



# The Relevance of Nepal's Non-Aligned Foreign Policy

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## Abstract

This article aims to investigate Nepal's interest in non-aligned foreign policy. Nepal was viewed by Prithvi Narayan Shah as a "Yam between two boulders," with Tibet to the north and the "Emperor of Seas" to the south. He recommended that Nepal and Tibet should always have cordial ties. With the goal of advancing developing nations' interests in the context of Cold War confrontation and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was established in 1961. During its initial thirty years, the Movement was instrumental in the process of decolonization, the establishment of new sovereign states and the democratization of global affairs. The five guiding concepts were and peaceful coexistence equality and mutual benefit non-aggression non-interference in one another's internal affairs and respect for one another's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The article aimed to investigate the following research questions. What is the continued relevance of non-aligned foreign policy? How might non-aligned foreign policy help Nepal preserve her interests in the altered setting, as it did in the past? One approach of gathering information was through content analysis of books, periodicals, papers and other materials. It found that Nepal does not join any military alliances or accept to be a member of any country's security pacts rather the country's constitution explicitly endorses NAM ideals as the foundation for its foreign policy. In Nepal, the reform of the non-alignment policy has become a topic of increasing discussion during the last few months. Some politicians and scholars believe that the non-alignment concept is losing significance given the evolving circumstances. Some have suggested implementing a multi-alignment strategy without providing any details. Several cite India as an example, which is attending the NAM meeting with a low-key delegation. While discussing, the world is watching Gaza's worst nightmare come true. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has primarily affected it. To its dismay, polarization and geopolitical competition have reappeared as key components of our international political system. It is clear that NAM ideals are now more important

than before. NAM has to take the lead in advancing multilateralism, upholding international law and the UN Charter, resolving conflicts amicably, changing global financial systems and establishing a fair global economic system for shared prosperity. The accomplishment of the SDGs and other globally agreed development goals, such as the Paris Agreement should be the main focus. It should embrace the idea that technology can advance everyone, provide climate justice for vulnerable nations and regions and leave no one behind. For investment, resources, capacity-building and technology in the true spirit of North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, a strong framework for cooperation and renewed collaboration with all of our development partners and fellow members of NAM are envisaged. Nepal is one of the Non-Aligned Movement's founding members.

**Keywords:** Non-aligned foreign policy, North-South cooperation, Multilateralism, South-South cooperation, Sovereignty.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Joshi and Rose (2004) revealed that after the Anglo-Nepal War (1814–1816), Nepal's international relations paradigm was restricted to British India and Britain, which gained prominence during the Rana regime. In retrospect, Nepal's international engagement was restricted to Tibet and British India prior to 1816. The establishment of democracy in 1951 was the catalyst for Nepal's foreign connections to grow stronger and more expansive in subsequent years. There are many different theoretical stances and methods used in the study of foreign policy. In addition to offering a prism through which academics can examine and comprehend the complexities of foreign policy decision-making, these theoretical frameworks aim to explain state behavior in the international system (Garrison et al., 2003). Among the most well-known theoretical perspectives on foreign policy is the realism school of thinking. Realists contend that states are the main actors in international relations and that their motivation is to increase their security



and power at the highest possible level. Realists contend that there is anarchy in the international system and that nations must rely on their economic and military might to protect their interests. Foreign policy research was dominated by realism until the 1970s. When researchers started to challenge its tenets and look into alternative theoretical frameworks. Another theoretical perspective on foreign policy is liberalism, which emphasizes the role of institutions, norms and values in determining state conduct (Meiser, 2018). Liberals contend that nations may work together and advance their goals through international organizations like the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. They also stress the significance of democracy and human rights in determining foreign policy. Constructivism is a theory that places a strong emphasis on how concepts and social norms influence how states behave. Constructivists contend that social norms and ideas affect states' identities and interests rather than fixing them. They stress the role that discourse, standards and ideas have in determining foreign policy. One of the cornerstones of Nepal's foreign policy has always been non-alignment. The nation adopted the Panchsheel five principles in 1955 at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, one of the 19 participant nations. Nepal's autonomous foreign policy is reaffirmed in Article 51 of the 2015 Constitution, which is based on the UN Charter, non-alignment, Panchasheel values, international law and global peace standards.

#### ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ALIGNMENT

The first great impulse for non-alignment as an international doctrine that grew out of the 1955 Bandung Conference. Following this meeting, many leaders invoked the "spirit of Bandung" to rigorously advocate non-alignment as their official foreign policy. The Bandung Conference adopted a declaration on the promotion of world peace and cooperation based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (or the Panchsheel Treaty), accepted as the guiding principles of international relations that has been already previously presented via the Indo-China agreement of April 29, 1954, as part of non-alignment. The five principles accepted include: Mutual non-aggression, respect for one another's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-interference in one another's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful cohabitation are the first five principles (Fifield 1958, p. 504). As a key element in international relations (IR), non-alignment emerged as a foreign policy philosophy following World War Second. According to Farajalla (1984), p. 199, the

international system of that era was defined by elements like "decolonization, the Cold War, socio-economic underdevelopment and the development of international organizations." A set of foreign policy tenets that members of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) adhere to in their pursuit of justice, development, peace and security is known as non-alignment policy. After Third World leaders Nasser (Egypt), Nehru (India), Tito (Yugoslavia) and Sukarno (Indonesia) met and decided to break away from the US-led East-West bipolar blocs of the Cold War, NAM emerged as a forum for pursuing cooperative policies in international relations. (USA) in addition to the USSR. Briefly put, the policy the promotion was the focal point of non-alignment of non-intervention in superpower affairs and of peace.

A rich historical background surrounds the origins of non-alignment as a tool of independent foreign policy and a political movement among postcolonial Third World nations to advance a shared agenda. Afro-Asian and Latin American nations' non-alignment policies were largely determined by three major conferences: The League against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression (1927), the Bandung Conference (Asian-African Conference) (1955) and the Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade (1961). During the interwar years, members of various anti-colonial movements took part in the historic 1927 Brussels Conference, which was organized by communists Willi Muzenburg and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya (Chatto). Who were affiliated with the Communist International (also known as the Third International or Comintern). (Mišković 2014). It was an attempt to establish a worldwide anti-colonial movement and provide participants with a thorough understanding of imperialism, both of which were firsts. According to Dinkel (2018), p. 25, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking on behalf of the Indian National Congress, stated that imperialism was a feature of the global political system rather than a conflict between colonial powers.

#### NEPAL'S STANDING IN NAM

Nepal was one of the original members of the non-aligned movement (NAM), a coalition of nations that opted out of the major cold war power blocs. The world has undergone many changes since it was founded in 1961, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the creation of NATO and the rise of China as a major world force. The conflict between Israel and Hamas and Russia and Ukraine illustrate how the Cold War still exists today in different forms. In an era where power struggles and



rivalries persist on a worldwide scale, diplomats often wonder about the economic, political and strategic value of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in light of the unparalleled problems in world affairs. But having a non-aligned and balanced foreign policy is thought to be in Nepal's best interests, given its location between two rising economic giants.

As an advocate of an inclusive global order where all nations can grow together with a sense of development justice, Nepal has consistently declined to join any military alliances or power blocs. Following a non-aligned strategy, Nepal seeks to advance its domestic agenda while promoting amicable relations and collaboration with other nations across the globe. The non-alignment tenet, which is rooted in Nepal's constitution, serves as the foundation for the country's foreign policy. Nepal is dedicated to preserving its independence and has no intention of allying with any big bloc.

The 19th NAM Summit was held in Kampala, Uganda on Friday. During his speech, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda emphasized the significance of resolving transitional justice concerns in order to bring about enduring peace in Nepal. The values of sovereign equality, mutual respect, and peaceful dispute resolution are the cornerstones of Nepal's foreign policy, as PM Prachanda emphasizes. Having emerged from a conflict, he is a leader who thinks that correcting historical, sociocultural and economic injustices on a national and international level can lead to peace. Peaceful resolution of issues, reciprocal respect, sovereign equality and mutual benefits form the cornerstones of Nepal's foreign policy. The Prime Minister expressed how very distressing the situation in Gaza and Ukraine is, saying that Nepal, a nation that values peace, deplores all forms of conflict and geopolitical conflicts worldwide. In accordance with a United Nations resolution, he stated his desire for peace in the Middle East and a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, whereby they would live side by side in safety and security within acknowledged international borders. With many questioning the NAM's continued relevance in the current context, Prime Minister Prachanda asserted that the organization may be extremely important in transforming the global financial system to help nations in unique circumstances obtain funding for realizing their aspirations for development. According to the prime minister, the developed countries need to quickly fulfill their finance obligation in order to give development justice to these countries. However, some of the countries that were at the forefront of the non-align

movement's founding have moved away from the NAM's philosophy. The member nations should endeavor to maintain this forum's relevance in this way so that it can develop into a potent tool for preventing conflict and promoting world peace. Nepal may use a non-alignment policy to meaningfully participate in the international arena as a free and independent country in the context of a shifting global order.

