

## THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND PAKISTAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

**Zahid Anwar<sup>1</sup>**

Professor, Department of Political Science,  
University of Peshawar, Pakistan  
[zahid\\_anwar@uop.edu.pk](mailto:zahid_anwar@uop.edu.pk)

**Sajad Rasool**

Ph.D. Scholar at the Department of Political Science,  
University of Peshawar, Pakistan

**Muhammad Ilyas Khan**

Department of Politics and International Relations,  
International Islamic University Islamabad  
[khattaklm@gmail.com](mailto:khattaklm@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*The idea of Non-Aligned Movement was originated in the 1950s and was founded in 1961. It is a forum of 120 states from the developing world who wanted to remain impartial during the Col War era. The Cold War divided the world into two blocks named Capitalist and Communist Block. The core objective of the Non-Aligned Movement was to avoid the polarization of the world and to bring peace and stability through multilateralism. Pakistan being on an important strategic location played a significant role during that era. Although She joined the Capitalist block in the early years as it was important for her security from India in the East and signed different defense treaties with the US and its allies. However, during the 1960s and 1970s those defense pacts which were assumed to protect Pakistan from India failed. Pakistan withdrawn from those pacts and joined the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979. This research will discuss the historical background of Pakistan in global geopolitics, its relations with different regional and ideological groups, its decision to join Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). It will also highlight the integration of Pakistan into Non-Aligned Movement, its role, and the future of NAM and global settings.*

**Keywords:** Non-Aligned Movement, NAM, Pakistan, Cold War, Peace, South Asia, Foreign Policy.

### INTRODUCTION

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was established in the aftermath of the end of colonialism as a movement waged by the masses in Africa, Latin America, Asia and across the world during the Cold War (NTI, 2021). The Bandung Asian African conference was the first of the kind that reflected the significance of the NAM and brought together leaders from the states of the two continents which were once colonies. The aim was to pinpoint and analyze issues and to adopt joint endeavors to solve them. The conference adopted ten principles as its main concerns which are formally known as ten principles of Bandung. These principles were later on given the status of the aims and objectives of the movement. Some of the leaders who played prominent role were Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia, and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia. They termed the NAM as a movement rather than as an organization in order to dispel the bureaucratic impression.

NAM was to support self-determination, national independence and the sovereignty of all states. It also emphasized on the integrity of states; opposition to apartheid; non-adherence to multilateral military pacts and the independence of non-aligned countries from great power or block influences and rivalries. Hence, NAM was a struggle against colonialism and imperialism, racism,

---

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author

foreign occupation, and domination. It supported disarmament, non-interference into the internal affairs of states and peaceful coexistence among all nations.

Furthermore, it rejected the use threat or force in international relations and supported the strengthening of the United Nations, the democratization of international relations, socioeconomic development, and the restructuring of the international economic system.

### **Pakistan Joining the West**

After independence from the British Empire in 1947, the embryonic nation struggled to place herself amongst the Non-Aligned states. Pakistan desperately needed friends. Friends that can help her in defense and economic endeavors. In East Pakistan pro-communist group possess a strong support from the masses. In the West Pakistan, the Pakistan Muslim League; a pro-US and pro-capitalist party had a strong hold, while the pro-Soviet, Socialist party had a weak position on the nation's political landscape. The then Pakistan premier Liaquat Ali Khan tried to have good relations with both the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). He was confident that Pakistan could get benefits from both sides. At that time USSR was aiding India, and Pakistan's Foreign Services as well as Military establishment have doubts as to whether the Soviet Union had the political will to provide economic, military, and technical assistance in the same manner as they were providing to India (Cawasjee, 2011). Thus Pakistan asked for aid from the Soviets, which was declined as the Soviet Union has established close relations with India (Cawasjee, 2011). The conservative middle class of Pakistan also disliked the proposal of having bonds with an atheist and socialist partner of India (Kazmi, 2003).

In 1950, US invited Pakistan's Prime Minister for an official visit to the United States. The invitation was accepted as Pakistan policy maker realized that maintaining friendly relations with both the superpowers were impossible. Prime Minister Khan started his long 23 days visit from May 3, 1950. The visit was highly publicized and was and still considered as a pivotal event which led to warm diplomatic relations for decades between the United States and Pakistan (Dawn, 2012).

