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Excerpts from

**NON-ALIGNMENT
PERSPECTIVES AND PROSPECTS**

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Non-alignment and Beyond

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ON the world scene, Nehru will always be associated with the non-aligned movement, a driving force for change in which he was one of the founding fathers and which he continued to help guide as it played a vital role in helping to define the shape of post-World War II international society. It was an initiative for peaceful coexistence, decolonisation and regional cooperation that arose from the third world—recalling other older such initiatives from the South like that of Simon Bolivar, the “Liberator” of Latin America, in the early 19th century.

The non-aligned nations are expected to meet in Delhi next March and this makes it appropriate to discuss the challenge that the non-aligned movement confronts today—in a world torn by fear of nuclear annihilation, economic disorder, political fragmentation, conflict and drift and a vulnerability that aggravates our sense of uncertainty and unpredictability.

The notion of non-alignment—of rejecting the concept of a world in which it was necessary to ally oneself with one of the two rival blocs—was a novel one, and often seen in its initial stages as hostile to the interests of the major power blocs that emerged after World War II. To espouse this cause at the United Nations during its early years, as Nehru observed, was “to plough a lonely furrow.”

The very structure of the United Nations, itself, he noted, was one which, as it came into being at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, seemed to imply two orders of nationhood—the Security Council, with veto power for the strong, and the General Assembly for the weaker.

The Bandung Conference in 1955 was really the take-off point for non-alignment. (I attended that Conference as adviser to my country’s delegation and there again I had the honour of meeting Nehru.) This regional conference of twenty-nine Asian and African countries was an attempt to develop a programme for active international cooperation in helping to bring about national freedom and decolonisation. The Bandung Charter containing the five *Panchsheel* principles and the principles of peaceful

coexistence, provided the non-aligned movement with its essential blueprint.

The movement became truly worldwide with the Belgrade Conference of non-aligned countries in 1961 at which Presidents Tito of Yugoslavia and Nasser of Egypt, along with the early Asian leaders, played a significant role.

Between Bandung and Belgrade a number of nations, particularly in Africa, had become independent; and the ranks of the non-aligned at the U.N. were swelling; they no longer had to plough Nehru's lonely furrow. Political patterns within the U.N. began to change as bipolarisation was increasingly challenged. One could also argue, I believe, that the non-aligned movement was influential, at least indirectly, in helping to dampen polarisation in Europe.

The third great theme of the non-aligned was economic equity (after decolonisation and peaceful coexistence). It came to the fore in the Cairo Conference in 1964. The mid-1960s, however, also witnessed the beginnings of the strains within the non-aligned that have increasingly plagued the movement ever since. As domestic disorders brought serious international problems to light, so too did the differing national interests of the various members of the movement.

Thus, with many signs of fragmentation and loss of dynamism within the movement, it was not until 1970 at Lusaka that another Non-aligned Conference took place. A major new thrust of this meeting was South-South collaboration. Following this, the notion of a new international economic order (NIEO) as a means of breaking the South's reliance on the North arose. The blueprint for the NIEO was drawn up at the Non-aligned Conference in Algiers.

Yet for all the specific steps taken, the overall drive and collective enthusiasm has continued to flag—in evidence with the lack of great accomplishment at the Colombo Conference and the divisions that displayed themselves at the 1970 meeting in Havana. The need to cancel the planned 1982 meeting in Baghdad because of the war between Iraq and Iran—two of the original participants in the first coming together in Bandung—was further melancholy evidence of the acute fragmentation, disagreement and disarray that had come to afflict the non-aligned. It is a sad fact that more than a hundred wars have been fought in the third world since the end of World War II, and most of them have been due to our own internal disagreements and tensions.

For all the divergent tendencies and conflicts that have reduced the effectiveness of collaboration within the non-aligned movement, there is little question of the very positive contributions that it has made to world peace and equity.

Certainly first would have to be the whole decolonisation process to which they imparted such impetus and drive. At the time of Bandung, vast reaches of Africa were still under colonial domination, and a number of Asian nations were only just emerging into the light of independence. While many vestiges of colonialism still afflict our lives, there are today only a few scattered patches on the globe still formally designated as colonies.

