

**INDIA AND NAM  
Embracing Policy of Engagement without Entanglement**

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**Abstract**

*The changing dynamics of global politics has increased uncertainty in the functioning of global institutions. End of Cold War period, emergence of multipolarity, rise of revisionist China and engagement and entanglement of major powers has made the choices tough for almost all the nations. Even during Cold War defining the Indian policy of nonalignment was difficult but India decided to remain nonaligned. Nonalignment was singled out as well calibrated move to pursue an independent stand on India's national interest. As Pandit Nehru conceived it as a strategy and not as dogma. And till today, it is the safe bet for India. Though the publication of NAM 2 has raised the argument of continuation of NAM in its present form. Undoubtedly, India needs this [doctrine as](#) new permutations and equations need deeper engagement with its friends as well as its competitors without losing its validity. Shashi Tharoor in his book PAX Indica suggested to focus more on Multialignment rather than so called Nonalignment that limits Indian approach towards other meaningful alignments. NAM is a policy that still promises advantageous position for India. This research paper conceptualises that it is impracticable for India to move away from this policy as Shushma Swaraj said '**NAM is our Heritage**. "As Nehru asserted that to remain aloof from military blocs doesn't mean that India will shun its role in global politics." This viewpoint engages India to act as a catalyst force for underprivileged teeming millions by addressing and redressing their newly emerged problems through the credentials of NAM. By holding the flagship of NAM it can provide a forum for multilateral engagement to control not only the forces of neo colonialism but also to continue its purpose of addressing major concerns of weaker societies like Environmental degradation, Climate Change, external debt and global terrorism in any form.*

**Key words:**

Cold War, NiEO, terrorism, Climate Change, multialignment, Strategic Autonomy

**Introduction**

Nehru said at 1st NAM conference in 1961 that "The power of nation assembled here is not military power or economic power nevertheless it is power." India since its inception has cleared its objective of resolving world issues. Despite problems of NAM many states want to be part of this group as it serves as a useful support system for third world countries.

Shenon on 1992 A western diplomat while observing the Jakarta summit opined that 'A lot of these tiny nations are praying that the NAM movement can survive and advocate on their behalf because most of the nations just are not capable of doing it for themselves. This reality is still there Third World societies are not individualistic; they are collective communities.

The whole philosophy of NAM is that it remains united on larger global approach though it may not side with a member on specific issues. As Camp David Accord between Israel and Egypt treaty of India with USSR didn't result in any disruption of membership. It is a heritage that can be leveraged. Infact it may not be a forum to resolve the bilateral problems because it is not a dispute resolution mechanism but of course it will actively assist those who need its assistance because the very nature of NAM permits state-centric stance as well. Numerous instances vindicate that India has reserved its position and acted independently although NAM is a fulcrum to address new configurations thereby solidifying itself to resolve common global issues. All nations have the right of unity, self-determination and independence by virtue of which right can determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development without intimidation or hindrance. India will lead to remove economic imbalances inherited from the era of colonialism and imperialism. Colonialism might have ended but the policy of domination has not ceased. India adopted this policy with two dimensional approach-One was to shun military bloc politics thereby defying water tight compartments and second contour of this approach was to ultimately pursue

independent stance and reassert its presence in global matters showcasing its importance as a global player.

As Nehru said In his speech on 9th Dec. 1958, "We don't align ourselves with either bloc but the policy itself can be a policy of acting according to our best judgement and furthering the principle objectives and ideas that we have..."

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi had reminded the nations of the World in July, 1991: "We seek an India in world order in which quest for dominance yields to peaceful Coexistence among sovereign nations, a world based on equality, democracy and constructive cooperation among countries..."

