

## INDIAN AND AFRICAN NON-ALIGNMENT ROLE A Theroretical Framework

Non-alignment is essentially anti-colonialism. It is an acceptance of the principle of peaceful coexistence; a national assertion of independence based on efforts for self-reliance; and international apporcach to achieve just and equal economic relations for stable peace. Non-alignment stands against the creation of blocs and similar combines of nations that can be or are easily militarized.

In this paper we will discuss some of the relevant questions as to how non-alignment is the objective necessity for India, Africa and other developing countries; how it is the product of new political and economic relations and how changing material conditions of the developing and developed world have necessitated the adoption of non-aligned policy. How did this movement become a 'Unity Forum' for anti-colonialism, new economic order and thus against continued exploitation of developing countries? We will examine the attitude taken by Africa and India and see whether the concept of non-alignment has changed since its inception.

The reasons which necessitated a policy of non-alignment in India and Africa are very similar. We have a similar colonial past, we all were afraid of loosing hard won independence. Our economy was intricately linked with the western capitalist system. We were exporters of cheaply paid raw material and importers of heavily charged industrial goods. We all wanted to improve our economic conditions and thus be less dependent on others. Our national struggle had taught us that even the armed imperialist could be forced to relent by determined united action. Thus we chose to unite, even though on limited issues.

Non-alignment according to the Indian and African founder fathers was not neutrality. It was a movement and not a bloc.<sup>1</sup> They had defined non-alignment in the following words: "the only camp we should like to be is in the camp of peace and good-will."<sup>2</sup> said Nehru in 1959. Nasser expressed similar view: "I will not become the stooge or satellite or pawn or hirling of any body,"<sup>3</sup> and according to Nkrumah "non-alignment . . . in no way is anti-western nor is it anti-Eastern."<sup>4</sup>

Since its independence India based her foreign policy pronouncements on anti-colonialism, anti-racialism, non-interference in internal problems of others, for free hand to build an economic base for the country, India has also been against military pacts. In her actions she has largely adhered to this policy. Nevertheless, India has been continuously making efforts to avoid total economic dependence on the West and thus has not allowed imperialism to re-enter through the back door.

India has consistently opposed apartheid and racial domination since 1946. This she has done in spite of annoyance of western powers. India, in the recent years, has shown a qualitative change in her involvement with African freedom struggle. From moral support she has now pledged full material, including military, support to the Africans.<sup>5</sup> India has given its active support for the establishment of a new economic order.

#### **Non-alignment – a Concept : A Historical View**

With the end of 2nd world war a qualitative and irreversible change had taken place in the world. The European colonial powers had become weak. The nationalist movements in the colonies had become “ uncontrollable ” and thus decolonization had become inevitable. USA had emerged as a great capitalist power, capable of holding the strings of the purses of European countries and was also industrially capable and anxious to exploit the minerally rich lands of Asia and Africa. USSR had emerged as a great socialist power with fast growing economy and a strong army matching the western military strength.

As a sequel to these changes, there emerged two systems—capitalist and socialist—in the developed world. The newly independent countries who were struggling to clear the debris of centuries of foreign domination and were struggling to give content to their freedom and independence did not align with any of these groups. Consequently, some regarded these countries as a third force, or a third world, allegedly opposed to both the capitalist and socialist worlds and others hailed the policy of these countries for positive contribution to international peace, decolonization and economic independence. The policy which the newly independent countries adopted was not merely a reaction to the cold war; it had much firmer and wider basis. It was a response to the aspiration of vast masses of people who emerged into freedom from foreign

domination and were eager to attain the status of respect and equality with other nations of the world. It was in line with the basic aim of the newly independent countries to secure the right to make their own decisions in domestic and foreign policies free from foreign pressures. It was a policy of non-alignment. Tanzanian president Nyerere chose non-alignment because "we shall not allow any one to choose any of our friends or enemies for us".<sup>6</sup>

For Dr. Nkrumah "It is not indifference that leads to a policy of non-alignment. It is our belief that... we must be free to judge issues on their merits and to look for solutions that are just and peaceful, irrespective of the powers involved." In fact, perhaps a "non-alignment is a mis-statement of our attitude; we are firmly aligned with all forces in the world that genuinely work for peace."<sup>7</sup>

The new states inherited their basic position within the international community direct from the colonial relationship. In the strategic terms they remained within the Western orbit, and in economic terms the majority remained virtually client states on the periphery of the western economic system. The question was: could they, in these circumstances, hold an independent position in the arena of international politics?