### **Pakistan Joining SEATO and CENTO**

Since its inception Pakistan's foreign policy has been developed largely based on its geographical location and ideological concerns. Geographically Pakistan has a territory which consist of plains, deserts, rivers, mountains, and costal belt. In the East Pakistan share border with India through "Redcliffe Line". In the North Pakistan has its "all weather friend" China. Its Western border line connects it with Afghanistan through "Durand Line" and with Iran through "Gold Smith Line" while Arabian Sea on the South create an important costal belt (Shahid, 2020). Pakistan is also considered as a gateway to the Central Asia through the "Wakhan corridor" located in Afghanistan. This corridor makes it relatively near to the Russia and Europe. It is also located at the crossroads of the South Asia and Middle East bridging the energy hungry East Asia and the West to the oil rich Gulf States. This also connects her to the Muslim world (Arya, 1966) which is a part of its constitutional and ideological obligations. However, such potential has never been achieved by Pakistan as it has unsettled boundary disputes with India and Afghanistan. It has undeveloped regional trade infrastructure and fragile democratic institutions (Sunawar and Coutto, 2015) which greatly influence its policies, partners, and global position.

Also, being in the Geographical Pivot of History (Mackinder, 1904), the former Union of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) wanted to reach its shores to increase its influence in the South Asian region and beyond. This increased the insecurity of Pakistan more, as USSR was a close ally of India and now Pakistan was getting encircled by the two. This pushed Pakistan to sign SEATO and CENTO agreements with the United States.

### **The Push for NAM**

From the beginning Pakistan faced an enormous challenge of survival and to deal with the power structure in the region and beyond (Adst, 1947). Pakistan needed economic assistance which compelled her towards United States. It was the time of ideological tussle between United States and the former USSR. US welcomed Pakistan to its camp as she was trying to limit the influence of USSR in the Asian countries (Leffler, 1992). In the years followed, Pakistan faced huge challenges. Muslim refugees were migrating to Pakistan from India. The inherited economic structure from British Empire was weak and India being a bigger country pursuing her supremacy in the region. On the Economic side, Pakistan first explored the possibility of receiving relief from British Commonwealth. However, due to poor economic conditions of the British Empire this option was not feasible (Hussain, 2005).

The 1950 visit of the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan to the United States was focused on building a new era of good relations between the two states. At that time Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan was on the rise, however, US was more interested in containing the influence of the Soviet Union (Khan, 1951). Eventually, Pakistan became “United States’ most allied ally” in 1950 (Wirsing, 2003).

On Pakistan side, the core objective of joining the Capitalist camp was to get their support against India and this why Pakistan in 1954 signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with the United States. Later Pakistan became the member of SEATO, a defense pact whose sole aim was to contain the influence of the Soviet Union in the Southeast Asia. In these agreements there was no assurance for Pakistan of a collective action against a non-communist attack on its soil i.e., from India (Sunawar and Coutto, 2015). In 1955, Pakistan signed the Baghdad Pact or Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Pakistan joining of the SEATO, and CENTO was justified on the plea that these alliances will protect her from any potential threat from the Indian side.

On the other side Pakistan has always wanted to develop friendly relations with the Muslim world and CENTO provided her the opportunity to work close with Turkey and Iran.

However, the relations between Pakistan and the United States saw a setback during the 1962 Sino-India border dispute. US aided India while Pakistan supported China. This gap in relation increased during the 1965 Pakistan India war in which it was believed that the US did not provide any significant assistance.

The final discomfort between the US and Pakistan came in 1971 when Pakistan military started a military operation to settle the unrest in the East Pakistan which was fueled by the separatists and India. Pakistan expected assistance from the United States. However, US didn’t came to assistance and Pakistan lost its Eastern part. The loss of East Pakistan greatly affected the relations between Pakistan and the United States. Pakistan leadership decided to search for other friends and allies and to formulate a new multilateral foreign policy. This driven her to the joining of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1979.