The philosophy of NAM doesn't belong to a bygone era, India is still wary of military alliance systems and like acting in the past it wants to recalibrate its independent approach towards global matters. Such as Neo imperialism, Terrorism, Climate change Disarmament [etc.in](#) form of new relics such as Strategic autonomy or multialignment or Multilateralism. Although Shyam Saran viewed in his book that the search for Strategic autonomy has been a consistent theme of India's external engagements. At one moment this organisation faced existential threat as many countries started going away from this organisation. Argentina dropped its membership not only this membership threat but also lack of economic orientation, advent of other parallel organisations placed NAM under scanner. In increasingly globalised and interconnected world where non state actors and civil society organisations are parallelly posing challenges to the sovereign nation state system, this policy is best argued as the capability of a state to take relatively autonomous decisions on important national as well as global issues. Chinese policy of upending USA world order and establishing itself as global hegemon compels India to challenge this hegemony by leading the global South. Geopolitical and geoeconomics challenges of today has thrown a volley of complex interstate relationships. fledgling position of USSR after end of Cold War dared America to act like a colossus over non spirited Europe, restored its hegemony in Gulf war and in real terms defined the moves of IMF and trade practice s unilaterally thereby jeopardised the national interests of other players. Here Indian NAM policy needs to be revitalized as China is fast filling the void left by Soviet Union. India needs to redefine its priorities towards NAM in this complex world of many other potential powers. NAM can provide strategic global reach by strategic support to the global south.

Even Venezuelan President Madura reminded "The emergence of Multipolarity needs to be shaped by the Global South whose instrument is NAM."

These countries are existing together not to form another bloc but to raise the voices of the exploited millions through a moral and peaceful political movement. Mrs Gandhi referred NAM as the biggest peace movement of the world. Nehru launched this as a global egalitarian movement that can be instrumental in setting up a body of rules for the developing societies. The world cannot be seen from a single prism of cold war, new assumptions and permutations have taken place due to process of globalization. Without changing the base of our foreign policy, There is urgent need for nuanced shifting of approach as India can successfully spearhead the cause of global south through the NAM only because the core philosophy of NAM can't be diluted.

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Nonalignment was mooted a year before independence of India. In a radio broadcast in Sept 1946 Pandit Nehru considered NAM as one of the pillars of Indian foreign policy. Even after independence pursuing the Policy of NAM was a wise course for India to adopt.

Shyam Saran defended the much-aligned policy of NAM as one based on a realistic assessment of Cold War politics. But The end of Cold War politics inescapably put forth into question the very existence of NAM as it was contended that without Cold War there is no reason to continue with this relic. It is debated that many declared aims have lost its sheen as Colonialism and apartheid are ideas of bygone era but only this platform of NAM can check the dominance of core states through collective efforts. In this regard different scholars and writers have underlined varying perspectives. Jagat Mehta pp6 Why not the mission declares accomplished and discontinues the ritual continuation of NAM."

Other scholar like Prof Hans Koechler envisioned, "The NAM has no charter. It has no statue unlike other international organisations . Further

Jansen in 1989 maintained that the organisation now has little or nothing to do with nonalignment as such.

But the Collapse of bipolar world and emergence of new players in world politics have led to further injustice and NAM becomes important to arrest military and economic coercion as When US Secretary of State **Condoleezza Rice** questioned the relevance of NAM by saying Nonalignment had lost it's meaning as it made sense only when the world was divided into two opposite camps, Our ministry of external affairs snubbed the idea and affirmed its abiding commitment to its ideals that shaped much of Indian foreign policy through the decades after independence.

**K.v Malhotra** another expert averred that NAM is perhaps even more relevant now to international relations and development than at any time in the history."

Our former President **Pranab Mukerjee** was of the view that NAM has contemporary relevance, "its relevance lies in promoting North South dialogue, South South cooperation...."

**N. Krishnan**, "The Cold War has ended but the dynamics of globalisation have produced a whole set of new problems which NAM must take note of."

During NAM summit in Tehran in 2012 **Dr. Manmohan Singh** urged the NAM grouping to play a reconciling role in a " highly uncertain and insecure world". He went on record by saying , "nonalignment is a state of mind to think independently about our options, to widen our development choices."

**U.N. Secerety Genral Ki moon** remarked, in 2009 , " No country can solve problems alone. That raises the stakes and the space for NAM."

History has shown that Nonalignment is an idea that evolved but doesn't fade. We will not let it die in the history books and jointly take it forward, harnessing it to make a formidable force to meet the challenges of today." like Climate change , global terrorism, protection of human rights, neo-colonialism and UN reforms . It is not a mere assembly of states rather a push factor.

In Tehran summit in 2012 Our Indian PM reiterated that our shared objective of working together to preserve strategic space that is as true and relevant today as they were in the past.

