

Pakistan's Role In The Non-Aligned Movement

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The Non-alignment movement has now virtually become an important institution of the Third World. The Movement emerged out of various conferences. The First conference was held at Belgrade in 1961 in which 25 countries had participated. Subsequent conferences were convened at Cairo (1964), Lusaka (1970), Algiers (1973), Colombo (1976), Havana (1979) and Delhi (1983).

According to the final declaration of the summit conference held at Havana in 1979, the purposes of the Movement were re-stated as under:-

To ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries.....in their struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, racism including Zionism and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great powers and block politics."¹

Pakistan played an important role indirectly in bringing the Movement into existence. It was in 1954 that the Heads of the Government from Burma, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka met at

Colombo and then at Bagor (Indonesia) and as a result of their deliberations, the conference of 29 Afro-Asian countries was held at Bandung in April 1955. Pakistan being one of the co-sponsors of the conference took active part in the deliberations of the conference and contributed in the formulation of Bandung Declarations on "The promotion of world peace and co-operation". It was the Bandung conference which practically paved the way for the non-aligned Movement.

However Pakistan, due to her own specific problems and particularly her membership in CENTO and SEATO could not join the Non-alignment Movement's First summit although she did participate in certain other conferences and was elected as member of certain organizations of the Third World countries viz., Afro-Asian Solidarity Council (formed in December 1957), The Afro-Asian Organization for Economic co-operation (formed in 1958), a meeting of which was also held in Karachi in December 1963.² Pakistan also participated in the twenty-two Nations Ministerial Meeting held at Jakarta in 1964 for preparation of the Second Afro-Asian conference.³

In 1972 and 1979, Pakistan left CENTO and SEATO respectively and thus she was in a position to join the Non-aligned Movement formally.⁴ The decision to admit Pakistan in NAM was taken unanimously by the 25 members of co-ordination Bureau of the Movement in June 1979. However even before leaving SEATO, the preparatory meeting of NAM had recommended to invite Pakistan as a guest at the Foreign Ministers' conference of the Movement which was held from July 25, 1978 at Belgrade, for which purpose special invitation was sent by president Josip Broz Tito. Unfortunately once again it was Afghanistan which raised objections against Pakistan's becoming a member of the Movement.⁵ Such an objection was surprising because Pakistan had not only decided to leave SEATO, but had somehow remained associated with the Third World. Pakistan's interest in the promotion of Islamic solidarity and her initiative to convene the second Islamic Summit Conference at Lahore in 1974 attended by 38 states had already provided her with the opportunity to play diplomatic role in the Third World because Islamic summit reflected "The hopes and aspirations of the Third World for

a just and a more equitable World Order”⁶ As most of the countries participating in the Islamic Summit Conference were associated with NAM, the conference facilitated Pakistan to consolidate her standing in the non-aligned group of states.⁷

Moreover, even being the member of various pacts, Pakistan had been following non-aligned policies. This fact was admitted by the Cuban Industries’ Minister Mr. Antinio Esquivel who had brought personal message inviting Pakistan to participate as guest at the Foreign Ministers’ conference of NAM held in 1978. Mr. Agha Shahi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs who had to attend the meeting could not do so as he had to leave Belgrade for a pre-arranged official visit to the Soviet Union. However a message addressed to the conference by the president of Pakistan was read by the delegation of Pakistan. Pakistan’s participation in the conference of the Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries was upheld as an “event of unique importance in its foreign relations.”⁸

In his first address at the sixth summit conference, the president of Pakistan General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq declared that Pakistan had joined the Movement as it was a voluntary association of states opposed to colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism, racism including Zionism and was not directed against any block or group. He also suggested that the Movement should not identify itself with any power bloc.⁹ This suggestion was of great importance in view of the accusations that the movement was having orientation towards Soviet Union and a controversy had started between two groups led by Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito and the Cuban President Fidel Castro, during which Castro criticised the policy of the United States and warned to “turn the movement into a tool of Soviet policy”.¹⁰

