an enduring ideology." It was relevant in the international power configuration at a particular point of time. Today that power configuration is undergoing a very radical transformation. Therefore, the non-aligned countries "have to assess very carefully the newly evolving international environment to update their strategy." The NAM Foreign Ministers Conference held in New Delhi in April 1997 applied its mind to the changed environment. The UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan represented the world body in the conference. It was agreed by 113-members NAM that it must play a more positive role in the international affairs and project the views of the developing world. NAM should not be denigrated, but it should be encouraged to tackle numerous socio-economic problems. "We have to tackle essentials, like putting bread on the table for the hungry millions of our countries" concluded Alfred Nzo, the Foreign Minister of South Africa. However, many people feel that NAM had not been able to achieve much. Some say that NAM conferences are just talk shops.

The twelfth NAM Summit held at Durban in September 1998 was attended by 113 countries, and was presided over by South African President Nelson Mandela. India was represented by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. India had certain anxious moments at the Summit. *First*, while talking about international disputes, President Mandela in his inaugural address mentioned Jammu & Kashmir and hinted at possible NAM mediation. India took strong exception at third party mediation offer. Consequently, South Africa assured India that it had no intention of interfering in Indo-Pak bilateral dispute. *Second*, an attempt was made to condemn India and Pakistan for their May 1998 nuclear tests.

India resisted this. Eventually, only anxiety was expressed at the tests. The Summit gave a call for a universal, non-discriminatory nuclear regime, and adopted India's proposal for an international conference in 1999 to work for the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

The thirteenth Summit scheduled for 2001 at Dhaka could not take place. Instead NAM Summit was held in early 2003 at Kuala Lumpur under the Chairmanship of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamed. Pakistani President Musharraf raised the question of so-called denial of self-determination in Kashmir and charged India of occupying the state. Vajpayee rebutted all charges forcefully, and said that it was Pakistan which was in illegal occupation of a part of the state, whereas people of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir had freely endorsed accession through their Constituent Assembly. India demanded immediate end to terrorism from across the border.

FOURTEENTH NAM SUMMIT, 2006

The fourteenth Summit of the Movement was held in September 2006 at Havana (Cuba). It was chaired by the Acting President Raul Castro (as President Fidel Castro had been hospitalised). India was represented by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who rejecting the concept of "Clash of Civilisations", called for a collective message to focus on urgent transnational issues such as terrorism, energy security and environment. Cuban leader launched a frontal attack on US for its monopolistic role in world politics. Cuba was supported by Venezuelan President Chavez in condemning the United States.

The Summit, attended by 118 nations, expressed its total opposition to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It asked the member-nations to fight the menace by all means including by prosecuting and extraditing its perpetrators. Without naming Pakistan, the Havana Declaration expressed deep concern that the terrorist groups, including former Taliban, were regrouping. Supporting India's campaign for reforms in the UN, especially the Security Council, the Summit expressed concern over lack of progress on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council.