



# Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

## Why in News?

- Non-Aligned Movement Summit is to be held in Azerbaijan in June 2019.

## Background

- The Non-Aligned Movement was formed during the Cold War as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral.
- The basic concept for the group originated in 1955 during discussions that took place at the **Asia-Africa Bandung Conference** held in Indonesia.
- The **first NAM Summit Conference** took place in Belgrade, **Yugoslavia, in September 1961**.
- It has **120 members** as on April 2018 comprising 53 countries from Africa, 39 from Asia, 26 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 2 from Europe (Belarus, Azerbaijan). There are **17 countries and 10 international organizations** that are **Observers** at NAM.
- The Non-Aligned Movement was founded and held its first conference (the Belgrade Conference) in 1961 under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Sukarno of Indonesia.
- The purpose of the organization was enumerated in Havana Declaration of 1979 to ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries" in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign subjugation.
- During the cold war era the NAM played a vital role in stabilizing the world order and preserving peace and security. Non alignment of NAM doesn't mean the neutrality of state on global issues, it was always a peaceful intervention in world politics.

## Principles

As J.L Nehru was founding members, the principles of NAM was largely guided by Panchsheel principles, some of them are:

- Respect for the principles enshrined in the charter of the United Nations and international law.
- Respect for sovereignty, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States.
- Peaceful settlement of all international conflicts in accordance with the charter of the United Nations.
- Respect for the political, economic, social and cultural diversity of countries and peoples.
- Defence and promotion of shared interests, justice and cooperation, regardless of the differences existing in the political, economic and social systems of the States, on the basis of mutual respect and the equality of rights.
- Respect for the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence, in accordance with the charter of the United Nations
- Non-interference in the internal affairs of States. No State or group of States has the right to intervene either directly or indirectly, whatever the motive, in the internal affairs of any other State.
- Promotion and defence of multilateralism and multilateral organisations as the appropriate frameworks to resolve, through dialogue and cooperation, the problems affecting humankind.

## Objectives

- NAM has sought to "create an independent path in world politics that would not result in member States becoming pawns in the struggles between the major powers."
- It identifies the right of independent judgment, the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, and the use of moderation in relations with all big powers as the three basic elements that have influenced its approach.
- At present, an additional goal is facilitating a restructuring of the international economic order.

## NAM in Cold War Era

- **Against Apartheid:** The evil of apartheid was massively prevalent in African countries like South Africa, its was on the agenda of NAM right from first conference. During 2nd NAM conference at Cairo the government of South Africa was warned against the discriminatory practices of apartheid.
- **Disarmament:** The Non-aligned Movement repeatedly comes out for maintenance of peace, the cessation of arms race and the peaceful coexistence of all States. In the General Assembly, India submitted a draft resolution declaring that the use of nuclear weapons would be against the charter of the United Nations and crime against humanity and should therefore be prohibited.
- **UNSC reforms:** Right from its inception NAM was in the favour of UNSC reforms, it was against the domination of US and USSR. It wanted the representation of third world countries to make UNSC more democratic. Members echoed with same demand at 17th NAM conference at Venezuela.
- **Failed to resolve regional tensions:** In the era of cold war the tension in South Asia escalated due to regional conflict between India- China and India-Pakistan. NAM failed to avoid tensions in the region, that further led to the the nuclearisation of the region.

## India's Position

- India being a founder and largest member in NAM was an active participant in NAM meetings till 1970s but India's inclination towards erstwhile USSR created confusions in smaller members. It led to the weakening of NAM and small nations drifted towards either US or USSR.
- Further disintegration of USSR led the unipolar world order dominated by US. India's New Economic Policy and inclination towards US raised questions over India's seriousness over non alignment.
- Prime Minister of India skipped the 17th Non Aligned Movement (NAM) summit held in Venezuela in 2016, it was only second such instance when Head of a state didn't participate in NAM conference.
- Moreover, NAM continued losing relevance for India in a unipolar world, especially after the founding members failed to support India during crisis. For instance, during 1962 War with China, Ghana and Indonesia, adopted explicitly pro-China positions. During 1965 and 1971 wars, Indonesia and Egypt took an anti India stance and supported Pakistan.
- India in particular, but also most other NAM countries, have integrated themselves to varying degrees within the liberal economic order and have benefited from it.
- India is a **member of the G20** and has declared itself as a **nuclear weapons power** and has for all practical purposes abandoned the call for global nuclear disarmament.
- India has also engaged itself with new and old global powers. India joining the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**, a coalition seen by many as a counterforce to China's rise in the Indo-Pacific and **Shanghai cooperation organisation** led by China shown India's balancing approach in new world order.
- India is striving hard for a multipolar world order and asserting itself as one of the player. Multi polar world order is very much closed to NAM principles.