In the beginning it was also feared that NAM may appear to be un-Islamic in light of the statement of president Tito at Belgrade on July 25, 1979 to the effect that “all sectarianism of any kind is alien to non-aligned Movement. Division based on ideological, religious and other criteria are impermissible”.¹¹ But such doubts are baseless if one analyses the teaching of Islam. The president of Pakistan

had highlighted the relationship which existed between the principles of the Movement and Islamic teaching by pointing out that Islam gave a clarion call of Jihad against tyranny, oppression, domination and exploitation of man by man and emphasized the equality of man.¹² He also emphasized that "Islamic character of Pakistan's polity was the basis of commitment to principles of equality, universal brotherhood, justice and for its belief in human rights, social justice and tolerance of divergent beliefs" and supported the cause of the people of Namibia and Zimbabwe.¹³ Obviously it indicates that the principles of NAM do not come into clash with the Islamic teaching but rather affirm the universal creed of Islam.

It is only because of this reason that during the 6th NAM summit conference the number of participating Muslim States had gone up to 43 and "Pakistan was the moving spirit behind the convocation of the meeting of Islamic group ever held during NAM conference".¹⁴

During the 6th summit conference one of the important contributions of Pakistan was the proposal made regarding conditions of external financing. This was included in the summit's Economic Declaration which reads as under:

"The conference expressed its concern over the conditions of external financing, strongly condemned the practice of using debt and development assistance to exert pressure or coercion of any kind on the developing countries."¹⁵

Pakistan was also successful in convincing the Political Committee of the 6th NAM summit to adopt an amendment calling for firm measures by members of the movement against countries which recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel for inclusion in the draft declaration.¹⁶

Pakistan also emphasized that the non-aligned summit should call for the transfer of nuclear technology from the developed to the developing countries. The Pakistani delegation proposed to the political Committee which was considering the draft declaration that the section dealing with the disarmament was not elaborate and

therefore proposed amendment to the paragraph dealing with the transfer of nuclear technology, nuclear weapon free zones and nuclear guarantees to non-nuclear states. "It is also to Pakistan's credit that its policy against imperialism and hegemonism was endorsed at the conference"¹⁸ After its entry into the Group of Non-aligned countries at the Belgrade conference, Pakistan started playing a significant role in the movement. The question of settlement of Afghanistan issue had remained under consideration by the movement but the movement could not achieve consensus on this issue. It was during the Non-aligned Foreign Ministers' conference held at New Delhi in February 1981 that a consensus was reached and the Ministers made an urgent call for a political settlement of Afghanistan problem in light of the four principles which Pakistan had suggested earlier and were approved of in the form of resolutions by Islamic Conference and were placed for consideration before NAM and the General Assembly of the United Nations. These principles included: Respect for the national independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Afghanistan, the right of Afghan people to choose a form of Government and Social Economic system free from foreign constraints and outside intervention, withdrawal of foreign troops and voluntary return of the Afghan refugees to their homes in conditions of dignity and safety.¹⁹

Keeping in view the role which Pakistan had started playing in NAM, she was elected as a member of the co-ordinating committee for the implementation of the action programme for economic co-operation among non-aligned countries. The fourth meeting of the committee was held at Havana in March 1982.

However, it was during seventh summit of the NAM held at New Delhi in March 1983 that Pakistan got opportunity to play a significant role in the Movement. This was possible because of two reasons. Firstly Pakistan was included in the Political and Economic Committee of the Ministerial conference and therefore could take many initiatives. Secondly the summit conference had to deal with many important and controversial issues like the question of representation of Kampuchia, problem of Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq war, Western Sahara Chad and above all the problem of deteriorating International Economic situation.