The socio-economic and political structure of the new states and consequently their foreign policies emanated largely from the circumstances, methods and actions through which the independence was achieved. Historically most of the nationalist movements in Africa and Asia had been led by petty-bourgeoisie or national bourgeoisie and not by working class. The colonial people had fought against their former colonial masters and had been aided, directly or indirectly, by socialist countries in their freedom struggle. During the national struggle for independence some leaders had expressed preference for the socialist development system and for delinking their economies with imperialist economies. But they found that their economies were intricately linked with capitalist countries and the link could not be broken without risking economic stability. It was also noted that in case of a shift of economic links from capitalist to socialist block the latter was not in a position to meet all their requirements. Besides they had no experience of dealing with socialist countries,<sup>8</sup> and hence were afraid and thus not prepared to join them. Most of them chose

not to brake with capitalist economic system and join the socialist system countries.

The varying levels of political and economic independence and different alignment of class forces defined the different foreign policies pursued by various countries of Asia and Africa. In countries where the anti-imperialist circles were in power, the governments refused to participate in power blocs and came out against the policy of neo-colonialism, and for peace and security in their respective regions and throughout the world.

The principal manifestation of their foreign policy was the policy of non-alignment. The basis was their need of restructuring their backward economies, freeing their countries from imperialist hold and marching towards faster socio-economic development. As these countries had diverse ideologies, economic and social structures and political institutions, they did not follow the same system for development and were not uniform in economic development plans.

They pledged to follow an independent policy, be self-reliant and restructure their economy, so that their dependency relationship presently leading to exploitation may change to equality relationship. This they found was possible by creating a powerful state sector capable of introducing accelerated development process.

To protect their freedom they thought of unity with other newly independent nations and a unified attack on forces of colonialism, racialism and neo-colonialism. For Africans, unity of African nations was an expression of Pan-Africanism. Their anti-racialism was an asserion of human dignity And thus it was imperative for them to join only that group which favoured Pan-Africanism and was genuinely against racialism and colonialism. They found the socialist countries as anti-colonialist and anti-racialists but realized that a complete switch over to them could mean upsetting the economy even though temporarily. These historical conditions demanded the adoption of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist policy, a policy of not aligning with the socialist bloc.

When the independent nations of Asia and Africa were born they found extreme type of antagonism between capitalist and socialist worlds. The former was trying to surround the socialist countries with those party to military pacts.<sup>9</sup> The latter was aiding Vietnam, Algeria, UAR and freedom-fighters of Africa in their struggle against the British, French and the USA.

The newly independent countries had no choice; they could either accept alliance with western military blocs or remain out of them. They could not join the Pact, which the socialist countries had formed to safeguard themselves against the western imperialist forces, as it was open to only socialist countries of Europe. Recognizing that their freedom was threatened due to the presence of army bases in Asia and Africa, most of the Asian and African nations decided to remain out of the western military pacts. Afraid of imperialist re-entry and to root out colonialism they adopted an anti-colonial and anti-racist policy. To be strong they decided to unite on regional and global levels.

The new political and economic relations and the changing material conditions of the developing countries and the developed world necessitated the adoption of non-aligned policy.

### **History of Non-alignment**

The policy of non-alignment passed through a number of stages. In the first stage the Afro-Asian countries voiced their refusal to participate in the cold war and met at Bandung to condemn the arms race, racism and demand the abolition of surviving colonial regimes.<sup>10</sup> This period witnessed the antagonism between imperialist and anti-colonial forces.

The second stage began after 1956 and ended with the first conference of the non-aligned countries in Belgrade in 1961. This stage was characterized by the establishment of Soviet-US nuclear parity and the politics of bi-polarity dominating the world scene, resulting in what was called the balance of terror. This period also witnessed the massive liberation of African countries and the phenomenal increase in the membership of the UN, increase in the number of countries pursuing a policy of non-alignment and seeking to work together on an organized basis. During this struggle between the imperialists and anti-imperialist forces sharpened eventually further weakening the imperialists and strengthening the anti-imperialist forces.

