

## **The Non-Alignment Movement: “No!” To The New Order**

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### **Abstract**

An international organization of 120 countries, the Non Alignment Movement (NAM), founded in 1954, once an effective deterrent during the decades of the Cold War, is still an international forum that could play its role in an era of new conflicts, new challenges, and new political, economic and cultural realities of the world. The rise of a unipolar world, the spate of globalization and invincibility of US war technology have given rise to a wave of pessimism that tends to make us believe in the gratuity of all peace movements, futility of all defence strategies, international summits and resolutions. On the contrary, there is an equally vehement optimism that the world with a ‘ New World Order’ under the dictates of the single Supreme Power, is sure to be free from regional conflicts, moving towards unification rather than disintegration, and complete homogenization to sweep away all diversities and discords. This kind of optimism is essentially irrational as variety is the essence of human nature, conflict is the driving force of civilization, and heterogeneity is the basis of culture. A unified NAM, with revised programme, is the only force to counter the hegemonic and imperial designs of the New World Order proposed by USA.

During the decades of the Cold War, the term 'non-alignment' had currency in international affairs to refer to the foreign policies of those states that refused to align with either of the two blocs led by two superpowers, i.e. the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and instead, opted to pursue an independent course of action in international politics. Non Alignment was not merely a notion, but an effective and powerful global movement, known as the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM). When we re-assess the global situation of the

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past six decades, we tend to believe that it was the role of the NAM that functioned as a deterrent in stopping a 'Third World War' that loomed large on the globe, and also guaranteed respect for sovereignties of countries, worked for harmonious growth of the economies in the third world and paved ways for cultural exchange and mutual understanding.<sup>1</sup>

The Non-Aligned Movement came into existence in 1961. It was the result of hectic diplomatic activities and statesmanship of Yugoslavia's President, Tito, India's Prime Minister, Nehru, Egypt's President, Nasser, Ghana's president Nkrumah, and Indonesia's President, Sukarno. The organization was aimed at attaining a respectable position of the developing world, usually called the Third World, and stop another war between two hostile blocs of the world, one led by the USA and the other by the USSR. The phrase 'Non Alignment Movement' was used for the first time by Indian diplomat and statesman V.K. Krishna Menon in 1953, and was given formal shape on the famous Punchsheel of Jawahar Lal Nehru.<sup>2</sup> The NAM, thus instituted, enjoyed strong support of all those leaders who believed, in the words of Fidel Castro:

...struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great power and bloc politics.<sup>3</sup>

The world's political, economic and cultural scenario has much changed since then and many major and minor scientific, economic and cultural changes have completely transformed the world order, and in many cases the changes were unpredictable. The unpredictability of the world is still the essential principle of human nature and thus of human world; time has taught us that nothing can be said for certain about the future course of changes and the world does not move in any pre-conceived direction. Nevertheless, man being a 'futuristic' living being, the compulsions of the present compels us to have a notion about future and strive to dispel all those dangers that confront us in the present and are likely to imperil our tomorrow. This basic and eternal drive of the

evolution of civilizations is constantly keeping us conscious of present political and economic conflicts and contradictions in the regional as well as global human world. With this premise when we have an overview of the contemporary situation, we find the whole world is replete with numerous political problems, and many of them have the potential of endangering the future of the world. Even if we ignore our future concerns, our present too is not quite pleasant: violent conflicts are rife, no country is safe from threats, economies are under stress, and the majority of human population is still denied their basic human rights. The most disturbing aspect of this grim world situation is absence of any international theoretical framework and the 'grand narratives' of the past.<sup>4</sup> The present world scenario emerged as a result of some dramatic events that were unforeseen by the mid of the last century. The events of global consequences are many, but the most consequential are:

- i) collapse of the USSR and the socialist bloc (IIInd world) ,
- ii) rise of a unipolar world with USA as the supreme power;
- iii) inefficacy of the UNO as a result of disintegration caused by regional conflicts and inability of the international forum to resolve the unresolved problems,
- iv) globalization and its repercussions for the developed as well as the under-developed countries,
- v) violation of human rights, and vi) critical stage in the pollution of environment.

With this set contingencies of catastrophic potential, mankind is still desirous of having an effective unity to counter the impending hazards, or decreasing their impact so that the world continues to be safe place to live. With this aspiration in mind, all expectations are associated with the Non-Alignment Movement that could be the linch-pin of the contemporary world situation and make the world a safer place for a longer time.

