

Background of NAM

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was created and founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War. During the early days of the Movement, its actions were a key factor in the decolonization process, which led later to the attainment of freedom and independence by many countries and peoples and to the founding of tens of new sovereign States. Throughout its history, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has played a fundamental role in the preservation of world peace and security.

The Non-Aligned Movement was formed as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral. The basic concept for the group originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference held in Indonesia. The first NAM Summit Conference took place in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September 1961. Currently the NAM has 120 members. There are also 17 countries and 10 international organizations that are Observers at NAM.

The Non-Aligned Movement was founded and held its first conference (the Belgrade Conference) in 1961 under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia. The purpose of the organization was enumerated in Havana Declaration of 1979 to ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries" in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign subjugation. During the cold war era the NAM played a vital role in stabilizing the world order and preserving peace and security.

Evolution of NAM

The creation and strengthening of the socialist block after the defeat of fascism in World War II, the collapse of colonial empires, the emergence of a bipolar world and the formation of two military blocks (NATO and the Warsaw Pact) brought about a new international context that led to the necessity of multilateral coordination between the countries of the South. In this context, the underdeveloped countries, most of them in Asia and Africa, felt the need to join efforts for the common defense of their interests, the strengthening of their independence and sovereignty and the cultural and economic revival of their peoples, and also to express a strong commitment with peace by declaring themselves as "non-aligned" from either of the two military blocks.

In order to fulfill the aims of debating on and advancing a strategy designed to achieve such objectives, the Bandung Asian-African Conference was held in Indonesia in April 1955. It was attended by 29 Heads of State and Government of the first postcolonial generation of leaders and its expressed goal was to identify and assess world issues at the time and coordinate policies to deal with them. The shared program included the political decolonization of Asia and Africa. Moreover, they all agreed that the recently attained political independence was just a means to attain the goal of economic, social and cultural independence.

The principles that would govern relations among large and small nations, known as the "Ten Principles of Bandung", were proclaimed at that Conference. Such principles were adopted later as the main goals and objectives of the policy of non-alignment.

Principles of NAM

The ten principles of Bandung

- Respect of fundamental human rights and of the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
- Respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
- Recognition of the equality among all races and of the equality among all nations, both large and small.
- Non-intervention or non-interference into the internal affairs of another -country.
- Respect of the right of every nation to defend itself, either individually or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
- Non-use of collective defense pacts to benefit the specific interests of any of the great powers.
- Non-use of pressures by any country against other countries.
- Refraining from carrying out or threatening to carry out aggression, or from using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.
- Peaceful solution of all international conflicts in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
- Promotion of mutual interests and of cooperation.
- Respect of justice and of international obligations.

Objectives of NAM

- NAM has sought to "create an independent path in world politics that would not result in member States becoming pawns in the struggles between the major powers."
- It identifies the right of independent judgment, the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, and the use of moderation in relations with all big powers as the three basic elements that have influenced its approach.
- At present, an additional goal is facilitating a restructuring of the international economic order.

- The Non-aligned Movement repeatedly comes out for maintenance of peace, and the cessation of arms race and the peaceful coexistence of all States. In the General Assembly, India submitted a draft resolution declaring that the use of nuclear weapons would be against the charter of the United Nations and crime against humanity and should therefore be prohibited.
- UNSC reforms: Right from its inception NAM was in the favour of UNSC reforms, it was against the domination of US and USSR. It wanted the representation of third world countries to make UNSC more democratic. Members echoed with same demand at 17th NAM conference at Venezuela.
- As one Summit after another was held in the 1960s and 1970s, "non alignment", turned already into the "Movement of Non-Aligned Countries" that included nearly all Asian and African countries, was becoming a forum of coordination to struggle for the respect of the economic and political rights of the developing world. After the attainment of independence, the Conferences expressed a growing concern over economic and social issues as well as over strictly political matters.

Purposes of NAM

- To promote and reinforce multilateralism and, in this regard, strengthen the central role that the United Nations must play.
- To serve as a forum of political coordination of the developing countries to promote and defend their common interests in the system of international relations
- To promote unity, solidarity and cooperation between developing countries based on shared values and priorities agreed upon by consensus.

- To defend international peace and security and settle all international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the principles and the purposes of the UN Charter and International Law.

- To encourage relations of friendship and cooperation between all nations based on the principles of International Law, particularly those enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

- To promote and encourage sustainable development through international cooperation and, to that end, jointly coordinate the implementation of political strategies which strengthen and ensure the full participation of all countries, rich and poor, in the international economic relations, under equal conditions and opportunities but with differentiated responsibilities.

- To encourage the respect, enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, on the basis of the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity, avoiding politicization of human rights issues, thus ensuring that all human rights of individuals and peoples, including the right to development, are promoted and protected in a balanced manner.

- To promote peaceful coexistence between nations, regardless of their political, social or economic systems.

- To condemn all manifestations of unilateralism and attempts to exercise hegemonic domination in international relations.

- To coordinate actions and strategies in order to confront jointly the threats to international peace and security, including the threats of use of force and the acts of aggression, colonialism and foreign occupation, and other breaches of peace caused by any country or group of countries.

- To promote the strengthening and democratization of the UN, giving the General Assembly the role granted to it in accordance with the functions and powers outlined in the Charter and to promote the comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council so that it may fulfil the role granted to it by the Charter, in a transparent and equitable manner, as the body primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

- To continue pursuing universal and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. Also to work towards the objective of arriving at an agreement on a phased program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time to eliminate nuclear weapons, to prohibit their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

- To promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to facilitate access to nuclear technology, equipment and material for peaceful purposes required by developing countries.