Credit must also be given to the movement's moral stance on the necessity for peace—a stance most eloquently expressed by Nehru in defining the concept of *Panchsheel* after the Bandung Conference:

This idea of *Panchsheel* lays down the very important truth that each people must ultimately fend for itself. I am not thinking in terms of military fending, but in terms of striving intellectually, morally, spiritually, and in terms of opening out all our windows to ideas from others, and learning from the experience of others.*

The concept of peaceful coexistence was seen at first by many of the strong and cynical as almost a laughing matter, but it came ultimately to be the foundation for the spirit of detente.

The non-aligned have also figured prominently in U.N. efforts at conflict resolution and peacekeeping. India played a central role on the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission at the end of the Korean War, and troops of various non-aligned nations have served the cause of peace in the Congo, Suez and other scenes of conflict.

A third major contribution has been in the non-aligned efforts to draw attention to and demand action on the inequities in the international economic picture, epitomised in the call for a more just international economic order at the Algiers Conference; from there it went to the United Nations where it led to two special sessions of the General Assembly which gave birth to the U.N. Declaration and Programme of Action for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.

Now, however, many of the major thrusts and inspirations of the non-aligned movement have come to a halt. In part, of course, this is because a number of their aspirations and strategies have become smothered by the current global economic crisis, in which they are really not the major villains but its chief victim. In part too, they are victims of the inability of all of us—North and South—to cope with the enormous and rapidly

* Speech in Lok Sabha, 17 September 1955.

changing complexities of the world crisis, at a time when interdependence, however unjustly asymmetrical, has become total.

But beyond that, it must be admitted that we of the non-aligned too easily fell prey to the old game of playing off one major power against the other for one's own economic or political interests. When one camp would not provide the arms to supply perceived security needs or aid for development, we turned to the rival camp. Here too the end result has been that the non-aligned have been the victims—this time of their own game. We first opened our doors to ideological salesmen from the superpower bloc, and in the process the third world became a battleground for rival global forces.

When the salesmen found that they could not sell ideology—as has become the case—they turned to marketing arms. In the years 1973-77—or roughly the period between the Algiers Conference giving form to the NIEO and the Colombo Conference at which our cross-purposes were becoming clear—something of the order of 50 billion dollars in arms were imported by third world countries, most of it from the industrialised world. Armed conflicts have also led to the proxy involvement of third world military forces.

What essentially happened, in my view, was that the non-aligned lost confidence in their own pluralistic vision of global solidarity that had first brought them together. As the vision collapsed, we gave vent to our fears of each other—our brethren in suffering and inequity. We began to build walls. India and China, the two most populous nations on earth who together could have given great force to the movement, split and fought over the contours of a wall between them—an event Nehru correctly termed “a misfortune for all of us and for the world.”

We cannot escape responsibility for this loss of vision. It is we, the non-aligned who failed to evolve a common strategy to respond to today's worsening crisis of an increasingly complex world setting. It is we who failed to prevent the penetration of superpower interests into the non-aligned movement, undermining the very rationale of the movement. Our tendency to play off one superpower against the other or to wait for the major powers to agree among themselves served primarily to paralyse our will to act together.

A further failing was in not sufficiently evolving regional solidarities which could have helped to reduce our common economic and political dependencies on the superpowers and former metropolitan powers. ‘Non-alignment’ was never translated into a design for an alternative course of socio-economic transformation, and a commensurate design for the state. The result was the worst of both worlds: on the one hand, being

torn between the capitalist and the socialist state models and on the other hand, subject to the worst manifestation of the world market forces.

II

Before one can make any rational determination of the present challenge to the non-aligned movement, it is essential first to consider the nature of the global crisis that now confronts the world and impinges on us in the South in a particularly devastating fashion.

The present situation is a vastly changed one from that with which we had to deal in the early years of the non-aligned movement. Today the whole international system itself is in a state of crisis and the cohesions—political, economic, social and otherwise—which have held it together are coming unstuck at an alarming rate.