There was a time when the NAM changed the nature of inter-state relations by enabling the newly independent developing countries to play a significant role in world affairs. Non-alignment emerged within the context of two simultaneous global developments: Afro-Asian resurgence and bipolar world politics.<sup>5</sup> This Afro-Asian

resurgence occurred at a time when the world was divided into two hostile camps, each representing two different ideologies and two socio-economic as well as political systems, one led by the US and the other by erstwhile USSR. Each aspired for greater spheres of influence through military alliances with other states. In this context, the independent position of the newly emergent states came to be viewed as non-alignment, as they refused to be allied with either bloc. Non-alignment can be defined as not entering into military alliances with any country, either of the Western bloc led by the US or the communist bloc led by the USSR. It is an assertion of independence and conformity in the foreign policies of the post-colonial countries.

The need of reinvigorating the NAM is an imperative in contemporary context because it is the only way to counter the conspiracy of imposing a unidirectional global government by the USA. The term 'New World Order' was used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by statesmen like Winston Churchill.<sup>6</sup> The futuristic term referred to an anticipated period of history after the two global wars when a global government would address worldwide problems and restore peace and prosperity in the world. This envisaged 'global government' created such international institutions as the UNO, and NATO. It was envisaged to be a method to prevent another world war and foster global justice and guarantee right of self-determination to all communities and nations. Foundation of World Federalist Movement was also an attempt to create the so called New World Order. However, this euphoria did not last long and was criticized by intellectuals and statesmen throughout the world.<sup>7</sup> An American writer Gary Allen for instance wrote in 1971 that the concept of "New World Order" was a surreptitious design of the USA to dissolve all national sovereignties and such was called a new global conspiracy."<sup>8</sup> After the collapse of titanic Communist bloc in the nineties of the last century, the extreme right wing discourse and politics looked optimistically to the imposition of the New World Order. On September 11, 1990, US president George Bush, in his speech to a joint session of the Congress, openly advocated post-Cold War global governance in collaboration with post-Soviet states. He said:

Until now, the world we've known has been a world divided—a world of barbed wire and concrete block, conflict and cold war. Now, we can see a new world coming into view. A world in which there is the very real prospect of a new world order. In the words of Winston Churchill, a "world order" in which "the principles of justice and fair play ... protect the weak against the strong ..." A world where the United Nations, freed from cold war stalemate, is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders. A world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations.<sup>8</sup>

With the announcement of the foreign policy of George Bush, the rational minds of the world were in unison to smell a great conspiracy to create a unipolar imperialism that was aimed at dissolution of all sovereign states and usurp their resources for the benefit of the USA. Making the NATO countries her allies, American government used the UNO as a camouflage for their new imperialistic designs to destabilize other countries and install such new governments everywhere as supported the American policies and allowed them access to oil resources. The progressive critics denounced this new world order as a rationalization for American ambition in the Middle East. Similarly, conservatives rejected it for being a conspiracy to impose a tyrannical collectivist system run by the United Nations. American investigative reporter chip Berlet analysis the Bush's version of "New World order."

When President Bush announced his new foreign policy that would help build a New World Order, his phrasing surged through the Christian and secular hard right like an electric shock, since the phrase had been used to represent the dreaded collectivist One World Government for decades. Some Christians saw Bush as signaling the End Times betrayal by a world leader. Secular anti communists saw a bold attempt to smash US sovereignty and impose a tyrannical collectivist system run by the United Nations.<sup>9</sup> Scathing criticism and denunciation of the aggressive policies and its secret conspiracy to make the UNO an instrument of imposing a tyrannical collective government was widespread. But the real situation obtaining throughout the world is that the successive presidents of the USA continue to interfere in other countries, send

their army and lethal arsenal and even their nuclear missiles to all regions and, without minding the consequences, or moral scruples, launches military aggressions. Since September 11, 1990, millions of army men and civilians of the target nations, and thousands of American soldiers have lost their lives. Several countries are left in chaotic civil wars, the land and industry of several nations have been destroyed by the NATO bombardment, millions have been displaced from their homes and the whole world is submerged in utter gloom of pessimism. There is no arsenal to counter the unbelievably powerful arsenal of the USA, no power can parallel the military might of the USA and no new ideology is possible now humanize the ferocity of the USA and instil new hope. In view of this gloomy picture of the contemporary world, the Non-Alignment Movement is the only hope.

This hope in the NAM is not baseless because the organization, though enfeebled, still exists. It is not mere nostalgia to recount the goals of the NAM, but an urgency to reinvigorate the organization and reorganize it in accordance with the new global realities. In the present context, non-alignment may be interpreted as not to get aligned with the US and the NATO policies. Unfortunately, because of the un-resolved regional conflicts, most of the countries surrender to the USA in order to get military and financial 'aid' to defeat their rival countries, and many countries on the other hand remain subservient to the USA because the undemocratic governments in such countries want to perpetuate their rule. This abject surrender is the biggest hurdle in rejuvenating the NAM as an effective resistance to the imperial designs of the USA. However, there is growing demand for the need of a stronger NAM because the five fundamental principles of the organization are relevant, and surely more relevant, though not sacrosanct, are certainly the best policy of non-alignment and respect for sovereignties of countries. The five principles, called *Panchsheel*, were:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Mutual non-aggression;
3. Mutual non-interference in domestic affairs,

4. Equality and mutual benefit, and

5. Peaceful coexistence.

The above principles were part of the treaty signed by Indo-China and later on accepted as the basis of NAM with certain changes in phrasing. Now we have the ten “Bandung Principles”<sup>10</sup> instead of the Panchsheel; which are as under:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.