- To promote concrete initiatives of South-South cooperation and strengthen the role of NAM, in coordination with G.77, in the re-launching of North-South cooperation, ensuring the fulfilment of the right to development of our peoples, through the enhancement of international solidarity.

- To respond to the challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities arising from globalization and interdependence with creativity and a sense of identity in order to ensure its benefits to all countries, particularly those most affected by underdevelopment and poverty, with a view to gradually reducing the abysmal gap between the developed and developing countries.

- To enhance the role that civil society, including NGO's, can play at the regional and international levels in order to promote the purposes, principles and objectives of the Movement.

India's Position in NAM

- India being a founder and largest member in NAM was an active participant in NAM meetings till 1970s but India's inclination towards erstwhile USSR created confusions in smaller members. It led to the weakening of NAM and small nations drifted towards either US or USSR.
- Further disintegration of USSR led the unipolar world order dominated by US. India's New Economic Policy and inclination towards US raised questions over India's seriousness over non alignment.
- Prime Minister of India skipped the 17th Non Aligned Movement (NAM) summit held in Venezuela in 2016, it was only second such instance when Head of a state didn't participate in NAM conference.
- Moreover, NAM continued losing relevance for India in a unipolar world, especially after the founding members failed to support India during crisis. For instance, during 1962 War with China, Ghana and Indonesia, adopted explicitly pro-China positions. During 1965 and 1971 wars, Indonesia and Egypt took an anti-India stance and supported Pakistan.

Challenges for NAM

- World has again moved towards bi-polarity, one led by US and other by China-Russia. The war torn Syria is prime example of this, where both US and Russia is asserting power.
- The escalating tension in Indo-pacific region due to China's assertion and US acting as a counterweight to check the Chinese expansionist policy.
- The large scale migration in Europe and Asia due to the unstable regimes and ethnic conflict in different parts of world.
- Issue of global climate change.
- Changing US policies, protectionism, prevalent terrorism and nuclearisation of Middle East.

Relevance of NAM

- NAM continues to hold relevance as a platform and due to its principles.
- NAM has played an active role in preserving world peace. It still stands by its founding principles, idea and purpose i.e. to establish the peaceful and prosperous world. It prohibited invasion of any country, promoted disarmament and a sovereign world order.
- During the 1970s and 1980s, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries played a key role in the struggle for the establishment of a new international economic order that allowed all the peoples of the world to make use of their wealth and natural resources and provided a wide platform for a fundamental change in international economic relations and the economic emancipation of the countries of the South.
- Territorial integrity and sovereignty - NAM stands with this principle and proved its repeated relevance with the idea of preserving the independence of every nation.
- Third World nations - Third world countries fighting against socio-economic problems since they have been exploited for a long time by other developed nations, NAM acted as a protector for these small countries against the western hegemony.

- Support in UN - NAM's total strength comprises of 118 developing countries and most of them being a member of UN General Assembly. It represents two third members of general assembly, hence NAM members act as important vote blocking group in UN.
- Equitable world order - NAM promotes equitable world order. It can act as a bridge between the political and ideological differences existing in the international environment.
- Interest of developing countries - If disputes arise between developed and developing nation at any point of a concerned topic for example WTO, then NAM act as a platform which negotiates and conclude disputes peacefully securing the favorable decisions for each member nation.
- Cultural diversity and human rights - In the environment of gross human right violation, it can provide a platform to raise such issues and resolve the same through its principles.
- Sustainable development - NAM supported the concept of sustainable development and can lead the world toward sustainability. Can be used as larger platform to make consensus on global burning issues like climate change, migration and global terrorism.

Conclusion

NAM as a concept can never be irrelevant; principally it provides a strong base to foreign policy of its members. It should be used as a platform to raise global issues like terrorism, climate change and trade protectionism and others. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries could not spare itself difficulties to act effectively in an adverse international political situation marked by hegemonic positions and unipolarity as well as by internal difficulties and conflicts given the heterogeneity of its membership and, thus, its diverse interests.

Nevertheless, and in spite of such setbacks, the principles and objectives of non-alignment retain their full validity and force at the present international juncture. The primary condition that led to the emergence of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, that is, non-alignment from antagonistic blocks, has not lost its validity

with the end of the Cold War. The demise of one of the blocks has not done away with the pressing problems of the world. On the contrary, renewed strategic interests bent on domination grow stronger and, even; acquire new and more dangerous dimensions for underdeveloped countries.

The movement has succeeded to create a strong front on the International level, representing countries of the third world in the International organizations on top of which the United Nations.

Current challenges facing the NAM also include the necessity of protecting the principles of International law, eliminating weapons of mass destruction, combating terrorism, defending human rights, working toward making the United Nations more effective in meeting the needs of all its member states in order to preserve International Peace, Security and Stability, as well as realizing justice in the international economic system.

Though the long-standing goals of the Movement remain to be realized. Peace, development, economic cooperation and the democratization of international relations, to mention just a few, are old goals of the non-aligned countries.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement, faced with the goals yet to be reached and the many new challenges that are arising, still the Movement played an important role in the support of nations which were struggling then for their independence in the Third World and showed great solidarity with the most just aspirations of humanity. It contributed indisputably to the triumph in the struggle for national independence and decolonization, thus gaining considerable diplomatic prestige.

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