

NON-ALIGNMENT MOVEMENT: ROLE & RELEVANCE

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MEANING

Non-alignment as the principle of foreign policy stand for the policy of keeping away from power politics, super power rivalry, cold war and the alliance systems of the hostile blocks it stands for independent action on the part of the non-aligned states in international relations. Its membership is 113 member nations. Non-alignment together with its offshoot – panchsheel and beneficial bilateralism and multilateralism constitute a model for a New World order. The credit for using for the first time the term “non-alignment” goes to George Lisca¹. Nehru also termed non-alignment as Independent Foreign Policy.

FEATURES OF NON-ALIGNMENT

- Opposition to Cold War
- Opposition to Military and Political Alliances
- Non-involvement in Power Politics
- Peaceful Co-existence and non-interference
- Independent foreign policy
- A policy of action and not isolationism
- It stands for distinguishing between the right and wrong and supporting the right
- Non-alignment is not alignment of the non-aligned
- Non-alignment is the policy of peaceful international intercourse and cooperation for development

ESSENTIALS OF NON-ALIGNMENT

- Independent foreign policy based upon non-alignment and peaceful co-existence
- Opposition to colonialism and support for liberation movements
- Non-membership of any military alliances or blocs
- Absence of bilateral military alliance with any big power
- Absence of foreign military base on the territory of the state

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NON-ALIGNMENT

¹ George Lisca, “Nations In Alliance, p.202

- It is an unrealistic and idealistic principle
- It has been a source of friendlessness
- It is a principle of inaction and pacifism
- It is really double alignment
- It has ceased to be a relevant principle

JUSTIFICATION OF NON-ALIGNMENT

- It is a realistic and a pragmatic concept
- It involves full action and participation in international relations
- It has helped the new states to act out their desired roles in international relations
- It acted as a source of influence on the policies of USA and USSR
- It is not double alignment
- It has played the positive role in ending the cold war

MERITS OF NON-ALIGNMENT

For the non-aligned nations, the policy of non-alignment has helped to –

- Maintain their independence of action
- To secure economic aid
- To concentrate upon the task of internal reconstruction and development
- To play an active role in international relations
- To consolidate the unity and solidarity of the third world
- To raise their voice against neo-colonialism and to work for securing a NIEO
- To establish cooperative and friendly relations with both the communist and non-communist states
- To check the spread of cold war
- Preventing a third world war
- Securing of peaceful co-existence and cooperative interaction among all states
- Making the UNO a stable international organization
- Helping and strengthening of international consciousness in favor of peace, security and prosperity and against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and apartheid²

SUMMITS OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

² George Schwarzenberger, “The Scope for Neutralism”, Year Book of World Affairs, 1961, P.233

Nearly two-third of the total members of the international community regards non-alignment as the fundamental principle of their foreign policies. It has been instrumental in transforming nationalism into internationalism and bipolarity into polycentrism. The first stage of emergence of NAM came in the form of adoption of non-alignment as a fundamental principle of their foreign policy by several states such as India, Burma, Indonesia, Egypt, Yugoslavia and Ghana. Nehru, Nasser and Tito become the torchbearers of this movement. The lead that India took in holding the Asians Relations Conference in New Delhi 1947 and the success, with which the prominent leaders of Asia and Africa could organize the Bandung Conference in April 1955, went a long way in preparing the ground work for the emergence of the movement of the non-alignment in international relations.

The following summits of non-alignment are as follows –

- The Belgrade summit 1961
- The Cairo summit 1964
- The Lusaka Summit 1970
- The Algiers summit 1973
- The Colombo summit 1976
- The Havana summit 1979
- The new Delhi summit 1983
- The Harare summit 1986
- The Belgrade summit 1989
- The Jakarta summit 1992
- The Cartagena (Colombia) summit 1995
- The Durban summit 1998
- The Kuala Lumpur summit 2003
- The last summit(18th) was held on Oct.25,2019 at Baku of the Republic of Azerbaijan

RELEVANCE OF NAM IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Over the years NAM has developed into a movement for the independence, political and economic, of all the countries. As such it continues to be a fully relevant movement. The successful movements in Eastern Europe towards democracy, multiparty system, exercise of human rights, opening up of economies and their integration with the global economy have been in unison with the spirit of non-alignment. The new emphasis upon peaceful coexistence, cooperation and peaceful resolution of conflicts doubly vindicate the principle of NAM.

Many of the important objectives of the NAM are of a long-term nature, such as establishing the NIEO and the democratization of the international system and its functioning. Surely, no one can expect the achievement of these large worldwide objectives in the foreseeable future. Hence NAM is destined to remain alive, active and relevant in the 21st century also. The 10th and 11th NAM summits have exhibited the resolve of the member countries to keep up and strengthen NAM as a group of countries united to oppose the forces of neo-colonialism and intervention.

In the 18th Summit, India has raised the pertinent issues of contemporary threats— whether it is terrorism, climate change, pandemics, financial crises, or cyber security and exhorted all members to contrive for a sustainable strategy to eradicate them. Perhaps our anticipation of pandemics in the current period has come true as this disease has surpassed the border and nations are still hankering for the remedy. The NAM has a special purpose to reach out to the poor nations in terms of providing them immediate as well as the long term relief.

One of the principle tasks of the NAM would, therefore, be to create a balanced, equitable, democratic and universal world power structure which is predicated on peace, disarmament and development. Indian foreign policy stands committed to all this and fully upholds non-alignment as one of its cardinal features. The differences among the members of NAM should also be accepted as a sign of vibrancy of NAM. Democratization of international system can be described as the agenda of NAM in the coming centuries.