The third stage was the period of Transition from old to new order. The Belgrade conference held in 1961 laid down criteria for non-aligned countries. It regarded only those countries non-aligned whose foreign policy was based on non-alignment and who followed an independent policy based on peaceful coexistence who supported liberation movements; who were not members of any

bilateral or multilateral military pact in the context of East-West struggle, who had not granted bases to foreign powers. <sup>11</sup> Peaceful coexistence meant that the newly developing countries could develop friendship with both capitalists and socialists. This stage emphasised the historical necessity of change to new international relations guaranteeing national independence in economic and political fields. The need for unity amongst struggling nations also became a necessity.

The next stage of the history of the non-alignment movement covers the period from 1st to 3rd conferences held in Cairo in 1964 and Lusaka in September 1970. During this period number of changes occurred. Most of the African countries achieved independence and identified themselves with the non-aligned movement. U.S.A. started open intervention in Vietnam. Efforts to interfere in Congo's ( Zaire's ) freedom were made by western powers and Israel occupied Arab areas. On the economic front the imperialist powers tried to stage a come-back through neo-colonialism disguised under the cover of multinational corporations. <sup>12</sup> Neo-colonialism attempted to carry out the imperialist policy under the guise of aid. In the process of change from colonialism to neo-colonialism certain structural changes occurred. USA, which was not a traditional colonial power, became partner in neo-colonial exploitation. Similarly Germans, who had lost all colonies during the great wars, entered the field through investments and aid programmes. Through multinational corporations and other methods colonialism took the form of *collective colonialism*. The old colonial powers involved other economically advanced countries in keeping the newly independent countries under their economic control. Another form of collective colonialism was the formation of monopolistic unions for example, the European Economic Community and European Common Market.

The Common Market turned the newly free countries into agrarian raw material appendages to a group of powers instead of a single power.

These structural changes precipitated changes in the anti-colonial camp too. Most developing countries adopted non-aligned policy. In developing countries forces of unity and cooperation were being strengthened. In spite of serious differences the radical and moderate states of Africa succeeded in setting up Organization of African Unity ( OAU ). This was an important development

because the OAU affirmed the "policy of non-alignment with regard to all blocs,"<sup>13</sup> and expressed their determination to "provide a solid foundation for peaceful and positive cooperation among states."<sup>14</sup> The OAU determined not to involve big powers in solution of its internal crisis situations. The African Unity with its numerical preponderance gave new strength to the movement.

During this period there was a growing disappointment on the question of aid from the big powers, particularly the western capitalist powers. Historically speaking we find that in the fifties and early sixties there was tremendous optimism at the prospect of the developing countries "catching up" with the developed world. The development process was envisaged to proceed on an imitative path based on the historical experience of the developed capitalist countries. Foreign aid was presumed to assist in the endeavours for development. There was the belief that increased participation in international trade brought nothing but benefits in terms of increased external resources to the developing countries.<sup>15</sup>

The need to remove economic imbalance inherited from colonialism and imperialism was emphasized and demand for just terms of trade for the economically less developed countries was made. The non-aligned countries were perturbed by the glaring inequalities and imbalances in the international economic structure and the ever widening gap between the developing and developed countries. More and more developing countries came to realize that their economic situation had continued to deteriorate and the resultant debt burdens on them had reached intolerable levels. These countries noted that if the deficit in the balance of payment rose at the present speed it will reach the figure of 212 billion dollars by 1980 (It was 12.2 billion dollars in 1973).<sup>16</sup>

Recognizing the close inter-action between the political and economic relationship the non-aligned stressed the need of economic self-reliance, accelerated economic development for gaining status of equality with other nations and solidarity and collective action by promoting economic cooperation amongst non-aligned countries.

The Lusaka conference endorsed this approach and pledged to actively cultivate the spirit of self-reliance through their collective bargaining strength. This approach was based upon the right of permanent sovereignty over natural resources, independent economic activities, the formation of producers association and

proclamation in the United Nations of the New International Economic Order. The developments in international situation, since the Belgrade Conference, demonstrated the growing impact of the non-aligned. The non-aligned nations played a constructive and progressively effective role in world affairs. They substantially contributed towards positive transformation of international relations and promotion of world peace.<sup>17</sup> The non aligned contributed significantly towards the prevention of the division of the world into opposing blocs and sheres of influence. The non-aliened succeeded in establishing themselves as an independent and vital force for the creation of a new and just system of political and economic relations and for combating unequal relations and domination arising out of neo-colonialism.<sup>18</sup>

