CHAPTER I
NONALIGNMENT AND REGIONAL CONFLICTS

If the nonaligned states have endeavoured to play a positive role for the cause of preserving peace in respect of Cold War issues, what could be our duty when we face disputes among ourselves and between friendly nations?

- Sirimavo Bandaranaike (1962)

The emergence and growth of nonalignment as a foreign policy perspective and as an international movement has been an outstanding development of post-war international relations. Since its inception in the early 1950s, the concept has significantly affected the diplomatic orientation of a majority of new states in the developing world and has lent them a distinctive identity in the contemporary world. By rejecting the dynamics of the Cold War and by offering a new approach to the questions of war and peace, these nonaligned countries have certainly tried to influence the conduct of international relations which in the past has been an exclusive preserve of the Great Powers.

Although the contextual motivations for the adoption of nonalignment as a foreign policy choice may have been different for different countries, in so far as details are concerned, yet essentially it was a spontaneous outgrowth of the anti-colonial revolution which swept over Asia and Africa in the
aftermath of the Second World War. During this era, the international peace and security was greatly threatened by the policies of the Great Powers which had sought to divide the world into two mutually antagonistic power blocs. Against this precarious setting, the imperative of safeguarding international peace was especially grasped by the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. Being former colonies and suffering from socio-economic underdevelopment, these countries were far more keen to avoid any conflictual situation which could undermine their hard earned independence and their quest for a peaceful national development. They were also seized of the fact that their resources in men and material had been exploited by their imperial masters in the past and it would again be done, if they participated in East-West conflict. Representing the overall view of these countries, Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Member-in-Charge of External Affairs of the Interim Government of India, made the first ever formal enunciation of the policy of nonalignment in 1946 and its opposition to bipolar alignments as such. In a radio broadcast on 7 September, he declared:

We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale.1

1 Jawaharlal Nehru, India's Foreign Policy (Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961), (New Delhi, 1961), p.2.
Thus, nonalignment was originally operationalized as a policy of non-participation in the military blocs headed by the Great Powers. But, at the same time, it represented the pursuit of the nationalist leadership of Afro-Asian countries to play an independent international role to bring about a new world order based on freedom and social justice.

**Nonalignment: A Distinctive Movement**

The collective concerns and activities of these new states manifested initially within the frame of Afro-Asianism and after a series of meetings and conferences among their leaders led to the historic Bandung conference in 1955. However, a new direction to these collaborative activities was given by President Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, who along with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the United Arab Republic's President Gamal Abdel Nasser conceived the edifice of the nonaligned movement. Starting from the Brioni meeting in 1956, the concerted efforts of these leaders led eventually to the formalization of the nonaligned movement at the first ever nonaligned Summit at Belgrade in September 1961. Beginning with a membership of 25 states (plus observers), the nonaligned movement

---


3 For a concise account of these developments, see Leo Mates, "Origins and Role of Nonalignment", in Ljubivoje Acimovic, ed., *Nonalignment in the World of Today* (Beograd, 1969), p. 153-89. Leo Mates was the Secretary-General of the Belgrade Summit.
has now become a mighty movement of 101 members (plus Observers and Guests). Eight spectacular summits along with numerous other conferences and the various degrees of cooperation within and outside the United Nations have helped to promote the identity of the movement as a distinguished grouping of like-minded countries in international relations.

For the last three decades, the nonaligned movement has been able to preserve its distinctive character. Though, Afro-Asianism and nonalignment have frequently been used interchangeably by the statesmen and scholars, especially during the sixties, there are conspicuous differences between the two categories. As pointed out by Lars Nord:

For Afro-Asianism, the formal criterion for inclusion is geographical, making a state's physical location the differentiae specifica and the attitude towards the Cold War a secondary factor; for the Movement of Non-alignment, on the other hand, the approach to the East-West conflict is pre-eminent and makes the geographic position irrelevant.

4 The countries represented at Belgrade were:

Similarly, despite sharing common grounds with the remaining countries of the Third World on economic issues, the nonaligned movement has retained a separate political identity. Also unlike the nonaligned movement, the Third World is still a loose economic category, not having any defined organizational arrangement, and encompasses the underdeveloped countries of the southern hemisphere irrespective of their approach towards East-West struggle. 6

Although there is no single authoritative definition of nonalignment as such, the nonaligned movement has in course of time evolved a consensus regarding its aims, principles, and criteria. Thus, starting initially as a policy of non-participation in power blocs, nonalignment has now developed political, economic, social, cultural, and other dimensions. 7 However, it continues to be primarily concerned with the issue of international peace and security. The nonaligned countries have both

6 "... although elaborate economic criteria have been devised to define and categorize the Third World, but these relate more to development than to group dynamics". Richard L. Jackson, The Non-Aligned, the UN and the Super Powers (N.Y., 1983), p.19.

individually and collectively reacted to and acted upon various issues relating to East-West conflict; military alliances, arms race and disarmament, imperialistic interventions, wars of liberation, and so on.