3. Recognition of the movements for national independence.

4. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations, large and small.

5. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country.

6. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.

8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

9. Promotion of mutual interests and co-operation.

10. Respect for justice and international obligation.

In the light of the popularity of “globalization”, there are scholars who confuse non-alignment with isolationism, non-commitment, neutrality, neutralism and non-involvement. They say that when weaker countries, one after another, are being target of the USA and NATO aggression, the NAM is sitting on the fence and watching the disasters with total apathy. War on terror, invasion on Iraq, bombardment of Libya and destabilization in Egypt and dethroning Egyptian president. Now, mechanized civil war in Syria, sanctions on Iran and the impending attack, isolation of North Korea, and presence of US army in Pakistan are some recent glaring examples to show that no international unity could resist these aggression, and the NAM really proved its non-commitment,

apathy, and non-involvement. But the criticism, though based on facts, is not objective and rational. If the NAM or any member of the NAM interferred in stopping the aggression of US and the NATO on any of these members of the NAM, that would have given rise to a global war. And then militarily there no deterrence to the US war strategy because all defence weapons of other countries are like toys before the laser guided cruise mesiles, F-16's, the Drone surveillance aircrafts, and what not. In spite of this grim and gloomy situation, the NAM has still its significance.

Recognizing the inefficacy of weapons against the US war strategy, the NAM has to shift its focus to other aspects of modern world and use economy as the most efficient defence mechanism. Thus, the NAM is now advocating sustainable development and attainment of the 'Mllenum Development Goals.<sup>11</sup> The NAM countries have to forge unity to overcome all impediments like debt burden, unfair trade practices, donor conditionality, and lack of democracy in international financial decision making.

The role of the NAM in contemporary political situation and mono-axial power structure has to work in close collaboration in changing the current UN structure and power dynamics. The non-aligned states have to strive for the reforms in UN structure by implementing various recommendations aimed at strengthening representation of the member states of the NAM. In addition to this all member states are in consonance in changing the shape of the UN Security Council which is presently undemocratic and non-representative.

The NAM can get revitalized when there is perfect South-South Cooperation. Formation of Group of 77<sup>12</sup> is a positive step in strengthening unity among the countries of the South to stand as the most powerful economic power to desist domination by the North, particularly the USA. Various statements and declarations by the Group of 77 are definitely an effort to forge economic ties among the member states, and to produce congenial conditions for egalitarian distribution of opportunities of growth. The dialogue has also produced global awareness about the unity of the South so that it can influence the 21<sup>st</sup> century power structure of the world and stop monoaxial authority. Recognizing China and India as



major economic powers of the South, all the countries of the NAM have to be vigilant that strength of these two economies should not usurp the growth of other economies in the bloc, but bolster them through interdependence. This consciousness is gradually shared by all the member states of the NAM and is sure to produce dividend. One important aspect of unity among the NAM is preserve cultural diversity. In order to desist the process of synthesis through homogenization of cultures, the local, indigenous, and native values, tastes, and standards are to be strengthened. Sovereignty of nations and their identity can have continuity in times to come when different cultures and sub-cultures are preserved from the onslaught of globalization.

Safeguarding human rights is one more important aspect of NAM activity. It is possible only when all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, creed, sex and age are stopped. The definition of discrimination given by the Human Rights Committee in its 37th session in 1989 is very comprehensive:

Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which is based on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and which has the purpose or effect of mollifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by all persons, on an equal footing, of all rights and freedoms.<sup>13</sup>

There are many other areas of cooperation among the NAM countries and, as such, various task forces, working groups and committees have been constituted. Some of them are:

- High-Level Working Group for the Restructuring of the United Nations
- Working Group on Human Rights
- Working Group on Peace-Keeping Operations
- Working Group on Disarmament
- Committee on Palestine
- Standing Ministerial Committee for Economic Cooperation
- Joint Coordinating Committee (chaired by Chairman of G-77 and Chairman of NAM)