### **Objective of the study**

1. Indian viewpoint of NAM after NAM.2 •
2. Approach of Indian Government towards this organisation not only from Indian perspective but also from global viewpoint.

### **Methodology**

This paper has largely relied upon secondary data to authenticate its viewpoint. During analysis of this paper, sources were explored from original resolutions, NAM summits, scholarly books and articles from journals. The researcher adopted both descriptive and analytical method to establish the fact that NAM is not irrelevant for India rather ambiguous global politics demand its presence to shape the truly equitable and just world order.

### **Analysis and interpretation**

NAM can be hailed as not only the biggest constituency of the world but also as biggest Peace movement. But the changing perspectives and fluidity of global politics such as multialignment and multipolarity and multilateralism regional considerations cast doubts about working strategy of NAM. As Rauch in 2008 pointed out, "the end of cold war and the resulting reapproachment between the former blocs have rendered the NAM irrelevant."

But foreign policy all the time need not be transactional and NAM will remain a part of Indian vision for the world today, it may be sound to be inconsequential.

During 13th summit, Malaysian PM said, " We must struggle for justice and freedom from oppression, economic hegemony.

Speaking in the constituent assembly on March 8, 1948, Nehru said: What does joining a bloc mean? After all, it can only mean one thing—give up your view about a particular question, adopt the other party's view of that particular question in order to please it and gain its favour....” Nonalignment would mean keeping India's options open, to take independent decisions, to judge issues on their merit and play a role to lessen tension and preserve peace. For Nehru a large and richly endowed country must stand on its own. Without peace India cannot develop economically, but it is also true that peace was deeply entangled in superpower rivalry. Therefore enlargement of non-bloc area was an important input for our own independence and development. Nonalignment was as important for India as it was for other countries. It is a fallacy that India might gain more by weaning away from this strategy and gain friends through multiple alignments. Indian foreign policy can't afford to be transactional in nature, it has to be holistic to promise south-south cooperation. The need is to rewrite its role instead of passing itself as a movement of Cold War politics.

Shashi Tharoor has said that new world politics cannot be locked into two blocs.... The new networked world welcomes every nation. Given the sensitive mindset of exhibiting strategic autonomy and multiple crisscrossing alignments India envisions, embracing NAM is a safe bet in times to come. The priority is to lead the poor countries to render them justice and for this goal we have to strengthen regional cooperation as well. It is on this belief that all bloc barriers need to be demolished and work for peaceful coexistence. With the deideologised world new configurations and new regions have gained importance and NAM is the biggest initiative for this purpose. NAM's true perspective and sound moorings enable India to become an important force in the changing perspectives of global politics. When India became a signatory to all the USA related foundational agreements such as BECA and IEMOA in 2016. Which were previously avoided on the ground that it would compromise Indian security and independence in military matters it was argued that on one side we talk about Strategic autonomy but through signature India appears to become part of the wider **anti-China Coalition** of the willing.” Has India jettisoned its previous policy of neutrality and of maintaining equidistance from power blocs. But it is not so because unsettled global order cannot dictate India to wholly push itself towards USA Sphere of influence.

In this quagmire like situation India will not shun its strategic autonomy by embracing other alignments as well. In a world where blocs and alliances are formally losing their importance the need is to embrace NAM not to veer away from it. When there is talk of alliances then non-military alliances very much come within the ambit of Nonalignment which is featured as Strategic autonomy. Under new geo-political realities without fail, it is a necessary engagement rather than dilemma of entanglement. Political issues engage NAM we get benefits from its activism and through its voice expansion of membership of security council by including Germany and Japan was checked and ensured that no quick fix to be allowed. Our nearness to any country USA or Russia is not a red tag in NAM and individual countries can have bilateral relations but India can use NAM platform as an instrument to project its viewpoint on multiple issues. India can't afford to bid farewell to NAM because the policy was adopted as a larger vision for both itself and the World. Nonaligned world needs to be guided by pragmatism and backed up by a firm commitment to economic targets.

Suhasni Haider has said, ” Given the stormy waters and multiple criss-crossing alignments India now envisions, it may be a safer shore for India's future as well.”