Economically the world is in a state of deepening recession. The international financial system has become separated from the economic system and has made rational management almost impossible—a three trillion Eurocurrency is virtually beyond control. Nations stricken by hunger and poverty must pay as much as 125 billion dollars a year on their debts despite stagnating economies, declining incomes and starving populations. Seeking economic relief, millions of people are pouring into the already overcrowded slums of cities; those who stay behind ravage the environment as they engage in a desperate search for more fuelwood or more land to till. Three quarters of a billion people are hungry in a world economy which, for all its present afflictions, still has the productive capacity to produce sufficient food for all. Much of the industrial capacity of the North lies idle while the development process in the South is stagnating. All of these problems are severely straining political systems everywhere.

The world has lost political control over the nuclear arms race and the arms trade. A labour force of more than one hundred million people are paid directly or indirectly by defence ministries. Globally more than 50 billion dollars is spent annually on military research and development and nearly half a million scientists and engineers are engaged in the arms industry or weapons-related research.

The cost of the arms race must be measured not only in the annual 600 billion dollars—itsself accepted only as a rough approximation by many experts—but also in the lost opportunities, the possibilities that are forgone for improving economic and social conditions throughout the world. As Victor Urquidi has observed, “whatever spin-off from military R and D is utilised for improving the basic conditions of mankind must be

judged as a minor benefit as compared with the fundamental damage achieved by the military build-up."

Both in the North and South, governments keep buying ever more sophisticated arms for security, only to increase the globe's insecurity and vulnerability as well as their own. The militarisation of whole societies is occurring. In short, humankind has allowed science and technology to serve its fears rather than its better creative impulses.

Governments everywhere show an increasing incapacity to make the hard choices that have to be made to implement the difficult policies needed. We are in a situation in which the rate of change, fuelled by profound economic, political, social, cultural and especially technological factors, outpaces and outstrips the capacity of governments and the political and social institutions, that undergird them to absorb and adjust to these changes. We are in a rapidly deteriorating international situation, drifting in seeming helplessness into what the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his Annual Report very rightly termed the threat of a new international anarchy.

Beyond all these manifestations of present human folly of wrong priorities and limits to our collective capacity for governance, we will have in addition to deal with some new problems just around the corner, from which it will be very difficult to escape.

First, even if we assume that the present recession will be overcome in the next few years, it is only realistic to also assume that the rate of economic growth of the OECD countries will be very low for a long time.

Secondly, this long period of slow economic growth is likely to be accompanied by continuing high levels of unemployment. This will be essentially structural in nature, resulting from efforts by these countries to move into a much more knowledge-intensive post-industrial stage with still unpredictable impact on unemployment and lifestyles. It is estimated that in Western Europe alone, by 1990 there will be 12 million unemployed, affecting particularly the young and women.

Third, we will have to bear the consequences of the aging of populations, consequences we cannot yet read fully. It is already one of the contributing factors to the present crisis of the welfare state.

In the South, the greying of the population is also becoming a new factor that will have to be taken into account in our social and development strategies. And for us the age question has yet another dimension. The lowering of the median age in most of our countries, at a time when the development process may well continue to stagnate, will put tremendous pressures on the employment market; these pressures

could in turn trigger political convulsions irrespective of ideological orientations and different development strategies.

Automation and robotisation in the North are bound to create new problems for the South. The South can no longer assume, as it has in the past, that the further industrialisation of the South will take place through the gradual movement of marginal industries of the North to the South, closer to the sources of cheap labour. Especially the latecomers in industrialisation in the South will have to begin to rethink their patterns of industrialisation that will enable them to compete on different terms with the North and at the same time to take care of their own massive unemployment problems.

From many points of view, therefore, the economic and financial future points to the need for new policies that take into account our inescapable interdependencies in this modern world as well as the urgent requirements for social change that could provide all sectors of society access to the benefits of economic improvement, social services, and participation in the political process.

For this to come about, however, certain long-term needs must be met:

—Real income, in all nations, must be increased—not only as measured in per capita income but also by other external factors that affect living conditions.

