

# Nehruvian Foreign Policy

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**Source:** *The Hindu*

**Manifest pedagogy:** In the inter-connected and an increasingly globalised world, foreign policy has essentially become a tool to pursue cooperative relationships for sustainable development and well being of citizens. In this context the foreign policy of India pursued by Nehru is relevant even today.

**In news:** May 27th is the death anniversary of the founder of India's foreign policy, Jawaharlal Nehru.

**Placing it in syllabus:** Indian Foreign policy

**Dimensions:**

- **Pre-Independence stand of Indian foreign policy**
- Asian relations conferences
- Non alignment movement
- Panch sheel
- His policy towards Pakistan
- Leadership of third world countries

**Content:**

**Pre Independence stand of Indian foreign policy:**

- The shaping of India's foreign policy was largely **influenced by international development after the Second World War.**
- There was an **upsurge in the movements for national liberation** that resulted in the **collapse of the colonial system of imperialism.**
- The **Indian National Congress (INC)** had as early as the **1920s** adopted a resolution expressing a desire to establish cooperation with the neighbouring countries.

- But the internal situation of the country did not permit them to pay attention to international developments.
- Since the mid-twenties, due to **Nehru's interests**, the Congress party began to take interest in international affairs.
- The Congress resolved to support people and races in their struggle for freedom and equality.
- **After 1927 Nehru took an active part in formulating the foreign policy** which was Congress' first foreign policy statement.
- It contained a declaration that **India should not participate in imperialism and any other war.**
- This position was taken up as the key foreign policy principle in the late 1920s and 1930s.
- The Congress condemned brutal imperialist designs of Japan, Italy and Germany during the 1930s and passed resolutions to defend the cause of the nationalist forces in various countries such as China, Ethiopia, etc..
- The **inter-war period** shaped a substantial portion of India's foreign policy.
- Soon **after the formation of the interim government in September 1946**, India established diplomatic relations and exchanged ambassadors with the USA, USSR, China and some other countries.

#### **Asian relations conferences:**

- **Rout of the forces of Nazism and Japanese militarism in World War II** resulted in an upsurge of movements for national liberation in Asia.
- Nehru on behalf of the Congress participated in several **international conferences like the one held at Brussels in 1926** that declared its profound aim of fighting imperialism.
- The Congress under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru constantly supported the newly liberated countries and

their struggle against imperialism.

- And under his guidance, India became the first state to have pursued the policy of Non-Alignment.
- Early **in 1947, at the initiative of India, the Asian Relations Conference at Delhi was convened** where the principles of foreign policy of independent India were proclaimed.
- It was attended by representatives of 29 countries and it helped to strengthen the solidarity of all Asian countries.
- Nehru participated in the **Afro-Asian Conference held in 1955 in Bandung** and popularized the policy of non-alignment there.
- The **agenda contained in these conferences was** the *economic and cultural cooperation, respect for human rights and self-determination and the promotion of world peace and cooperation.*

#### **Non alignment movement (NAM):**

- The NAM was **founded during the collapse of the colonial system** and at the height of the Cold War.
- It was a tactic to maintain world peace in such a way that each nation pursues his own interest without disturbing the other.
- Its actions were a key factor in the **decolonization process**, which led later to the attainment of **independence by many countries.**
- It has always played a fundamental role in the **preservation of world peace and security.**
- A major economic factor for the adoption of the policy of non-alignment had been **India's economic backwardness.**
- India was both tied up with the east and west for economic development.
- Hence **Jawaharlal Nehru of India**, along with other Heads of State and Government like **Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Ahmed Sukarno of**

**Indonesia and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia**, convened the African-Asian Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955.

- Indonesia's President, Sukarno was the host of the conference in which **Ten Principles of Bandung** were set forth which later evolved as the **essential criteria to the membership of this movement**.

**Panch sheel: Panchsheel or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence**, were first formally enunciated in the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of **China and India** signed on **April 29, 1954**. It was based on the following **principles**:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
2. Non-aggression
3. Non interference in each other's military affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful coexistence

By April 1955, Burma, China, Laos, Nepal, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Yugoslavia and Cambodia had accepted the Panch Sheel. In **1961**, the **Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Belgrade** accepted *Panchsheel as the principled core of the NAM*.

**His policy towards Pakistan:** The period 1947-1952 saw India and Pakistan facilitating a transfer of populations, rationalising bilateral relations after the violence of Partition, sorting out canal-water issues and evacuee property disputes.

The **Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950** was a declaration binding the two states to "**protect the interests of minorities in both their countries**". Both governments solemnly agreed that each shall ensure, to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of citizenship irrespective of religion, a

full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property, freedom of movement, occupation within each country and freedom of speech and worship subject to law and morality.

During the period of British rule in India, large canal systems were constructed. **After 1947, the water system got bifurcated, with the headworks in India and the canals running through Pakistan.** After the expiration of the short-term **Standstill Agreement of 1947**, on April 1, 1948, India began withholding water from canals that flowed into Pakistan.

The **Inter-Dominion Accord of May 4, 1948**, required India to provide water to the Pakistani parts of the basin in return for annual payments. Negotiations came to a standstill, with neither side willing to compromise.

In **1951, David Lilienthal**, former head of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, visited the region and suggested that both countries should work toward an agreement to jointly develop and administer the Indus River system, possibly with advice and financing from the World Bank.

**In 1954, the World Bank submitted a proposal for a solution to the impasse.** After six years of talks, Indian Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** and Pakistani President **Mohammad Ayub Khan** signed the Indus Waters Treaty in **September 1960**.

The treaty required the creation of a **Permanent Indus Commission**, to maintain a channel for communication and to try to resolve questions about implementation of the treaty. Numerous disputes are peacefully settled over the years through the Permanent Indus Commission.

### **Leadership of third world countries:**

Post- independent India initiated a new path of foreign policy and proclaimed for the unity of the Third World. The **relevance of non-aligned strategy acted both as a foreign policy**

**instrument as well as framework of interaction with the capitalist and the socialist states.**

This resulted in the development of the NAM. The dynamics of India's relations with the Third World is linked to its foreign policy and economic policy.

India articulated a non-aligned policy and developed friendship and cooperation with the United States and Soviet Union. **Non-alignment further strengthened solidarity with the Third World countries which had the same socio-economic and historical experiences** as that of India.

From an economic point of view, being aligned neither with the United States nor with the Soviet Union allowed India the **possibility of diversified trade, investment and credit relationships** with both powers and their allies.

This policy of India **proved to be extremely attractive to other newly independent countries** which followed India's lead and began using non-alignment as the philosophical basis for their own external relations and policies.

Thus, the Indian position served as the catalyst for the genesis of the NAM. It became a **potent force that helped unite the Third World in a common perspective on world affairs.** Meanwhile India carved out a specific role for itself in the global arena.

**India's positive gestures to China,** notwithstanding internal differences over the political and legal status of Tibet, led to a consolidation of India's foreign policy objectives vis-a-vis Third World countries in the form of **Panchsheel agreement** that rapidly gained the **status of a common agenda as well as the basis of relations with other nations.**

**Mould your thought:** Nehru is the virtual director of India's foreign policy. Examine.