The perspective

However, since the beginning the nonaligned countries have paid little attention to the question of regional conflicts and bilateral disputes. Naturally, this aspect of nonaligned behaviour has by and large been less discussed in the scholarly works on nonalignment. It is only recently that the statesmen and scholars of the nonaligned world have revealed growing interest in highlighting the potential and performance of the nonaligned in various situations relating to regional disputes and conflicts.⁸

In this Chapter an effort has been made to discern and amplify the nonaligned approach, to the extent it is possible, towards regional conflicts especially in a situation involving one of their own ranks. Evidently this relates to a number of basic premises of the policy of nonalignment as well as the international and domestic setting of nonaligned countries. Some kind of explanation to this inquiry may provide the necessary context to the present study which aims to examine the nonaligned behaviour towards India's major international conflicts. The present analysis of the nonaligned concerns as reflected through their various policy proclamations and their actual behavioural patterns in certain instances may not be precise and specific. Yet, it may focus on the problems which the nonaligned face vis-a-vis regional conflicts involving a fellow nonaligned. Following points of inquiry may be raised in the context of the present study.

At the general level:

If nonalignment was not a negative policy or neutrality then what has been its positive dimension? What has been the nonaligned intent of independence in foreign policy sphere or their resolve to decide each issue on its merits? Do the nonaligned foreign policy actions differ substantially from aligned and other Third World countries in this regard? What are the political dimensions of nonaligned solidarity
and to what an extent has it been evoked regarding issues which fall outside their global concerns, such as the Cold War and anti-colonialism. And at a more specific level:

How have concrete issues such as regional conflicts been tackled by the nonaligned in their conferences and on other forums? Are there any diplomatic expectations from the fellow nonaligned when a nonaligned faces aggression? Finally, what are the peace-functions of the nonaligned in regional conflicts and what have been their potential and performance in this regard?

Evidently these questions warrant a fairly extensive treatment both at the conceptual and empirical levels—something which is not feasible here, given the limited scope of the present study. However, a cursory glance at the broad trends of the policy of nonalignment, as they have emerged over the years, especially till the early seventies, may provide some clues to understand in a proper perspective the nonaligned behaviour vis-a-vis India's international conflicts.

**Plural Character**

To begin with, the nonaligned group of countries whose number has quadrupled in the course of the past twenty-five years has always remained a highly pluralistic and heterogeneous group. Situated in four distant continents, these countries have undergone multifarious changes in their
foreign policy outlook over the years. Ideologically too this group represents an amorphous scenario having in its folds radicals, moderates and conservatives who differ in historical, economic, political and religious grounds. The only uniting feature has been the expressed commitment of its members to the policy of nonalignment. And although nonalignment does not explain the entirety of their foreign policy, it does provide a canvas to outline the broad patterns of foreign policy activities in this arena.

Nonalignment admittedly resists any iron-clad definition. The great variety of viewpoints and practices associated with nonalignment led sufficient credence to the judgement expressed by Leo Mates that:

"It is safe to say that there are at least as many possible definitions of nonalignment as there are nonaligned countries. Probably there are even more. In fact every statesman in such countries would consider his view of world problems as the most prominent definition of nonalignment."

It is precisely due to this diversity of opinion that there has been multiple labellation in the nonaligned arena.

9 However, some scholars consider the "absence of a clear authorised definition of what constitutes the essence of non-alignment ... a major source of conceptual as well as institutional weakness and a major cause of the wide gap between the theory of non-alignment and practice of nonaligned states, individually and collectively". M.S. Rajan, "The Concept of Non-Alignment and the Basis of Membership of the Movement", in Misra and Narayan, ed., n.7, p.238.

10 Mates, n.3, p.154.
to designate the individual foreign policy posture. However, one may try and discern the irreducible core of nonalignment about which there has been a minimal subjective consensus. But before doing that, it is necessary to remove the cobweb created by western scholars regarding the real nature of nonalignment.

**Positive Policy**

Indeed, it was the context of the Cold War which gave an opportunity to the western minds to interpret nonalignment as a negative policy, some kind of neutrality, a policy of fence sitting and equidistance. However, it has now been sufficiently established that nonalignment had never been conceived as a neutral or negative posture vis-a-vis the


East-West struggle. Nor even its nomenclature necessarily denote a negative attitude. It was neither a product of the Cold War nor an attendant phenomenon of the bloc division. The ethos of nonalignment not only preceded the Cold War, but the proliferation of nonaligned movement also occurred at a time when the bipolarity was on the decline.

Unlike neutrality, nonalignment as a political concept stands for optimum involvement in international politics, primarily in safeguarding international peace and security. For instance, at the first nonaligned summit at Belgrade, the participants considered it essential that "the nonaligned countries should participate in solving outstanding


15 See Misra, Ibid., p. 25.

international issues concerning peace and security in the world as none of them can remain unaffected by or be indifferent to these issues."¹⁷ Moreover, nonalignment is based on positive considerations. Thus, in case of war the neutrals would prefer to retain their legal status but the nonaligned may take sides on the basis of right and wrong.¹⁸ This aspect of nonalignment was well amplified by President Ahmed Soekarno at the Belgrade summit when he stated:

... nonalignment is not neutrality ... It is not the sanctimonious attitude of the man who holds himself aloof - "a plague on both your houses". ... Nonaligned policy is not policy of neutrality without its own colour: being non-aligned does not mean becoming a buffer state between the two giant blocs. Nonalignment is active devotion to the lofty cause of independence, abiding peace, social justice, and the freedom to be free.¹⁹

It is clear that nonalignment was conceived as a response to the inadequacy of alliance system but unlike others, it was not a defensive response.²⁰ It was rather a policy - strategy of "maximum involvement" in the major

¹⁹ The Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries (Belgrade, 1961), p.27.
conflicts of the world. The non-bloc attitude only meant to ensure that the nonaligned are able to assert themselves without any outside hindrances. After all, what distinguishes a nonaligned from an aligned is that the former is not shackled by prior judgements and preconceived commitments. Jawaharlal Nehru highlighted this very aspect in 1957 when he stated:

Nonalignment seems to me as the natural consequence of an independent nation functioning according to its own rights. After all alignment means being regimented to do something you do not like and thereby giving up certain measures of independent judgement and thinking.