The 4th Summit Conference held in Algiers in 1973 laid emphasis on the mutual cooperation among non-aligned and other developing countries and its decisions and recommendations served as the basis for intensive international negotiations aimed at the estblishment of the new international economic order. It further affirmed the need for collective bargaining strength among the non-aligned and placed entire weight and influence behind the actions to be taken by producer countries of raw materials to obtain a remunerative price for their products.<sup>19</sup>

"Since Algiers Summit Conference in 1973", President Kaunda said, "major economic changes affecting the developing countries had taken place. The expectation that the 3rd world would get a fair deal from the industrially rich countries had been failed. The developing countries faced a very grave and common problem. They were linked with the international system which worked against their interests."<sup>20</sup> The growing demand was that the monopoly in decision-making by the developed countries had to be ended. There was a growing conviction that "nothing short of a complete re-structuring of international economic relations through establishment of the new international economic order, will place the developing countries in a position to achieve an acceptable level of development."<sup>21</sup>

### **New Interantional Economic Order**

In view of the growing realization that "the struggle for political independence and the exercise of their sovereignty cannot be disociated from the struggle for the attainment of economic



emancipation,<sup>22</sup> a new international economic order was proposed as a system of collective bargaining against collective colonialism. The new order was based on Nyerere's concept of economic self-reliance and implied a firm determination on the part of the non-aligned developing nations to secure their legitimate economic rights in international dealings through the use of their collective bargaining strength. Nyerere emphasized the need for collectivity and cooperation and said "the big powers will try to prevent us from forging a real united front and if we succeed they will constantly endeavour to break it up. . . . they will even strengthen their control over our political freedom." Stressing the need for economic independence Nyerere said, "we must have economic development or we have no political stability, we have no political independence either, but become play things of any other nation which desires to intervene in our affairs."<sup>23</sup>

Expressing his views in support for a change in international economic relations president Kaunda said, "we of the third world have become increasingly aware of the fact that we share one common problem namely that we are linked with an inequitous global system of international economic relations which works against our vital interests. We are opposed to present system whereby the wealthier and industrialized countries retain the monopoly of making decisions affecting all other states. We believe in power sharing as an important guarantee for peace within the international community."<sup>24</sup>

By the time Colombo Summit was held there was greater clarity in the understanding of world forces. The non-aligned leaders had realized that "much of the present international economic relations are a carry over from colonial relations. . . . In some areas the old relationships have been replaced by new patterns of relationship which hide inequality and the essentially exploitative nature of the system and give a comforting feeling that a new era had dawned."<sup>25</sup> That the task of promoting change in the international economic order could be carried out through a collective self-reliance, through a non-imitative approach to development utilizing to the maximum the indigenous resources and mobilizing fully the collective potential and economic capacity to extract the best bargain from the developed countries.<sup>26</sup>

During the course of 15 years non-alignment had become a dynamic movement activating change, indeed becoming an instru-

ment of change. Starting as a movement against imperialism and neo-colonialism it sought to change the prevalent structure of exploitative economic relationship.

### Conclusions

The bi-polar world power structure in which non-alignment was born fifteen years ago has gradually been replaced by new patterns of relationships in which many countries are loosening their military links with big powers, are asserting their sovereignty and are exerting more control over the use and disposition of their natural resources. During this period a large number of countries, particularly in Africa, achieved national independence. These countries, in their effort to advance economically, came in closer touch with the international imperialism. They found that western powers aid and trade, although proclaimed to develop newly independent countries, actually underdeveloped them. The former colonial powers, after independence, introduced neo-colonial machinery. The new system involved many countries in collective exploitation of developing countries through multi-national associations and corporations. The newly independent countries realized that in order to fight this collective imperialism they had to form collectives. As they had done on national scale during the period of nationalist movement, they decided to bury their ideological differences now to form international united front overlooking diversity of ideologies, social structures, political institutions, and uneven stages of economic development.