#### **Pakistan Joining NAM**

The establishment of the Non-alignment Movement has been traced by some to the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955. All the nations of Asia and Africa, except Israel and Korea, were represented at the Conference. China and North Vietnam from the communist bloc, while Turkey, the Philippines, and South Vietnam from the capitalist bloc were among the nations participated in the conference. In December 1954, at the Bogor conference, a precursor to Bandung, other Asian and African countries including Pakistan addressed the possibility of joining the movement. It was declared by the NAM that no nation's participation in the Afro-Asian conference would jeopardise its ties with any other country in attendance, as stated in the Bogor statement. The declaration went on to highlight that the conference's goal was not to incite separatism among its participants, however, it didn't want the participating nations to become part of any block (Kotelawala, 1956).

One of the most pressing issues discussed during the Bandung Conference in 1955 was that of colonialism. There were many who wanted to ensure that only the West was considered colonialist. They argued, "If we are unified in our resistance to colonialism, wouldn't it be the obligation of us to publicly announce our opposition to Soviet colonialism as much as to Western colonialism?" Pakistan adopted the same stance.

After the Conference, a major agreement was reached on the right of each nation state to defend itself, either on its own or collectively, provided that these arrangements did not serve the interests of the big powers or were used to attack other nations. The policies that sprang from the Bandung platform have made it an important predecessor in the history of the non-alignment movement. Emerging nations' ambitions to live in peace and freedom, and their desire to construct a new world free of dominance, inequality, and exploitation were expressed in its declaration.

As a result of Bandung, a number of participating Afro-Asian nations started to emphasize an independent policy, which meant independence from affiliation with either bloc or its armed groups, a line of strategy that in their hands grew into a policy of non-alignment. Pakistan was already in the process of establishing deeper ties with the United States and its allies when Bandung was held.

However, In the early 1960s Pakistan has realized that the tense relations between the Soviet Union and China and the détente between United States and Soviet Union would make these military alliances ineffective. Furthermore, advancement in the rocket science and intercontinental missile

technology reduced the importance of United States military bases in the far away stations. Vietnam War also shadowed the US image in the developing countries.

These ups and downs in the global and regional politico-strategic development influenced Pakistan's approach towards the global politics. Consequently, Pakistan needed to redesign its foreign policy and to increase its support for multilateralism and consider joining the Non-Aligned Movement (Kalim, 1981).

### **The Struggle for Independent Foreign Policy**

Pakistan began its independent life without any restricted and specific convictions or biases in the international realm. As a young nation, it attempted, like India, to have a foreign policy that was independent of the big power politics (Hasan, 1951). However, it shifted its allegiance to the Western Bloc in the middle of the '50s.

Pakistan's founding father passed away before the country had even been a sovereign state for a year. While he was alive, the issue of foreign policy alignment or non-alignment was not on the table. Nevertheless, Quaid-e-Azam was unwavering in his belief in the importance of Pakistan's independence and self-respect, and he opposed the country's submission to a foreign superpower.

According to one of his remarks, "To every country in the globe, we extend the hand of friendship and goodwill. We have no interest in waging war on any other country or nation. Honesty and fair play in national and international affairs are core values for us, and we are willing and able to contribute to the advancement of peace and prosperity around the globe. As long as the United Nations Charter's ideals are upheld, Pakistan will never fail to help oppressed peoples across the globe (Ahmad, 1979)."

Similarly, in 1951, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan asserted without reservation that Pakistan was "neither attached to the strings of the American bloc nor was she a follower of the Communist bloc (Ahmad, 1979)."

However, in spite of this assertion, it was evident even at the time that Pakistan's external relations were mostly focused on the Western nations. Since Pakistan's political, economic, and bureaucratic elites considered communism unacceptable, Pakistan's first inclination was to focus on the West and disregard the Soviet Union.

Pakistan's foreign policy of military alliances during the first twenty five years of its existence was a failure; for it neither served Pakistan's fundamental objective of protecting its territorial integrity nor promoted its economic development. This failure forced the Pakistani leadership to veer round to the alternative, viz non-alignment. And yet there was no conversion to the philosophy of non-alignment (Kalim, 1980).

It was only after the dissolution of the SEATO in 1972 and the CENTO in 1979 that the decks were cleared for Pakistan to join the non-aligned movement. Pakistan participated in the non-aligned conference in Havana in September 1979. It is interesting that Pakistan was pressurized by China into holding on to the tattered CENTO till 1979 as this served the Chinese interests in the Sino-Soviet conflict (Chaudhary, 1980). Pakistan had wanted to quit CENTO much earlier.