Independent Attitude

Thus, one of the most basic and at the same time discernible element which explains the minimal core or the essence of nonalignment has been the concept of independence of judgement or, to be more precise, the wish to take an independent attitude vis-a-vis international issues. This is easily confirmed by an analysis of the documents of nonaligned conferences and various policy proclamations of nonaligned governments. For instance,

23 "The concept of independence, so frequently stressed by the nonaligned has always been seen as the right of independent decision making ..." Leo Mates, "It Began in Belgrade", Review of International Affairs, vol. 37, no. 867, p. 5. Also see Misra, n. 13, p. 100.
Burmese Prime Minister U Nu considered nonalignment as "an instrument to retain his freedom in foreign affairs".\textsuperscript{24} King Haile Selassie of Ethiopia implored "... to be impartial, impartial to judge actions and policies objectively",\textsuperscript{25} and Nehru spoke of it as "a policy of acting according to our best judgement.\textsuperscript{26}

However, nonalignment defined in terms of liberty of making independent judgement and decision on foreign policy has not been properly appreciated in many circles. For instance, it has been argued that the concept of nonalignment defined as independence itself was not a substantive policy - except in a negative sense.\textsuperscript{27} Or else a recent study finds that:

\begin{quote}
... the notion of nonalignment as independence is, in fact, ambiguous; it compounds, instead of simplifying, the conceptual problem. The idea of independence of political action is difficult to operationalize; in our increasingly interdependent world, it is practically difficult to assess degrees of national independence.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{24} William C. Johnstone, \textit{Burma’s Foreign Policy} (Massachusetts, 1961), p.104.

\textsuperscript{25} Non-Aligned Countries, n.19, p.86.

\textsuperscript{26} Nehru, n.1, p.79.


Clearly, both these opinions take a rather atomistic and at the same time exaggerated view of the nonaligned quest for autonomy in the conduct of foreign policy. The pursuit of independence never meant an end in itself nor did it imply the circumvention of the national interest of a nonaligned country. In fact, the two elements, viz., independence of foreign policy and pursuit of national interest were considered by many to be the two basic elements which explain the essence of nonalignment. Highlighting this aspect Nehru said:

Our instructions to our delegates have always been first to consider each question in terms of India's interest, secondly, on its merit - I mean to say if it did not affect India, naturally on its merits and not merely to do something or to give a vote just to please this power or that power....

The nonaligned wish to independent decision making ought not to be seen in absolute terms. After all, "there is no such thing as 'fullfreedom of action', because confrontation with environment necessarily limits this freedom." And there is no denying that nonaligned

29 Nehru, n.1, p. 33.
30 Mates, n.7, p.108.
independence in this regard is severely limited by their difficult economic position, military weakness and internal instability.\textsuperscript{31} Thus, the degree of independence in foreign policy sphere of the nonaligned is bound to vary from case to case and from time to time. And though, independence of judgement is an important dimension of the policy of nonalignment, it would be rather difficult to measure in precise terms the extent of a country's nonalignment on the basis of its independent acts.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Freedom and Social Justice}

It would be, however, more reasonable if the nonaligned pursuit of independence be seen in the context of the substantative values which were prescribed by its early protagonists such as Nehru, Nasser, Tito, Sukarno and others. Highlighting this aspect, President Kwame Nkrumah pointed out, "Nonalignment is the ability to be free and being in a position to judge issues on their merits.


\textsuperscript{32} Some scholars have, however, tried to measure a country's nonaligned posture in proportion to its capacity to act independently in international political arena. See for instance, Richard Vengroff, "Dependency and Underdevelopment in Black Africa: An Empirical Test", \textit{Journal of Modern African Studies} (Cambridge), vol.15, 1977, p. 642, ff, as quoted in Asobie, n.28, p. 499-516.
and look for situations that are just and peaceful irrespective of the interests involved." Nehru also forcefully advocated these substantive values when he stated:

We are not blind to reality nor do we acquiesce in any challenge to man's freedom from whatever quarters it may come. Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot and shall not be neutral.

The five-point membership criteria of nonalignment also underlines the positive dimension of the policy.

---

33 Ibid, p.503.
35 The five-point criteria adopted originally at the Belgrade summit were:

1. A country should follow an independent policy based on peaceful coexistence and nonalignment or should be showing a trend in favour of such a policy.

2. It should consistently have supported movements for national independence.

3. It should not be a member of multilateral military alliances concluded in the context of Great Power conflicts.

4. If it had conceded military bases these concessions should not have been made in the context of Great Power conflicts.

5. If it were a member of bilateral or regional defence arrangement, this should not be in the context of Great Power conflicts.

The first two criteria highlighted the principle of peaceful coexistence and support for national liberation movements as two positive components of defining a non-aligned country. Moreover, the principle of peaceful coexistence did not entail passivity and status quo in all situations for the nonaligned countries. It was much evident when the final documents of the Belgrade Summit while referring to this principle included in it "... the right of people's self-determination to independence and to free determination of the forms and methods of economic, social and cultural developments ...." Obviously, these positive principles had been conceived in accordance with Nehru's conception of peace which did not preclude the possibility of nonaligned countries actively supporting the cause of freedom and justice.