### **Significance**

NAM is not vague, not anachronistic, not negative, its philosophy is alive forever. It is an organisation that may need reorientation to deliver more positive results. In continuation of this motif Nonalignment seeks national independent policy to strive for peace policy of engagement for global cooperation for promoting mutual benefits and disengagement from entanglement in military alliances. Challenges are galore and time is not easy in this complicated world of crises but India needs to use its moral power to strengthen this organization.

Mrs Gandhi said in 7th Summit “Powerful states propagate the untenable doctrine of deterrence “ “But our response must be surer, swifter and sharper.” Only with Coexistence can there be any

existence. Deterrence is possible not only due to economic weakness but also by our sharp divisions and discords within our movement.

In his book, "The Darker Nations" Vijay Prasad framed NAM as a crucial historical effort by newly independent countries to advocate for a more equitable world order. The global South desired to build an alternative form of internationalism to counter western dominance of which NAM is a key example. India argued vehemently against those who tried to dub it as organisation losing its utility. As the main focus of NAM was freedom of thought and action, India reinforces that it was relevant for ever whether there is one bloc or no bloc. While talking about reforms in UN Security Council, NAM Platform was availed to check USA and others to include Germany and Japan as permanent members.

In 2012 Nonalignment 2 was mooted to surmount the challenges of rivalry between America and China and monitor the growing space for India in newer global situation. It is not a question of becoming powerful but also setting an agenda for what the powerful should do.

### **Conclusion**

NAM is undergoing structure transformation because of epochal shift. The process of globalisation has changed the economic structure thereby causing untold misery to the periphery states. Under such circumstances NAM cannot surrender its role. Infact it will have to shed preconceived notions as mere symbolism and shibboleths can't bring about desired results. **"India must remain true to its aspiration of creating a new and alternative universality."** As the global system is still unsettled, to complete the travesty of becoming Super power, the policy has to be holistic in nature. Countries can have bilateral relations with USA, China or Russia but the real dilemma is to cobble their joint interest without undue influence of these three powers. NAM symbolises the desire of global South to ascertain their own viewpoint on climate change, Technology transfer.

If NAM withdraws its role, the global governance will be the biggest loser. NAM will not go, It needs to grow as the global South is committed to get just world order irrespective of their political or economic status. As Shashi Tharoor said'. For India the nonaligned movement remains a necessary reflection of its anti-colonial heritage."

Our former PM Mrs. Indira Gandhi in her address at Algiers conference of NAM countries said, "We are here because of our convictions and in response to the inspiration which brought us together.... We have a part to play in the remaking of the world. It is still relevant due to its **unfinished agenda**. The unfinished mission is proper utilisation of resources for service of promoting good of humanity and setting up fair, just and egalitarian society to end all hues of inequalities not only among the people but also amongst all the nations

**Mrs. Gandhi asserted**, "The unfinished revolution must continue...until the power at the disposal of nations I tamed through institutions in which all people can participate." We must speak for those whose number is large but whose voice is muted....their right to a life of dignity is indisputable.."

NAM after all is not an ideology, It is a broad based movement of poorer countries having common goals. Nowhere the Indian dispensation has discarded its relevance, rather it is hailed as the moral voice of the global South. Although Nehru cautioned India of limits of Indian ability to influence events when he added, "We should be strong enough to produce some effect we should not interfere at all." But today India is strong enough and no gain saying the fact that There is no better bet than India to lead this visionary organisation with defined direction.

Not banish non alignment as Shyam Saran has said rather to rewrite its importance for rewriting Common destiny of mankind of Global South I.e equitable, balanced multipolar world free from clutches of neo-colonialism, trade malpractices, nuclear monster, Climate pollution ghost of terrorism, cyber security and above all saving the human values. India needs to bind all these sufferers anew to the newer active Nonalignment." Foreign policy cannot merely be transactional and it has to be holistic and this agenda setting mechanism can be NAM only where collaboration not coercion is the only option. In this new geopolitics and geo economics India will have to take the lead in governance strategy and blunt the power politics of nations and ossify the blueprint of this largest constituency of third world commensurate with protection of their multiple interests. To be sure we

are responsible not to our individual countries alone but towards prosperity of peace as well. To achieve this goal, need is to resuscitate this organisation I.e NAM As Nehru in his book Discovery of India said regarding NAM page 597,"Whatever happens it Will be well for the world if India can make her influence felt.For that influence will always be in favour of peace and cooperation...."

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