

Historical Background and First Non-Aligned Summit Conference

Dr. Syed Kazim Raza Zaidi

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Shia P.G. College, Lucknow

SOVIET PERSPECTIVE OF NAM

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

India is the first non-aligned country and the doctrine of non-alignment was first formulated by its outstanding leader Jawaharlal Nehru.⁽¹⁾ In Nehru's conception non-alignment did not mean "disassociation" from the foreign powers, but also active opposition to their aggressive policy by non-aligned countries acting separately or in league with other freedom loving and peaceable anti-imperialist forces of the world.⁽²⁾

In view of this approach to the world politics Nehru considered it out of the question for India to align itself with any of the power blocs, and he made this clear on more than one occasion even before India emerged as an independent country on 15, August 1947. In his announcement of 7 September 1946, as 3. vice-President of Interim Government of India,⁽³⁾ Nehru said: "we propose as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one the another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale".⁽⁴⁾

When India got independence on 15 August 1947, Nehru defined his concept of non-alignment and declared India's firm determination to pursue an independent non-aligned foreign policy. The policy of keeping away from military alliances was and it was not properly understood both in India and abroad. And it was wrongly interpreted as the policy of neutrality or neutralism. Nehru did not like to call India's policy of non-alignment even of positive neutrality. He declared repeatedly that: "we have proclaimed during this past year that we will not attach ourselves to any



particular group. That has nothing to do with neutrality... 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's policy of non-alignment was a positive policy, and a policy to remain independent in foreign affairs and to judge issue on merit. Such a policy provided the non-aligned states with a free choice of positions on major international issues without associating themselves with the policies of great powers. ⁽⁷⁾

The policy of non-alignment was based on Peaceful Coexistence with different social systems. India wanted to develop friendly relations with all newly independent nations of Asia and Africa because it felt that the problem of India and other newly independent countries were more or less the same and that these problems can be solved only by the unified efforts of Afro-Asian States that is why even before India's independence Asian Relations conference was attended by 28 countries and representatives of some republics of the soviet union. ⁽⁸⁾

Opening the Asian Relations Conference Nehru said: "Perhaps one of the notable consequences of European domination of Asia has been the isolation of the countries of Asia from one another... As that domination goes, the walls that surrounded us fall down and we look at one another again and meet as old friends long parted. ⁽⁹⁾

The main speech delivered by Nehru at Asian Relations Conference dealt with far more broader foreign policy issues, Nehru said: "We have no designs against any body; ours is the great design of promoting Peace and and progress all over the world ... For too long we of Asia have been petitioners in Western courts and chancelleries ... We propose to stand on our own legs and to cooperate with us. We do not intend to be the playthings of others".

Nehru, reiterated and expounded the foreign policy of India in his address to Indian Constituent Assembly,⁽¹¹⁾ he said: "The main subject in foreign policy today is vaguely talked of in terms of



"Do you belong to this group or that group" ? That is an utter simplification of issues We have sought to avoid foreign entanglements by not Joining one bloc or the other ... We were trying to act according to our own lights and according to the merits of the dispute as they seemed to us".⁽¹²⁾

Nehru regarded non-alignment as an effective instrument in the hands of the newly free nations, with the help of which they could pursue an independent foreign policy".⁽¹³⁾

In January 1949, in view of Holland having launched an aggression against Indonesia , a Conference of Foreign Ministers of Asian Nations was convened in Delhi. It called on the UN Security Council to take the necessary steps to curb the Dutch aggression and carry out measures aimed at enforcing its recommendation should Holland fail to comply with it. The question was raised at the Conference of the need to set up a permanent regional organization of Asian-nations to defend their security.⁽¹⁴⁾ At the opening of the Conference Nehru said: "That the free countries of Asia should begin to think of some more permanent arrangement than this Conference for effective mutual consultation and concerted effort in the pursuit of common aims ...?" .⁽¹⁵⁾

One of the resolutions adopted at the Foreign Minister's Conference pointed out that the participating states must consult one another out in order to study ways and means of creating an appropriate regional mechanism to promote consultations and cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.⁽¹⁶⁾

The years of 1949 and 1950 were a period of trial for India's non-alignment. The Korean crisis put India's non- alignment to test, for with a highly critical China, it was difficult for India to intervene without incurring Beijing's wrath. Nehru did not want to offend China. In the event, India 's role was appreciated by USA, China and the USSR. The USA was hurt that democratic India did not side with the Western democracies. Tibet was another challenge to Nehru's non-alignment. Its annexation by China without even a guarantee of autonomy, left Nehru with no option but to protest. India's constructive role in the UN over the Korean question as a peacemaker (it voted in the UN calling North Korea as the aggressor) and its handling of the Chinese question



established for the first time that India was impartial as between the West and the East and it was not appeasing anyone. In the 1950s India's policy of non-alignment came under severe attack in USA. It was linked to neutrality which, the USA suggested, was equal to playing the communist game. Nehru was under pressure both at home and abroad to change the policy one way or the other. ⁽¹⁷⁾

References

1. Kovalenko, Ivan and Tuzmukhamedov, Rais, *The Non-Aligned Movement: The Soviet View* (Sterling, New Delhi, 1987), p. 12
2. . Khan, Alim, *The Non-Aligned Movement: Achievements, problems, prospects* (Novosti, Mos cow, 1985), p. 11.
3. Ibid
4. Jawahar Lal Nehru's Speeches, Vol. 1, Sep 1946-May (Second Edition, November 1958. The publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India), p. 2.
5. Kovalenko, Ivan and Tuzmukhamedov, Rais, n., 1, p. 13.
6. Jawahar Lal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches September 1946-April 1961* (The Govt. of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Publication Division, New Dell 1971), p. 24.
7. Kovalenko, Ivan and Tuzmukhame dov, Rais, n., 1, p. 13. 5. 6. 7.
8. Hari Jaiaingh, *India and the Non-Aligned world: search for a New order* (Vikas, Hew Delhi, 1983), p. 7.
9. Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign policy*, 6. p. 250.
10. Jawahar Lal Nehru, *India 's Foreian Policy*, n. 6, p. 251.
11. Benevolensky, v.. *The Non-Aligned Movement: From Belgrade to Delhi*, (Progress, Mos cow, 1985) p. 15.
12. Jawahar Lal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy*, h., 6, p. 245.
13. Kovalenko, Ivan and Tuzmukhame dov, Rais, n., 1, p. 13.
14. Kovalenko, Ivan and Tuzmukha medov, Rais, n., 1, pp. 8-9.



-
15. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy, n., 6, pp. 410-11.
 16. Conference on Indonesia (1949), New Delhi, 1949, pp. 21-2.
 17. Hari Jaisingh, n., 8, pp. 26-7.