38 For an interesting discussion on this point, see Lars Nord, Non-Alignment and Socialism: Yugoslav Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice (Uppsala, 1974), pp. 30-31. Also see Ranko Petkovic, Non-Alignment - An Independent Factor in the Democratization of International Relations (Beograd, 1979), pp. 12-16.
Limiting Factors

Nonalignment both as a foreign policy perspective and as an international movement has undergone significant shifts in its intent and content during the last three decades. While the nonaligned movement has remarkably enlarged its area of activity and has become a global social movement, some of the original political principles and commitments enunciated by its early adherents have either been sidetracked or never implemented.

This has created a crisis of credibility for the nonaligned countries. It is often remarked that some of the countries are nonaligned more by the virtue of their public declaration than by their foreign policy actions.39 And that it is no more necessary for a country to pursue the positive and substantive principles of nonalignment for participating in the nonaligned movement and even for assuming a leadership role in the movement.40

It is also suggested that the common basis of the nonaligned identity defined in terms of non-participation in military blocs has been weakened in recent times.

39 See for instance, Holsti, n.12, p.106.

Indeed with the so-called dilution of membership criteria, the nonaligned movement now only bans direct participation in the multilateral military alliances with Great Powers and tolerates less direct military arrangements.\(^{41}\) Along with this, the factors of external intervention, internal instability have contributed to the growth of militarism in the nonaligned world and military and para-military forces have frequently been employed to suppress social unrest and secessionist movements. Thus, it is contented that, at times, the nonaligned become subject to the perception of hostility which leads them into accepting external military aid and eventually compromise their nonaligned status.\(^{42}\)

In this very context, it is worthwhile to quote a lengthy remark of John W. Burton who had earlier espoused nonalignment as an ideal 'norm' of international behaviour.


\(^{42}\) See Burton, n. 20, p. 97. Also see Romesh Thapar, "Non-Alignment: In Today's Setting", Seminar (New Delhi), September 1977, no. 217, p. 13.
The NAM was beginning to create a new type of international society that could have isolated great power conflict. However, the NAM has failed in its objective. The reasons are not hard to find. There are not many small states that can claim a legitimised status. Many, if not most, are under threat internally. Sometimes the reasons are environmental and structural: boundaries that were drawn by colonial powers cut across ethnic groups and incorporate factions that make a unified state impossible. Sometimes the regimes are carry-over from the colonial past, are governed by small privileged groups who try to insist on their rights to rule, by coercion and repression if necessary. Whatever the reasons there are not many newly-created states that can survive without foreign military assistance in dealing with internal opposition. There cannot be nonalignment in condition of internal instability that requires alliance support.

Indeed, a formal distinction between aligned and nonaligned on the basis of the existence of some formal treaties with Great Powers by itself does not evince any positive and distinctive character of the nonaligned. Therefore, it has been observed that "the distinction between nonalignment and alignment in practice, when one brings to bear actual behaviour on different concrete issues, tends to use two different labels for essentially..."
the same phenomenon. Even the statesmen and scholars in the nonaligned world have taken cognizance of the gradual erosion of positive and distinctive features of the policy of nonalignment. Thus, concedes Leo Mates:

The policy (nonalignment) was frequently described in terms of independence, autonomy or active or peaceful coexistence. However, as the time went on nonalignment appeared more and more frequently to signify the policy of nonaligned countries.

Non-bloc Temper of Solidarity

It would be relevant here to amplify certain political dimensions of nonaligned solidarity especially in order to examine its role in a conflict situation involving one of its own ranks.

Evidently, the most discernible feature of nonaligned solidarity, as it has grown since the mid-fifties, has been its distinctively non-bloc character. Starting from ad hoc forms of collaboration, it has evolved within less formal frame of periodic meetings, and the various degrees of mutual consultation at the United Nations. There have been strong ideational and pragmatic considerations which have moulded the nonaligned co-operation along

46 However, Henry A. Kissinger finds the nonaligned movement "an alignment of the nonaligned", see Bebler, n. 41, p. 301. Peter Willets has also preferred the term "alliance" to describe the nonaligned solidarity, see Willets, n. 36.
their flexible and informal lines.

The founding fathers of the nonaligned movement endeavoured to dispel the notion of nonaligned countries acting as a bloc. Nehru, in particular, was even opposed to the formalization of nonaligned movement at Belgrade as he saw in it a possible move towards some kind of bloc formation and only at the last moment did he consent to attend the conference. However, the Belgrade participants overwhelmingly rejected the very idea of forming a third force or a bloc. While President Tito found the creation of a third bloc as running contrary to the political concept of non-alignment, President Nasser questioned as to why "a third bloc should enter the arena and increase the tension of this strife instead of easing it". Similarly, Emperor Haile Selassie felt that any such bloc like functioning would diminish the effectiveness of the nonaligned group of countries.

The Belgrade Summit also ruled out any organizational structure or institutional apparatus akin to a bloc or

47 See for details, Jansen, n.2, p.281.

48 The final declaration issued at the end of the Belgrade Summit confirmed that the participants "do not wish to form a new bloc and cannot be a bloc" see Non-Aligned Countries, n.19, p.256.

49 Ibid., p.20.

50 Ibid., p.45.

51 Ibid., pp.87-88.
alliance. When a tentative proposal was mooted that some kind of permanent secretariat be established after the summit, the majority rejected it categorically. This despite the fact that the proposed secretariat was to have a very limited area of jurisdiction. And for nearly twelve years till the Algiers Nonaligned Summit (1973), the nonaligned desisted from even elementary forms of institutionalization.