—Income disparities between rich and poor nations must be reduced over a reasonable period of time.

—Income disparities and inequities within countries, particularly in the third world, must be reduced.

—High priority must be given to education, health, housing and urban environment problems.

—Improved communications need to be put to the service of strengthening cultural diversity.

In the short term, a solution must be found to three very basic economic problems faced by the third world—the high cost of money and credit, falling prices for its primary and industrial products, and access to markets. It is the only way to avoid even higher levels of resource transfer from the North to the South to prevent economic collapse in a number of countries and a further breakdown of the international economic system.

We cannot hope, however, to evolve the present economic and financial crisis within the framework of existing international structures. What is needed now is a second Bretton Woods that would establish international financial institutions that could more effectively handle, on the scale required, the closely interconnected problems of adjustment, development

and structural change. This is the only way we can hope to reverse the present trend to the bilateralism that failed us so badly in the 1920s and 1930s and return to the multilateralism that served the world so much better after World War II.

We also need such new financial and economic institutions domestically—particularly in the third world. We will have to alter the ways we think about ourselves. The rapidity of the economic development of the NICs has led to regional and social disparities of great magnitude within the South—even though the economies of the NICs have now shown themselves to be highly vulnerable. We now realise that maldevelopment or notions of 'instant' development have been an enormous waste and misdirection of resources. We need to fashion institutions that reduce rather than aggravate inequalities and lessen social tensions, not add to them.

None of the world's economic or financial problems, however severe they may be, poses as serious a threat to continued survival as does that of nuclear warfare—for there lies the route to extinction of all human life and all civilisation. We would do well to remember in the South that there is no safe haven from nuclear war—its ravages would not spare our societies nor our peoples.

It seems unlikely that the superpowers will consciously and deliberately opt to launch a nuclear war. But that is really rather small solace when we begin to factor in a number of other strategic considerations arising from the present state of the world's weaponry, nuclear and otherwise:

—The new generation of nuclear weapons now being produced, or likely to be produced shortly, are not deterrent weapons, but fighting weapons—thereby increasing the temptation to fight a nuclear war.

—Technical malfunctions, miscalculations, or accidents increasingly threaten to trigger nuclear war in a fearful world stockpiled with 50,000 nuclear warheads.

—The flashpoint of nuclear war could well lie in the instabilities of the third world. An international system as unpredictable as the present one puts great pressures on the threshold countries to go nuclear.

—The incapacity of the superpowers to agree on effective arms reduction denies them the moral right to demand non-proliferation on the part of others; the non-nuclear powers will have to restrain themselves from using that option, for the sake of human solidarity.

—Technological innovation in the nuclear weapons field poses a great future threat. The technology of miniaturisation in the nuclear

weapons area, along with increased precision, makes any semblance of a nuclear balance all the more difficult to maintain.

—While concentrating on nuclear weapons, we must not overlook the much greater destructive capacity of present conventional weapons—demonstrated all too well in recent conflicts.

—The present seeming predominance of conventional defensive weapons should not lull us into a false sense of security which ignores the lessons of military history where the defensive-offensive superiority cycle has been inexorable.

—And let us not forget the new weapons that are only a step away in lasers, in chemical warfare, and in further development of 'smart' conventional weapons—and are only further testimony to the modern world's capacity for violence and destruction.

The confluence of the growing political resistance to the emplacement of nuclear weapons and changing political orientations in various countries with the technological innovations in weapons systems may very well lead to basic shifts in military strategies—away from the land to the oceans or to space.

We also need to take into account the fact that what may now seem safe alliances could easily be swept away in the next twenty years by these changing political tides, leading to new political configurations.

All the evidence tells us one thing with great clarity—we simply cannot go on living for the next twenty years or so with the present terrifying levels of armaments, in such fragile balance and living at the brink of nuclear holocaust. Already now a whole generation has grown up who do not believe they will live out their natural lives—and that is already affecting behaviour and lifestyles.

III

What conclusions might be drawn from this look at the present troubled world situation and the implications of these newly emerging problems?