In order to continuous evaluation of the functioning of these committees and taking decisions about their restructuring the NAM has one more committee , called the Joint Coordinating Committee under the Chairmanship of the Chairman of G-77 and Chairman of the NAM. The most urgent task for the NAM is to renew itself; there is both space and need for the Non Aligned Countries. These post colonial countries are also recognized by the name of the Global South. Beside their common recent political identity and geographical truth, they have numerous common problems. At the present historical moment when the G8, and the G20 have the common interests of furthering and sustaining capitalist interests by usurping the natural resources and the human resource of the erstwhile colonies. The NAM countries, too, have to strengthen unity in safeguarding their mutual interests to counter the imperialistic designs of the USA and the concerned political alliances. The USA and the countries of G20 are united to have hegemony in international politics and economic interests. They continue to have this hegemony not only because of their unity, but because of the weakness and disunity of the other countries. The NAM countries can design their political and economic policies in accordance with the crises in international system: the crisis of the financial system, the Euro debt crisis, American debt crisis. The USA and Europe are already feeling threatened by the powerful economies in Asia and they call this threats 'Asia Century', which means the rising powers are from the developing countries of the South.<sup>14</sup> They are scared of the Asian tigers like China, India, Iran, Brazil, South Africa, and, Malaysia. They continue to weaken these potential economies by creating various political, and economic crises in these countries under the garb of UNO. Inorder to counter these nefarious designs of the hegemonic block, an active, vibrant and powerful NAM is the only hope of comparatively peaceful future.

To conclude, the Non-Alignment Movement established in 1961 is more relevant than it was during the years of the Cold War. The world is threatened by a monoaxial power structure of the world.<sup>15</sup> There is no super power now to work as a deterrent in desisting the neo-imperial designs of the single all dominating

power of the US and its allies. And at the same time the inexorable process of globalization is working havoc in the South bloc by paving way for economic exploitation of the weaker countries, homogenization of culture by effacing variety and colourfulness, and rendering all values of moral behavior, dress, diet and housing redundant. The Non-Alignment Movement is an effective, rather, the only forum to counter this spate of annihilation.<sup>16</sup> In order to bolster its potential the NAM has to redefine itself so that it can play its role more effectively. Some of its foundational principles, mainly national independence, territorial integrity, and the struggle against colonialism and imperialism, need to be modified so that they are compatible with contemporary issues. All the member countries of the movement feel that multilateralism, equality, and mutual non-aggression are inevitable to become efficacious force in the shape of the global South. In order to promote interests of the South, cooperation and unity amongst member states is the foremost condition. The size of the organisation and the divergence of agendas and allegiances are becoming major impediment in the process of unity and cohesion among the member countries. Then there are some member countries that have emerged as major economies and military powers and are seen as regional threats, there is cynicism about their sincerity. In spite of all these hurdles, the movement continues to remain the only possible “No” to the Imperial designs underlying the New World Order of the USA version. Many of the poorest member nations of the NAM remain exploited and marginalized; they are constrained to give up their policy of opposing the policies of the USA. The NAM can play its role in overcoming underdevelopment, poverty and dictatorships that are the cause of the surrender.

**Notes and References**

<sup>1</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> NAM summit. The Durban declaration of the new millennium 2 to 3 September 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Final Document of 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of heads of state and government of the non-aligned Movement, Cartagena, Colombia, 18-20 October, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Köchler (ed.), *The Principles of Non-Alignment. The Non-aligned Countries in the Eighties—Results and Perspectives*. London: Third World Centre, 1982. P. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Final Document of 14<sup>th</sup> Summit Conference of heads of state and government of the non-aligned Movement, Havana, Cuba, 11-16 September 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Havana Programme of action, group of 77, South Summit Havana, April 10-14, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Allen, Gary (1974). *Rockefeller: Campaigning for the New World Order*. American Opinion. P.29.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid P39.

<sup>8</sup> George Bush, US President address to joint session of the Congress, September 11, 1990.

<sup>9</sup> Chip Berlet. Dances With Devils. How Apocalyptic and Millennialist Themes Influence Right Wing Scapegoating and Conspiracism.

<sup>10</sup> Bandung Conference, a conference of Asian and African states in 1955 was hosted by Indonesian President Sukarno, who gave a significant contribution to promote this movement.

<sup>11</sup> Millennium Development Goals are eight international development goals that all 193 UN member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. The goals are:

- ❖ Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
- ❖ Achieving universal primary education
- ❖ Promoting gender equality and empowering women
- ❖ Reducing child mortality rates
- ❖ Improving maternal health
- ❖ Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- ❖ Ensuring environmental sustainability and
- ❖ Developing a global partnership for development

<sup>12</sup> Group of 77 at the United Nations is a loose coalition of developing nations, designed to promote its members collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations – Proceedings 1989.

<sup>13</sup> Ohlson, Thomas; *Stockholm (1988)*. Arms Transfer Limitations and Third World Security. *Oxford University Press*. P.110

<sup>14</sup> Allen, Gary (1987). *Say "No!" to the New World Order*. Concord Press. P.28.

<sup>15</sup> Dice, Mark (2010). *The New World Order: Facts & Fiction*. The Resistance. P.88.

<sup>16</sup> Robertson, Pat (1992). *The New World Order*. W Publishing Group. P.87.