The Belgrade Summit thus established certain norms of nonaligned collaboration to clearly set it apart from bloc-like behaviour. It has been rightly observed, thus:

First, at no stage was any nonaligned nation bound to policies agreed upon by the group; nonalignment was shown to be not merely non-alignment with respect to Great Powers, but with respect to other nonaligned countries also. Secondly, at no stage were declarations made or decisions taken which would isolate nonaligned from aligned African or Asian countries.

Cooperation: Global and Regional Levels

At the global level, the nonaligned have evolved the elements of a more or less common approach. But this is not so at the regional level, especially with respect to regional conflicts. Such absence of

52 Mates, n.7, p.221.
54 Burton, n.7, p.20.
articulation of a common approach at the level of regional issues is probably because of the understanding that nonalignment is not an immutable policy but a flexible guideline for policy. It is possible, therefore, for the individual nonaligned countries to take divergent stands on concrete issues affecting their national interest on the basis of the merit of the case as seen by them.

Evidently, the nonaligned movement does not and cannot prescribe specific behavioural norms for its members. Rather it has adumbrated certain vaguely defined principles such as peaceful coexistence and peaceful settlement of disputes. However, these principles only serve as some kind of directive principles regarding the approach of the nonaligned towards concrete issues. As Ljubomir Radovanovic says:

Such affairs are the internal business of every nonaligned country and all that is required of them from the standpoint of nonalignment when the narrower national interests are concerned is, that the fulfillment of these interests should not be at variance with the general principles of the policy.55

Even if a nonaligned country has ignored the so-called nonaligned norm of behaviour with respect to

regional or concrete issues while fulfilling its nationally defined objectives, its position within the movement remains unaffected. It has perhaps never happened that the foreign policy action of an individual nonaligned has been scrutinized on the basis of its obligation to other nonaligned states. 56

In fact but for the voluntary and flexible temper of nonaligned solidarity, it would have been virtually impossible to bring such a large number of dissimilar countries on a single platform. And given the loose structure of the nonaligned group, it is simply not feasible to coordinate the foreign policy actions of the nonaligned in a bloc-like fashion, especially on concrete issues requiring urgent attention.

To begin with, there is no sufficiently dominant or core power which could even conceive the role of coordinating individual nonaligned preferences on concrete issues. Secondly, it is hard to see how a bloc could be organized without a centre corresponding one or the other Super Power in the case of existing two alliances. Thirdly, in the absence of proper communication links and a common economic, military and technological base the nonaligned countries cannot simply take an effective group action

56 See Mates, n.7,p.221.
vis-a-vis any situation demanding immediate attention. And last but not the least, most of the nonaligned are so weak in economic, political and military capabilities that there would be little they can do to influence the course of international crises even if they decide to form some kind of an alliance or mechanism of joint action. 57

The nonaligned movement also does not command similar identification from its members. In fact, right since Belgrade, only a few activists have been called upon to express their views forcefully on all issues concerning international peace and security. But even their activism within the movement has varied from time to time. For instance, during the initial years, the following nonaligned were far more active: Yugoslavia, India, Egypt, Indonesia, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Burma. However, during the mid-sixties many of these activists took a low profile within the movement. The change of leadership and other domestic and international constraints saw India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Egypt losing much of their activism during this phase. 58 On the other hand, there have been passive members of the movement which

57 For a detailed discussion on this point see Bebler, n.41, pp.301-2 and Mates in Acimovic ed., n.3, p.163.
became important in later years. Cuba can be cited as the case in point.

The mechanism of conference diplomacy has played a limited role in promoting the desired level of unity among the nonaligned countries. And the growth of regionalistic and particularistic orientations with the enlargement of the movement has made the task of taking a coordinated nonaligned action all the more difficult. For instance, the African states which entered the movement en masse at the Cairo Summit have been primarily concerned with their regional issues and have looked towards the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as their main platform. Similarly, the nonaligned Arab countries, especially after the demise of Nasser, have by and large preferred to articulate their demands through their regional and religious platforms. Similarly, many more ideological, regional and religious considerations divide the nonaligned group, more so after the weakening of their common identity which was initially defined clearly in the context of a Cold War situation.

Clearly the nonaligned movement having in its folds members with vast plurality of interest and diverse perceptions regarding international situation can attain cohesion only as regards global issues. It is no

surprise, therefore, that the imperative of the nonaligned activating their solidarity vis-a-vis non-global issues has not been generally emphasized.

In line with such a frame of cooperation, it is quite understandable as to why the concrete issues affecting the individual members are treated in a cursory manner within the movement. A glance at the conference documents confirms this. It is evident that these specific issues were included for consideration on the agenda and mentioned in the final declaration only on the insistence of the interested parties and were watered down sufficiently to evade any clearly defined stand of the participants concerning the position and actions of their governments. For instance, the question of Congo, the Near East, and the French bases in Tunisia were taken up at the Belgrade Summit but as pointed out by Leo Mates:

... the treatment of these issues in official documents clearly shows that these questions had not been discussed as basic problems and they were rather an appendix than a constituent part of the problem.60

Regional Conflicts and Security Dilemma

It is clear from the preceding discussion that if the nonaligned solidarity has any meaning, it is mostly vis-a-vis overarching global issues. On concrete issues such as