#### RELEVANCE OF NON-ALIGNMENT

Woods (2022) remarked that many smaller nations are defying pressure to choose a side as the US and China split the world into allies and adversaries. It is better to handle the rise of economic nationalism without blindly following the superpowers' lead on foreign policy. It is further argued that smaller nations can further their goals and ideals through non-alignment without being wholly bound by the global whims and inclinations of a powerhouse. This presents a challenge to the superpowers. It's more comfortable and gives them more power to project blind allegiance.

The 120 members of NAM can continue to help the UN by playing a significant role in the general assembly. In order to maintain international peace, the 120 members of NAM might be extremely important to the UN. Today, NAM's foreign policy is still highly significant. India is one of the several developing nations that still adheres to NAM policy. All tiny and emerging nations should continue to adhere to the principle of avoiding colonialism and imperialism. The 120 developing nations that make up NAM serve as a restraint on the aspirations of superpowers. It strongly forbids imperialism, nationalism and universalism and served as a unifying force against the conventional foreign policy of big power. The cooperation of South-South countries is facilitated by NAM. It brings up topics that the countries in the south are quite concerned about. In order to accomplish the intended consequences of transitioning from developing to developed nations, it starts the corner of economic, political and social growth. Day by day, NAM is becoming the majority. Its membership can voice their opinions on global issues as its strength grows yearly, acting as a force. NAM became the alternate global power as time went on. With its influence and desire to democratize the international system, it demonstrated that it was a legitimate alternative world power that could advance peace and equality globally and even provide fresh perspectives to the politics of the day. Human rights and cultural diversity are safeguarded by NAM. NAM is



constantly working to protect every country's human rights and will stand up to protect them when they are violated. NAM has served as a forum to advance the interests of developing nations since its founding. When disagreements occur between developed and developing nations on any given subject, NAM serves as a forum for peaceful negotiation and resolution, ensuring that each citizen of the country receives a good outcome. With the goal of maintaining each country's independence, NAM demonstrated its relevance. Regardless of sporadic, insignificant adjustments to the current system in place globally, this policy will remain in place for as long as sovereign nation states exist. It remains relevant at every level until the idea of international relations is established. Therefore, whether we live in a unipolar, multipolar or bipolar world, NAM policy will only get stronger. Khanal (2000) articulated that Nepal possesses a unique foreign policy that safeguards its national interests and aligns with its own national goals. We know that the Great Powers decide the real matters of war and peace and we have very little influence over them. Obviously, we are also aware of the reality that our function in the world is restricted due to our size and other factors. Non-alignment is a suitable policy for promoting national interests and autonomously assessing global events. Anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, a struggle against hegemony and dominance, foreign aggression and occupation and the goal of existing as a counterbalance in international affairs are the essence of non-alignment. But with the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, NATO emerged as the only truly significant military bloc, casting doubt on NAM's continued usefulness. NAM's relevance has been revived and persists to this day due to the variety of challenges and insecurities sown within rising global politics.

## II. CONCLUSION

Khatami (2012) avowed that talk has always been a human concept, but because it was presented correctly and at the right moment, the idea of "dialogue among civilizations" spread widely, gained acceptance and became a valuable symbol. The world continued to pursue cross-cultural dialogue in a variety of useful fields despite the world's most famous terrorist attacks, the 9/11 attacks, which occurred in the year that was declared the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations and which caused the discourse of violence and war to overshadow the discourse of peace and compromise. The newly independent postcolonial nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America

developed a unique worldview known as the Non-Aligned Movement, which is focused on promoting global peace in tandem with security and development, peaceful coexistence and independent foreign policy. It is reasonable to regard non-violence as the sibling, or rather a reflection of, non-violence, given the background of India's experiences with colonial oppression (including abuse and brutality) and anti-colonial struggle. The Panchsheel Treaty has been widely embraced as the foundation for the international conduct of non-aligned nations. NAM was born out of a particular historical setting, particularly the post-war era. Numerous nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America became independent as a result of decolonization. Nepal's foreign policy is independent, impartial, impartial and non-aligned. Mutual respect, sovereign equality, mutual gain and peaceful dispute resolution are the cornerstones of our foreign policy. One of the cornerstones of Nepal's foreign policy is the non-alignment principle. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an alliance of 120 nations that do not have formal allegiance to any major political force. In the backdrop of the Cold War struggle, it was created with the intention of furthering the interests of emerging nations. It is the world's largest association of states, second only to the United Nations. In general, non-alignment refers to not associating oneself with a country or with military alliances. It entails attempting to preserve amicable ties with other nations while attempting to see things as objectively as possible—not always from a military perspective, though that must occasionally be considered.

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