Twenty-five years ago primary preoccupation of the newly emerging countries was to avoid being partner of military link ups, set up by western powers. To-day, though not eliminated, the military alliances and bases, in view of the development of technology e.g. ICBM and satellite system, are not that important. The confrontations of yesterday have now been replaced by growing dialogue and spirit of detente. Detente recognizes peaceful co-existence and other principles of panchsheel. Detente has been interpreted by some as an instrument to obtain mutual recognition of sphere of influence as acceptance of a balance of big power relationship. Such a concept is negative. As we have seen above the prevailing structures of relationships are unsatisfactory, and to a considerable extent are a carry over from the hey-day of imperialism, and are pregnated by new forms of unequal and one-

sided dependency relationships.

We find that non-aligned are seeking change towards a new economic order, towards relationship based on quality, respect for sovereignty, self-determination, mutual interest and towards removing the causes of tensions. The non-aligned, in every summit, have made it abundantly clear that, for peace and detente, they are not prepared to forego their right of armed struggle by the people under colonial or racial domination.

Besides struggling against racist regimes in Israel, South Africa and Rhodesia, the non-aligned have to fight against the politics of pressure and domination which are seriously threatening the independence of states, and also against measures calculated to cause disruption and destabilization which threaten their internal security and create political confusion and economic chaos.<sup>27</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. Y. B. Chavan, 'Ideals of non-alignment', *Secular Democracy*, Vol. IX No. XIV & XV, July-August 1976, p. 65.
2. Laurence Martin (ed) *Neutralism and Non-alignment: the New States in World Affairs*, Praeger, New York, 1962, p. 95.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Anirudha Gupta, "Non-alignment Summit, and Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa", *Mainstream*, Delhi, 14th Annual Number 1976, p.65.
6. Dr. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism*, Dar-es-Salaam, O. U. P. 1968, p.369.
7. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, "African Prospects" *Foreign Affairs*, New York, Vol. 37, No. 1. October 1959, p. 49.
8. Dr. Nyerere States, "Before independence we had no direct contact with Eastern Block Countries". *Nyerere Tanzanian Policy on Foreign Affairs*, Dar-es-Salaam, 1967, p. 5.
9. NATO in 1952 - involving Turkey and Greece, SEATO - USA, Britan, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand and Philippines (September 1954) the Baghdad Pact - had Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Britain.

10. G. H. Jansen, *Non-Alignment and the Afro-Asian States*, Fredrick A. Praeger, New York, 1966, pp. 20-28.
11. Yugoslavia, Cyprus and Tunisia were among those who participated in the Belgrade conference. Yugoslavia at the time of the conference was a member of the Balkan pact, a military alliance to which incidentally some members of NATO also belonged. Cyprus had a British military base on its soil. Tunisia had a base at Bizerta although President Bourguiba had challenged its legitimacy before coming to the conference. Ethiopia had a US communication station with American troops guarding it. Doudou Thiam, *The Foreign Policy of African States*, London, 1965, p. 81.
12. Current inflow of Foreign direct investment and outflow of income on accumulated past direct investment by region 1965-79 ( Million dollars ).

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Africa						
inflow	182.2	162.7	241.5	201.6	235.5	270.7
Outflow	380.8	318.8	708.6	963.7	924.3	996.2
Balance	-198.6	-555.1	-467.1	-762.1	-688.8	-725.5

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Source : Nair, Vikram and R. Kasbehai " Multinational " *the Economic Times*, Annual Bombay 1975, p. 123.

13. *Charter of the OAU*, Principles, Article III, Clause 7.
14. *Ibid.* Preamble.
15. Non-Alignment Conference, special supplement, *Ceylon Daily News*, 16-7-1976.
16. UN. G. A. A/31/197, 8th September 1976  
NAC/Conf. 5/S/3, p. 4.
17. UN NAC/Conf. 5/S/2, 1977, p. 12/5.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 15/7.
19. NAV/Conf. 5/3 pp. 8--9.
20. Speech by Kaunda reported in *Africa Diary*, p. 8142.
21. NAC/Conf., 5/S/3, p. 7.
22. *Ibid* p. 8.
23. J. Nyerere, Non-alignment in the 1970's, op. cit., pp. 6.7.10.
24. Kaunda's speech quoted by *Kuwait Times*, August 17, 1976.
25. Address by H. E. Brig. General Referi Bante Chairman, P M A C, Ethiopia, to the Vth Assembly of the Non-Aligned Summit Conference, Colombo, August 1976.
26. *Ceylon Daily News*, August 16, 1976.
27. NAC/Conf. 5/S/3, 1976, Political Declaration.