60 Mates, n.7, pp. 79-80.
regional and subregional disputes, they are under no mandatory obligation to take a common attitude or to act in unison. During the formative phase of the nonaligned movement, the Nehruvian model of nonaligned behaviour was generally accepted, which emphasized that a nonaligned wishes to be nonaligned in relation to other nonaligned countries as well.61 A recent study on nonaligned co-operation also confirms this:

An important corollary of the basis of such (nonaligned) co-operation is that the nonaligned also do not want to be involved in the conflicts of nonaligned countries inter se or with other countries.62

Robert L. Rothstein who has also found this feature conspicuous enough states:

Nonalignment always refers to global issues .... Conversely, nonalignment had little, if anything, to say about LDC (less developed countries) conflict or economic relations among the LDCs themselves.63


62 Raña, n.59, p.79.

63 Robert L. Rothstein, Alliances and Small Powers (New York, 1968), p.119. He further maintains that, “Many of the potential conflicts within the Third World were not foreseen, perhaps because primary attention still focussed on the former colonial mentors or on Cold War dialectics”. Ibid.
Referring to this trend, Werner Levi has stated:

Nonaligned etiquette required that fears and conflicts within the non-aligned family would not be discussed in public at all, or only in the abstract with no names mentioned. Otherwise, the effectiveness of the nonalignment in global politics would be greatly reduced.64

The inability to offer any collective help to a fellow-nonaligned country involved in an armed conflict has evoked much criticism. Lars Nord, for instance, argues that "it is precisely this unwillingness to adhere to a united front against the enemy which is a deplorable thing about nonalignment".65 Similarly, it was noted at an international symposium on nonalignment held at Belgrade in 1969 that:

There are many instances supporting the view that nonaligned countries are often in a position that does not allow them to act freely and effectively. Thus when India was attacked in 1962, the first support and aid came from the aligned and not from the nonaligned countries.66

And in the same symposium, an Indian scholar pointed out:

In case the victim of a wrong or an injustice is a nonaligned state, the other nonaligned states should be prepared to go a step further beyond verbal condemnation of the wrong or

64 Levi, n.27, p.88.
65 Nord, n.5, p.92.
66 Acimovic ed., n.3, pp.48-49.
the injustice and expression of sympathy with the sufferer. They must develop the principle of mutual assistance among themselves. This should not mean the launching of another military alliance; the assistance rendered also may not necessarily be military in each case, but there should be some preparedness to go to the aid of a fellow nonaligned country in times of need or distress.67

Indeed, for some nonaligned countries, "perhaps the most discouraging feature of nonalignment was the refusal of the nonaligned states to form a bloc of their own in support of nonalignment".68

This very aspect of nonalignment has also disappointed those who saw the nonaligned movement as a means of obtaining security by gaining friends and prestige among other countries.69 Notwithstanding Nehru's model that the nonaligned countries are expected to remain nonaligned vis-a-vis fellow-nonaligned countries, it has often been expected that the nonaligned movement would be a source of diplomatic strength to the participants when they face aggression or any other form of armed hostility.

67 Bimla Prasad, ibid, p.110.  
68 Levi, n.27, p.118.  
In this context it is argued that the failure of nonaligned to come to India's help or atleast to condemn the Chinese aggression indicated the decline of nonalignment as a diplomatic strategy. The nonaligned ineffectiveness regarding the various regional conflicts of the Third World involving its own ranks has been cited to prove that:

... nonalignment as a diplomatic strategy has failed to meet the individual security needs of the movement. It is of no use when the security of a member is threatened by a Super Power. It is of very limited use when the security of a member is threatened by another member of the nonaligned movement. When faced with crisis situation, the nonaligned countries have often fallen back on the support of either the Super Powers... or religion-based groupings like the International Islamic Conference, or regional groupings like the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), instead of relying on their movement. The nonaligned movement has proved sterile.70

Even if one does not agree to the above contention, the fact is that increasingly there is a growing demand within the nonaligned movement to have some kind of institutional mechanism to take care of individual security needs of its members. And as one analyst has pointed out, "many members are now realizing that while fighting for the world peace and security, they have tended to neglect even the most elementary form of mutual cooperation which would have helped preserve

70 Satish Kumar, ibid, p. 117. Also see Hari Jai Singh, India and the Non-Aligned World (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 115-18.
their own freedom and independence.\textsuperscript{71}

Despite increasing disillusionment with the United Nations Collective Security System, the nonaligned have generally resisted any attempt to develop institutional norms regarding mutual assistance and self-reliance. Such step, it was argued, might be misconstrued as a drift towards the formation of a third bloc. In fact, a nonaligned country seeking diplomatic help from the fellow nonaligned was sometimes seen as some kind of liability for the movement.\textsuperscript{72}

However, it was only at the Lusaka nonaligned summit (1970) that a first embryonic move was made in this direction which eventually ushered into a limited institutionalization of the movement at Algiers in 1973. Also for the first time the political declaration of the Algiers Summit expressed the resolve to help a member in case of threat to its security:

Participants paid special attention to strengthening the security and defence of nonaligned countries from all external dangers. . . . expressed the resolve of


\textsuperscript{72} For instance, Indian diplomatic expectations from the nonaligned movement vis-a-vis its neighbours has been seen as one of the factors which weakened the movement. See Kreacic, n. 58, p. 5.
their countries to increase their ... solidarity and assistance in case of threat to their independence and territorial integrity.73

However, more than a decade has gone since the idea of evolving some kind of mechanism for mutual assistance was mooted, and no conspicuous progress could be made in this direction. This was bound to be the case. With a movement so vast and pluralistic and representing conflicting interests, it is no easy task to evolve mutually acceptable parameters of a common security system. However, unlike the sixties when any such discussion was a taboo within the nonaligned circles, now one often finds suggestions to this effect. For instance, in an international seminar held in 1982 at Baghdad, it was opined:

The idea of mutual security arrangement does not by any means contradict the policy of nonalignment regarding affiliation with military-politico alliances. The non-aligned countries owe it to themselves, and for the sake of survival of the Movement, to adopt sustained measures of mutual defence vis-a-vis their security of independence which is the raison détre of NAM.74

73 See Bebler, n.41, pp.300-01.

Peace Making Functions

From time to time, the distinct conflict-reducing functions of nonalignment have been proclaimed in various policy statements of individual nonaligned statesmen as also in major gatherings of the movement. Way back at the Bandung Conference (1955), Nehru spoke of creating an "area of peace"—"whose mobilization of the moral violence of people against situation of strength and military alliance would reduce the level of conflict in the international system". 75 The first nonaligned summit at Belgrade pinned paramount importance to the principles of peaceful coexistence which were further amplified and reiterated at the subsequent summits. 76 The second nonaligned summit at Cairo (1964) also set forth certain norms for peaceful settlement of disputes which still remain valid in the movement. 77 These principles and norms were aimed


76 The nonaligned adopted "Ten Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" at the Cairo Summit which included five-principles of panchsheel and five pronounced principles of the UN Charter, see Appendix 1 of this work.

77 These principles were reaffirmed in all the subsequent nonaligned summits, see Two Decades of Non-Alignment, n. 73, pp. 22, 94, 203; 383. Also see Final Document : Non-Aligned Summit (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 57-58.
resolving international disputes and conflicts by excluding predetermined methods and permitting coexistence, compromise, adjustment and accommodation.\textsuperscript{78}

The conflict reducing perspective of the nonaligned led them to identify with the peace-keeping concerns of the United Nations. They rightly realized that "neither the nonaligned have the means of solving, nor do they solve problems. International problems are settled through the United Nations, through direct talks between the two parties concerned or on the battlefield...."\textsuperscript{79}

Thus, from the very beginning the nonaligned have been prominent contributors to peace-keeping activities of the United Nations. In fact, in the fifties and sixties it was the nonaligned which provided backbone to various United Nations peace missions and observer groups.\textsuperscript{80}

The impartial and positive opinion of the nonaligned also added substance to the United Nations debates. As has been

\textsuperscript{78} See Levi, n.27, p.81.

\textsuperscript{79} Milgan Komatupa, "Dilemma and Perspective: The Need to Strengthen the Unity and Effectiveness of the Non-Aligned Countries", \textit{Review of International Affairs}, no.653, June 1977, p.3.

aptly remarked:

For if the U.N. consisted only of (overcommitted) bloc members, what would be the use of its debates and the resolutions passed in it? And who would sit there ready, on the whole, to "judge issues on their merits" and vote accordingly? Whom would the two blocs accept as chairmen of international commissions of enquiry and control? Whom would the blocs have as a moderating influence on them, and whose views would they care about? 81

Outside the United Nations, too, the nonaligned played a distinct role of peace-makers in the tight bipolar system of the fifties. India and to some degrees Yugoslavia provided effective mediation during the Korea Crisis (1950-53) and played a useful role in arranging a cease-fire and resolution of the issue of exchange of prisoners. 82 The Indo-China Crisis (1954) once again afforded India an opportunity to employ its mediatory role resolving East-West contention. Krishna Menon's informal diplomatic initiatives at Geneva contributed significantly to the ceasefire and in recognition of this India was made the Chairman of International Commission. 83 There are other instances

81 Korany, n. 75, p. 366.
also such as the Suez Crisis (1956) and the Laotian Crisis (1961) wherein the nonaligned did play a distinct peace-making role. 84

It is no surprise that when the Belgrade Summit was convened it was the East-West struggle that overwhelmingly occupied the nonaligned attention. In fact, at that point of time, none of the participating countries were in conflict with each other and none faced a serious threat from any other Third World country. As remarked by Bojana Tadic:

...there was a marked absence of the movement's attitudes on disputed issues in its own ranks, as well as on conflicts in the countries of the so-called Third World. There seems to have been a tacit agreement not to bring up possible disputed issues among these countries at non-aligned meetings, to leave them to be settled on a bilateral basis, and to concentrate common efforts on formulating principled stands and organised action in domains where non-aligned interests coincided. 85

However, events following the Belgrade Summit did not augur well for the nonaligned states. The Cuba Crisis (1962) highlighted the severe limitations of the nonaligned states in resolving a global conflict and indicated that the nonaligned mediation is feasible only when Great Powers are willing to compromise their

84 Baral, n.8, p.122.
85 Tadic, n.8, no.850, p.10.
interest. 86

More than the Cuban Crisis, it was the Sino-Indian conflict which shattered the confidence of the non-aligned group regarding their professed peace-claims. It was an unprecedented situation for the nonaligned and was rightly described as a challenge to the concept of nonalignment. Although the nonaligned, in a state of shock, could not react immediately to the situation, yet, some of the leading nonaligned eventually decided to intervene as mediators. The six-nation nonaligned Colombo Conference did make a remarkable effort to bring the two disputants back to the negotiating table. This mediation, not so well recorded in scholarly literature, was nevertheless the first ever nonaligned endeavour to mediate in a regional conflict.

However, the ultimate failure of the Colombo mediation dissuaded the nonaligned from intervening any further in the conflict situations involving their own ranks. And then on bilateral disputes and regional conflicts were precluded from the nonaligned collective agenda.