First, we must, all of us—North and South, East and West—attempt to stop this drift into international anarchy which threatens all our lives and those of all our children. We must act to make science and technology more socially and politically accountable, devise more effective means for the governance of our various international systems, and create the institutions that can be responsive to the global society's continuing and new needs and changing values, and to accommodate and integrate the many new political forces everywhere, reflecting these changes in this

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very profound process of social and global transformation. We must ready a world that is a viable one for the six billion people who will inhabit it as we reach the twenty-first century.

Some 80 per cent of that global population will be living here in the South and so the non-aligned cannot afford to be paralysed just because the superpowers and the North in general are unable to act. To avoid this paralysis, we will have to take stock of our own collective condition more honestly than we have done so far, and look into the causes of our present weakness, disarray and fragmentation. Failing to do so may well doom us to increasing insignificance and irrelevance. In the first place we will have to devise ways to make more effective use of our material and human resources on a regional and sub-regional basis that will reduce our vulnerabilities and our security and economic dependencies on the superpowers and the metropolitan powers.

At the same time, we will have to continue the struggle for a more decent and equitable international order capable of overcoming the structural inequities that now exist between North and South. And we must do so without losing sight of the ultimate global context in which we will have to work out difficulties.

The situation calls for a common strategy from the non-aligned to deal with the crisis of the international system and to adjust the terms of its dialogue with the North as well as for the global negotiations to the new conditions, integrating the security and economic and financial as well as the developmental aspects of these problems through a set of regional approaches, within a common global perspective. As a first step this will require the clear identification and broadening the margins of independent decision-making.

One other thing that seems clear is the need to revive the non-aligned movement as a popular movement. The North-South dialogue has become too much the preserve of the bureaucrats—not the millions once stirred by its banner of freedom and equity. Compounding matters, the various bureaucracies have claimed possession of its issues in very fragmented fashion. Its various elements are now under the purview of foreign, finance, agricultural and other ministries with very little coordination between them, even in the Group of 77.

The movement has also lost the popular constituencies in a number of countries in the North on which it formally could count—the youth, the clergy, trade unions and the liberals. The young have become mainly interested in single-issue politics which they have yet to relate to other domestic or international issues. The clergy are mainly concerned with human rights. Unemployment has driven all other concerns from the trade union agenda. The great ideologies that shaped our thinking and

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our institutions in the early part of this century have exhausted themselves. They are now fragmented and incapable of dealing with the complex interlinkages between domestic problems and their international dimensions. We have nothing with which to replace these ideas.

We badly need a change, I believe, in our categories of thought about North-South relationships; the phraseologies of the 1960s and 1970s will no longer do. Increasingly, many of the South's problems are shared by a number of small and medium countries in the North. In attempting to consolidate our strength, we may have to think of new coalitions of small and middle powers in the North and the South as well as in the West and the East. In that context, we may regain some of the support of our old constituencies—and also begin to relate to new emerging political forces in the industrial world and broaden their concerns to embrace similar issues in the South.

But to accomplish all this, we very much need to put our own houses in order first. We will have to learn to deal more effectively with the central problem of inequality in our own countries. With a few exceptions we have failed to overcome the structural dualism of our societies inherited from our colonial and pre-colonial past. We need to do something about the consumptive lifestyles of our elites which helps perpetuate this dualism. We must find ways to revitalise the countryside. It is entirely possible, in my view, that we could use the effort to overcome inequalities by developing our own internal markets better, as a means of stimulating and reviving our economies, reducing the paralysing social and political tensions, and using the revolution in science and technology to serve those ends rather than falling victim to it.

We need to gird ourselves for the coming technological revolution which will impinge so sharply on all humankind but could have particularly negative effects and create new dependencies in the third world unless we are better prepared to become part of that revolution. I am talking here about the enormous implications for future human growth in the revolutionary developments in fields like biotechnology, communications and microprocessors, energy technology, materials technology, seabed technology.