As a result, Pakistan's foreign policy of military alliances throughout the first twenty-five years of its existence was a failure. The Pakistani leadership was obliged to turn to non-alignment as an option after this disaster. However, no one was persuaded to adopt the non-alignment stance.

Pakistan was only able to join the Non-Aligned Movement following the disintegration of the SEATO in 1972 and the CENTO in 1979. In September 1979, Pakistan attended the non-aligned meeting in Havana. In the Sino-Soviet confrontation, China's interests were benefited by Pakistan's decision to cling on to the tattered CENTO until 1979 (Ahmad, 1979).

Later, Pakistan withdrawal from CENTO considerably improved its international image. Now the progressive Arab countries and non-aligned countries were willing to welcome Pakistan into their organization.

After its withdrawal from CENTO, Pakistan immediately started efforts to gain membership of the NAM. The non-aligned movement coordinating bureau discussed its membership in the 1979 Colombo meeting and recommended for acceptance at the NAM Havana summit 1979. The change in policies and ending its partnership with the western bloc removed the technical hitch which prevented it from NAM membership (Ahmad, 1979).

### **NAM Future Developments and Pakistan**

The alliance of NAM countries could introduce a new era in this interconnected world, if its members consider the ground factors and exploit the means accessible to propel their plan. The Non-Aligned Movement; as a group of nations making two third of the UN member states, can be a pioneer for its members and the society in discovering answers for the current worldwide issues inside world system of law abidance, fulfillment of global responsibilities and prevention of extremism and fanaticism.

NAM is a unit of 120 developing nations that do not wish to adjust themselves to any superpower. In historical perspective this movement gave an option in to countries that did not want to be a part of either the United States or Soviet Union during the Cold War. Unfortunately, despite the end of the Cold War global politics is power politics. Colonialism, imperialism, and hegemonism is a ground reality it is mutated still wreaking havoc in new forms and manifestations. Today powerful states do not invade states but influence them through the economic sanctions and institutions. In this scenario the non-aligned states need more exchange of dialogues, cooperation and collaboration to decrease their dependency. Many developing countries are pointing to improvement in International Political and Economic order. For instance, the Iranian President in the 18th NAM summit in Baku, Azerbaijan said that the only solution to the ongoing crises in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Palestine is to respect the right of self-determination of nations and commitment to noninterference in the internal affairs of other states. The international community is required to provide for a sustainable economic system and expansion of trade ties on the basis of multilateral monetary policies. And that NAM counties need to adopt a coherent strategy and agreements on cybersecurity to reduce the vulnerability of the developing states against the misuse of the cyberspace (financial tribune, 2019).

The recent G7 and NATO summits showed that the clouds of Cold War still roam in the sky. Pakistan being a developing state is also influenced by the big powers approaches to global and regional issues. Pakistan is located in a region where the two world's most populous countries are also located i.e., China and India. The US and its Western Allies are tacitly supporting Indian hegemonic designs in the region and promoting her as a power to counter China in the region. On the other side Pakistan is a close friend of China and both are having cordial relations. Pakistan is a part of Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, and both are building the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which the US and the West consider as a challenge to their economic and technological superiority. NAM must play a big role in the coming complex situations in the Asian region as well as all around the world. The aim of peaceful coexistence and multilateral cooperation is much needed today as the world is moving again towards new geopolitics. In the current situation where there is more divisions and fragmentation in the world, where there is invasions and occupations, use of threats and force, non-fulfillment of disarmament obligations and terrorism the principles and role of NAM is more relevant and needed (Mofa, 2011).

### **CONCLUSION**

Despite its fifty years of existence, the NAM head members of independent states as well as of movements that accepted its principles and objectives despite their political, social and ideological differences. However, the NAM has been successful to patch up the very differences while providing a common ground which helped archive the targets and the principles. It has fought down the hegemonic designs of the states thus has been able to save the interests of the members despite diversity. Consequently, the NAM has maintained its existence even in today's world and didn't lose its validity despite the end of the Cold War. However, the problem of the world has not been eradicated although the world has transformed from bipolar to unipolar and then to multipolar. New policies need to be followed to combat the eminent problems of the underdeveloped states due to this transition in global politics. The movement puts stress on its multilateralism principle that could help it become a stronger agent for the cause of the South and can tackle the problems while negotiating with the developed states. The movement has its relevance in today's world as it opines those developing nations are being exploited by the developed nations. It has focused on the problems of the underdeveloped nations especially its economy, poverty and social justice which it considers an increasing threat to peace and security.