Cairo Summit onwards nonalignment lost much of its appeal in terms of its conflict-reducing credentials. On the one hand, loosening of bipolarity and increasing trend

86 See Korany, n.75, pp.382-86.
of the Super Powers resorting to direct communications afforded less and less opportunities to the nonaligned to employ their projected impartiality for mediation purposes. On the other hand, most of the stalwarts who had shaped the formative course of nonaligned movement had been replaced by lesser personalities who engaged their attention exclusively to their immediate national problems. 87

During this period, most of the local and regional conflicts were simply not noticed or discussed at the nonaligned platforms. The Indo-Pak conflict over Kashmir in 1965 offers an interesting instance wherein the conflict remained confined largely to the big-power domain and not one mediation proposal came from the nonaligned arena. 88 Instead, the leading nonaligned became involved in the diplomatic-battle that ensued in the larger Afro-Asian nonaligned arena. Similarly, in 1971 when a genocidal violation of human rights in East Pakistan culminated in the fourth round of Indo-Pak

87 Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser, Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Nkrumah—all left the scene in this period.

88. In contrast during Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, Sri Lanka, the UAR, Guinea and Ghana had made concrete mediation proposals. See the second and third chapters of the present work.
conflict, the nonaligned remained totally ineffective.

It was due to the ineffectiveness of the nonaligned group vis-a-vis the growing regional conflicts in Third World that eroded much credibility it had gained in the early years. It is now often contended that the nonaligned lack cohesion and common viewpoint which is necessary for exercising group pressure towards settlement of international disputes,\(^{89}\) and that they are effective only when the big-powers are willing to compromise their differences.\(^{90}\) It is sometimes alleged that these states have been concerned with a conflict situation "only to the extent they hoped to benefit from it".\(^{91}\) Doubts have been raised regarding the so-called impartiality of the nonaligned and some critics prefer to see the nonaligned as only producers of conflicts and "dividers".\(^{92}\) Henry A. Kissinger has gone to the extent of stating that, "as for the uncommitted they cannot eat their cake and have it too

\(^{89}\) Baral, n.8, p.121.

\(^{90}\) Ernest W. Lefever, "Nehru, Nasser and Nkrumah on Neutralism" in Martin, ed., n.12, p.118.


\(^{92}\) See Korany, n.75, p.51.
They cannot remain uncommitted and seek to act as arbiters of all disputes at the same time". 93

Although some of the above criticism may be discounted easily as having no foundation, yet, it is indeed difficult to agree with those who do not accord serious consideration to the limitations with which the NAM has to operate in recent times. As said earlier, the NAM has been far more concerned with global issues affecting international peace and security but seldom addressed itself to the regional or bilateral conflicts involving the nonaligned states. It was hoped that the nonaligned would themselves create a "zone of Peace" and provide an alternative model based on the rejection of power-politics and armament-culture. But such hopes have been belied by the developments of the past decades which witnessed an increasing number of conflicts within the nonaligned world. Studies show that after the Second World War more than a hundred conflicts have been fought which involved the nonaligned and developing countries. 94 This development has seriously strained the bases of

93 Cited in Baral, n.8, p.121.

nonaligned solidarity, shifting its orientation from global to inward looking.

Now the nonaligned are getting increasingly disillusioned with the United Nations and its collective security arrangements which was the main plank of nonaligned quest for security in the formative phase of the NAM. Surely these arrangements have rarely come to the rescue of a nonaligned which faces a threat or an aggression. Thus, despite their ostensible commitment to the United Nations collective security provisions, the nonaligned have increasingly shown a trend in favour of evolving segments of group security.

To conclude the discussion, certain tentative points can be made regarding the broad characteristics of nonaligned behaviour which may be relevant in the context of the present study.

Nonalignment is a flexible guideline for policy rather than an immutable policy. Thus on concrete issues such as regional or local conflicts which directly affect their national interest, the nonaligned are bound to take divergent and sometimes mutually exclusive views.

96 See Bebler, n. 41, p. 289.
The nonaligned group's commitment to certain positive or distinctive international norms is at the best relevant in the context of their global concerns such as the East-West struggle and anti-colonialism. However, it hardly affects the individual nonaligned perspective on regional or subregional issues. In fact, there has been a general tendency within the nonaligned group to evade, in their general meetings, the issues relating to regional and bilateral disputes even when they are vital for a fellow nonaligned nation.

In the context of nonaligned quest for independence of foreign policy actions, it may be stated that the nonaligned countries are by and large as much influenced by domestic constraints and global alignments as are the other Third World countries. Notwithstanding their non-participation in multilateral alliances, in practice, they are at times amenable to the Super Power influence. Thus the distinction between nonalignment and alignment in the context of actual behaviour on different issues relating to regional conflicts gets blurred.

Lastly, most of the nonaligned are so weak in capabilities that even if they are vitally interested in a concrete issue such as regional or local conflict,
there would be little they could do to affect the outcome unless they convert their common global outlook into effective political action. In the early years of the nonaligned movement when their number was small, the anti-bloc attitude provided a cohesive basis of common identity. However, with their fast growing number and with the international system moving towards some kind of multipolarity, the existing basis of nonaligned identity has become rather weak. And with the recrudescence of regional and particularistic motivation within the nonaligned group, it has become increasingly difficult to co-ordinate the foreign policy actions of the nonaligned vis-a-vis concrete issues requiring urgent attention.