Regional arrangements will be essential to our effort to build up the collective strength of the South, particularly in the area of security, so that we may reduce the dependencies on the superpowers and metropolitan powers which have so sapped our vision. To reduce the possibility of countries within a region from making war on each other would involve regional agreements on conflict resolution mechanisms, confidence-building measures, reduction and verification of arms, and new mechanisms

for the settlement of border disputes and the prevention of armed conflicts.

We also need to construct the regional economic and social architecture for peace through such measures as the scrambling of national interests, harmonisation of development plans emphasising complementarity rather than competition, cooperative development and use of nuclear power, harmonisation of defence plans and, to the extent necessary for minimum regional security, the regional production of arms. These would help to ensure the transparency of the intentions and capabilities of any nation within a region. Regional arrangements could also be made to assure food securities and promote environmental cooperation.

Our efforts to consolidate strengths on a regional basis will inevitably force us to look with new eyes at our development strategies. This could lead to more effective interregional cooperation and the building of better economic and social infrastructures for really meaningful South-South cooperation. All of these will need to be evolved in ways that benefit and not impede global negotiations.

These efforts will force us to look at our own innermost values, the cultural wellsprings for creative social action. This would most likely take us in new directions leading to different patterns of industrialisation and social development, more in line with our basic cultural values. To do this, however, we will have to work out different concepts of growth that are not limited to the economic field but enable us to deal with social growth as well and new concepts of productivity and value, again not exclusively measured in economic terms but using social and cultural productivity as additional yardsticks of growth.

All this will require social innovation on an unprecedented scale. If we can do this, I do not think it is utopian to visualise the emergence of alternative, non-Western modern civilisations capable of dealing with the challenge of the twenty-first century—the Sinitic, Hindu, Islamic and others—to take their rightful place on the basis of rough parity alongside those of the West.

All this will take time while the problems are urgent ones. Nevertheless, we need to recognise that it will take the North just as much time to work out their own problems, allowing us the time to work on our own and just possibly turn impending disaster into new opportunities.

IV

The foregoing, I suggest, helps define the goals for a reinvigorated

non-aligned movement—to provide the spearhead as a new pluralistic global vision emerges from a newly strengthened South, with implications and hope for the total global society, North and South, East and West, and again restoring the non-aligned movement to its active role in the cause of peace, coexistence and equity for all people.

But the challenge before us cannot be brought off through the bureaucracies—it will require great social innovation, fresh ideas and new institutions. Which means that a major intellectual effort is demanded. We will also need to strengthen our basic infrastructures lest we be caught in even greater reliance on the North for the fruits of new scientific advance. And we will have to mobilise our intellectual capabilities together—and here the non-aligned movement could play a central role—for the preponderance of intellectual firepower in the industrialised world is so overwhelming that no single third world country can hope to go it alone.

To overcome the intellectual impotence of the South that has hamstrung us so in the North-South dialogue, this mobilisation should not be limited to government but needs intellectual inputs from their own societies at large as well. This will require that we involve the intellectual communities from the universities and the research institutions who will need access to the necessary data if they are to contribute to their fullest potential. We need to make our universities and research institutions the seed-beds for fresh thinking about domestic, regional and global problems and their linkages.

This would be greatly fructified by greater South-South intellectual cooperation, along with scholarly and scientific interchange with the industrialised world. But we want to be sure that we can set the terms of our own intellectual pursuits—rather than following the latest intellectual fads from the North. We need, moreover, to develop the infrastructure for intellectual cooperation as a deliberate policy.

But all this will be an empty effort if intellectual freedom is not assured, for without it, no creativity is possible. There will inevitably always be tensions between the requirements of creativity and the maintenance of social order. Essentially, all new ideas are subversive to the existing order, but the eternal triangle that the developing society must contend with is that marked by the requirements of change, justice and stability. The balancing of this triangle can only be maintained through creativity and not through rigidity or defensiveness.

The third world must learn the delicate art of balancing this triangle. This will mean learning to take risks in the development of new ideas to

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deal both with old and new challenges. The intellectual creativities which so well served the non-aligned movement in its early years became smothered by routine and a growing preference for the immediate secure over the risks of innovation. It is now terribly important that we somehow restore those early creativities. The only way we can survive is to move forward.

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