The above discussion suggests that NAM has never lost its role and significance. The ongoing geostrategic developments in the Europe America and Asia and the increasing intensity of competition among big powers underline the existence and importance of NAM (Futuredirections, 2012).

## REFERENCES

- Ahmad, N. (1979). Pakistan Foreign Policy. The Non-Aligned Movement and Pakistan. *Pakistan Horizon*, 32(4), 79–91. doi:10.2307/41393610
- Arya, H. C. (1966). "A Study of Some Aspects of the Relations of the U.S. with Pakistan," (Ph.D. Thesis), Indian School of International Studies. New Delhi, p. 2
- Bahadur, K. (1981). "Pakistan and Non-Alignment." *International Studies*, 20(1–2), 215–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002088178102000117>.
- Chaudhary, M. A. (1980). "Pakistan and Regional Security: A Pakistani View", *India Quarterly* (New Delhi), p. 181.
- Cowasjee, A. (2011). "A recap of Soviet-Pakistan relations". Dawn Newspaper, Pakistan Institute of International Affairs (1950). Retrieved 23 August 2021
- Hasan, S. (1951). "Foreign Policy of Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan," *Pakistan Horizon* (Karachi), 4, p. 134.
- Hussain, T. (2005). *The US-Pakistan Engagement: The War on Terrorism and Beyond*, United States Institute of Peace. p. 2.
- Interview with David Newson, Information Officer, USIS, Karachi (1947-1950). *Moments in U.S. Diplomatic History Establishing Ties with Pakistan - 1947*. Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. Available at <http://adst.org/2013/10/establishing-ties-with-pakistan-1947/> Accessed 29 July 2021.
- Kazmi, M. R. (2003). *Liaquat Ali Khan: His Life and Work*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2003. p. 354.
- Khan, L. A. (1951). *Pakistan: The Heart of Asia*. London: Oxford Printing Press. pp. 15-16
- Kotelawala, J. (1956). *An Asian Prime Minister's Story* /6, George G. Harrap & Co., London. p. 1 77
- Leffler, M. (1992). *A preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mackinder, H. J. (1904). The Geographical Pivot of History. *The Geographical Journal. The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)*, 23(4), 421-437. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1775498>
- NAM Could Pioneer Change For A Better Multipolar Future". (2019). *Financial Tribune*. <https://financialtribune.com/articles/national/100498/nam-could-pioneer-change-for-a-better-multipolar-future>.
- Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). (2021). *What Is the Non-Aligned Movement | NTI*. Nti.Org. <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/non-aligned-movement-nam>
- Shahid, S. (2020). "Geographical and Strategic Importance of Pakistan - About Pakistan". *About Pakistan*. <https://www.aboutpakistan.com/blog/geographical-and-strategic-importance-of-pakistan/>.
- Sunawar, L and Coutto, T. (2015). U.S. Pakistan Relations during the Cold War. *The Journal of International Relations, Peace and Development Studies*, 1(1). p-01
- The Nonaligned Movement: Does It Have a Future? - Future Directions International" (2012). *Future Directions International*. <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/the-nonaligned-movement-does-it-have-a-future/>.
- Timeline: History of US-Pakistan Relations. (2012). *DAWN.COM*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/731670/timeline-history-of-us-pakistan-relations>.
- Wirsing, R. G. (2003) "Precarious Partnership: Pakistan's Response to U.S. Security Policies," *Asian Affairs, an American Review*. p. 70.
- XVI NAM Ministerial Conference of The Non Aligned Movement, Bali, Indonesia. (2021). 25-27 May 2011 – Ministry Of Foreign Affairs ". Mofa.Gov.Pk. <http://mofa.gov.pk/xvi-nam-ministerial-conference-of-the-non-aligned-movement-bali-indonesia-25-27-may-2011/>.