



Non-Alignment, the Brain-Child of Pandit Nehru

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After the holocaust of the two World Wars all the nations of the World began to feel panic-stricken and wished for conditions of international peace. Under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India the doctrine of Non-alignment developed and grew popular.

Jawaharlal Nehru had the privilege of formulating and moulding the foreign policy of India as he retained the Foreign Ministry under his supervision. It was an essential part of his thinking developed during the years of struggle for independence, during travels around, discussion with foreign leaders, and during long periods of contemplation about India's place in the world, that the future of India would be conditioned by and would in turn condition world affairs.

The Non-aligned community consists mostly of countries which liberated themselves from colonialism and foreign domination. They stand for equality, they work for peace and they believe in a world order based on co-operation. Two notable international gatherings, the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in March 1947 by the initiative of Nehru and the Conference of Afro-Asian Nations in Bandung in 1955, proclaimed the determination of Asian and African countries to consolidate their

independence and to pursue their own political, economic and social development.

Jawaharlal Nehru apparently realised that the traditional foreign policy choices of states imperialism, isolationism, neutrality alliances, balance of power and nationalistic universalism did not serve different community of nations in the nuclear age, in particular, the integrity of the majority of small and weak nations, most of whom, following India's independence, achieved freedom. Each of these choices either restricted the freedom of states or divided the international community into groups and blocks-either of which failed to serve the mutual interests of all nations. "Every country has a right to choose its own path," he said and go along it. We have chosen our path and we propose to go along it, and vary as and when we choose, not afraid of any other country imposing its will upon us by military methods or any other methods. Nehru was asserting the freedom of choice of states unconstrained by traditional choices and in consonance with the new spirit of liberation of most of the newly independent nations. Nehru, more than any other statesman of the post-war world, had the foresight of freedom that many nations and peoples were hungering after. The policy of non-alignment and its loud and persistent

advocacy by Nehru gave a new dimension to the game of international politics.

Nehru was of the opinion that India should not be linked up with any group of powers which, for various reasons, are full of fear of war and prepare for war.

In the nuclear age, he felt that such a policy of Non-alignment was imperative as much in national interest as in the interest of the world community at large. Nehru was certain that the most important and even compulsive element of national interest of any nation was peace, without which, the newly independent nations would be unable to promote the other elements of their respective national interest. Unless there was world peace, these new nations would be unable to promote internal socio-economic development, colonial liberation, racial equality and even the progressive strengthening of the international organisation.

India's decision to establish good neighbourly relations was reflected in the agreement signed with China in April, 1954 which enunciated the Five Principles (Panchasheela) of Peaceful Co-existence as the basis for developing relations between States. These principles provided for peaceful co-existence, mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in each-other's internal affairs, and recognition of equality and mutual benefit. These found support from most of the African and Asian countries and were affirmed at the Bandung Conference of countries of Asia and Africa held in April, 1955. The wider acceptance of India's Policy of Non-alignment led to the holding of the first Non-aligned conference at Belgrade in 1961 in which 25 countries participated. Nehru (India), Nasser (U.A.R.), Tito (Yugoslavia)

gave leadership to the conference which created conditions for peace. They were described as the wisemen of the East, who carried Christmas gift of space to the cradle of Christ. Nehru laid stress on the need for negotiations between Soviet Union and the United States as a step towards promoting peace and finally bringing about Universal Disarmament. The conference drafted an appeal requesting both the countries to settle their differences through mutual negotiations. When the partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed by the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain in July 1963, India was one of the first countries to sign the treaty. In the same year, for maintenance of international peace India lent full support to the activities of the U.N. in various fields to defuse tension in different parts of the world.

Following the Suez Crisis, India contributed the largest contingent for the U.N. Emergency Force stationed in West Asia. Later, following the crisis in the Congo in 1960, India supported efforts of the U.N. to prevent the disintegration of the newly independent countries and it had the largest contingent in the U.N. Force sent to the Congo to prevent a civil war and preserve the territorial integrity of that newly independent country.

Thus, Nehru as the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Independent India sought to implement India's Non-alignment Policy under difficult internal conditions in India and a series of grave international conflicts and situations. It is no denying the fact that the policy of non-alignment has been universally appreciated.

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