## Emerging Global Order

NAM has to adopt and change itself to suit the newly emerging challenges and geopolitics such as:

- World has again moved towards bi-polarity, one led by **US** and other by **China-Russia**. The war torn syria is prime example of this, where both US and Russia is asserting power.
- The escalating **tension in Indo-pacific** region due to China's assertion and US acting as a

counterweight to check the Chinese expansionist policy.

- The large scale **migration in Europe and Asia** due to the unstable regimes and **ethnic conflict** in different parts of world.
- Issue of **global climate change** and occurrence of **catastrophic disasters** raising demand to form global consensus to deal with it.
- **Changing US policies**, protectionism, prevalent terrorism and nuclearisation of middle east.
- **Formation of multiple regional economic groupings** like TPP and RCEP and fading away of multilateral bodies WTO from global arena.

## Relevance of NAM

NAM continues to hold relevance as a platform and due to its principles.

- **World peace** - NAM has played an active role in preserving world peace. It still stands by its founding principles, idea and purpose i.e. to establish the peaceful and prosperous world. It prohibited invasion of any country, promoted disarmament and a sovereign world order.
- **Territorial integrity and sovereignty** - NAM stands with this principle and proved its repeated relevance with the idea of preserving the independence of every nation.
- **Third World nations** - Third world countries fighting against socio-economic problems since they have been exploited for a long time by other developed nations, NAM acted as a protector for these small countries against the western hegemony.
- **Support of UN** - NAM's total strength comprises of 118 developing countries and most of them being a member of UN General Assembly. It represents two third members of general assembly, hence NAM members act as important vote blocking group in UN.
- **Equitable world order** - NAM promotes equitable world order. It can act as a bridge between the political and ideological differences existing in the international environment.
- **Interest of developing countries** - If disputes arise between developed and developing nation at any point of a concerned topic for example WTO, then NAM act as a platform which negotiates and conclude disputes peacefully securing the favorable decisions for each member nation.
- **Cultural diversity and human rights** - In the environment of gross human right violation, it can provide a platform to raise such issues and resolve the same through its principles.
- **Sustainable development** - NAM supported the concept of sustainable development and can lead the world toward sustainability. Can be used as larger platform to make consensus on global burning issues like climate **change, migration and global terrorism**.
- **Economic growth** - The countries of NAM has inherent assets, such as a favourable demography, demand and favourable location. The cooperation can lead them to higher and sustainable economic growth. Can be an alternative to regional groupings like TPP and RCEP.

## Way Forward

- NAM as a concept can never be irrelevant, principally it provides a strong base to foreign policy of its members.
- It should be seen as "Strategic Autonomy", which is the need of the hour of today's world. The principles of NAM still can guide the nations towards it.
- NAM is a platform where India can assert its soft power and provide an active leadership and by being a torchbearer for smaller countries at multilateral platforms.
- The conference of Heads of the State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, often referred to as **Non-Aligned Movement Summit** is to be held in Azerbaijan in June 2019. Platform should be used for consensus making on spectrum of global issues.
- It should be used as a platform to raise global issues like terrorism, climate change and trade protectionism and others.
- NAM platform can be used to garner support by South-East Asian countries like Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines against Chinese assertion in South China Sea and related island and border disputes.
- NAM can provide a platform for Afro-Asian cooperation and a strong position for poor African nation to have healthy negotiations with China and US for economic development without compromising the sovereignty of their land.

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