Before the opening of the summit conference, a Ministerial conference was held in which Pakistan had the distinction of being called upon to address the inaugural plenary session of the conference on behalf of the Asian group.²⁰

One of the contributions of Pakistan was that she was successful in getting PLO represented at the NAM. The preparatory meeting at official level had made efforts to get the bureau assisting the chairman of the Ministerial conference expanded to accommodate PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization). Consequently the strength of the bureau was extended to 22.²¹

During Minister's conference, Pakistan had pointed out that seventh summit conference was being held at a time when the world was faced with conflicts and turmoil and there was a deepening crisis in international economic system and growing danger of nuclear conflict which endangered the very survival of human civilization. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan, therefore, suggested that the movement should play an active role in contemporary affairs and we should "concentrate our joint endeavours in pursuit of peaceful coexistence and a world order based on dignity and justice for all nations, strong or weak, large or small".²²

Another important contribution of Pakistan was that her viewpoint on disarmament was accepted by the working group on the subject which was to be included in the Political Declaration issued at the conclusion of the conference. In the original draft declaration it was stated that non-nuclear states should not be threatened or blackmailed. However Pakistan got included a paragraph in the draft declaration under the caption 'Disarmament' in which it was suggested that disarmament should not only relate to nuclear armament but should also include chemical destructives and cover outer space. Pakistan delegation to the main political committee also emphasized that a distinction should be made between nuclear weapons' technology and peaceful uses of nuclear facility and that the road of nuclear technology should not be closed to the developing countries for peaceful purposes.²⁴

Pakistan also took initiative in making amendments to the draft

declaration which was being considered by the drafting group of the political committee. The amendment emphasized the role of the United Nation to seek a political solution of the situation in Afghanistan in conformity with the ideals and principles of the non-aligned movement.²⁵

The same view-point was reiterated by the president of Pakistan at the summit conference when he informed the distinguished guests that Pakistan was making efforts to achieve a political settlement of the Afghan problem through indirect negotiations under the intermediary of United Nations Secretary General's personal envoy on Afghanistan. He, however, urged the conference to reaffirm its support to the people of Afghanistan in light of the position adopted at Havana and non-aligned Ministerial meeting at Delhi.²⁶

However, the most important contribution of Pakistan during seventh summit conference was regarding economic progress of the developing Nations. The president of Pakistan stressed that the survival of mankind depended as much on progress towards peace as on advance in economic growth. He enunciated a five point formula for achieving global economic co-operation on a more sound line. These included: The developed countries having material and technological superiority should collectively dismantle all barriers of free trade; The North and South should evolve an orderly and equitable system of debt management for resolving the problem of International debt; The South should accept the need for better economic management and efficient utilization of its own national resources by mobilizing its own creative energy, both on a national and on a collective basis; All countries should give full support to the concept of multilateralism and to increasing the capacity of the international financial institution to enable them to play effective role in initiating a world economic recovery and in accelerating the economic advancement of the developing countries; In view of urgent needs of the developing countries for energy investment, considerations must be given to set up arrangement, encompassing contributions from Government and private Banks and supplies of equipment for financing the capital intensive and technologically complex projects in the energy sector.²⁸

Most of the proposals made by Pakistan were accepted and included in the final declaration issued at the end of the conference designated as New Delhi message.²⁹

Although Pakistan joined NAM in 1979 and since then had participated only in two summit conferences and the conferences at Ministerial levels, her role within such a short span of time has been of great importance. However one can not predict the role which Pakistan would be expected to play in future because the member countries of NAM have been faced with differences of opinion on important issues. Consequently movement has not been able solve many vital issues like the question of Kampuchia, Iran-Iraq war, problem of Afghanistan. For example, during non-aligned Ministers' conference held at New Delhi in February 1980, it was not only the Afghan Foreign Minister, who rejected the final document section that dealt with Afghanistan, but he was supported by the Vietnamese delegate who called the declaration on Afghanistan as "a dangerous precedent".³⁰

The history of the NAM indicates that these differences appeared since the very first conference held at Belgrade in 1961 and became more apparent at Lusaka conference in 1970 when it was pointed out by certain circles that "the movement had begun to lose its inspiration and drive following East-West detente and the near end of colonial Era"³¹

It was also shocking that being dissatisfied with the policy of NAM, Burma quitted the movement after Havana summit, alleging that "the principles of the movement are not recognizable; they are not merely dim, they are dying".³²

The differences of member countries have not only led to the reconsideration of its purposes and principles frequently³³ but have also hindered the creation of a permanent organizational structure of the movement.

Keeping in view these differences, the president of Pakistan advised the member States of the movement "to weld themselves into a cohesive unity, united in their resolve to stand by their principles and in support of any member who has suffered a wrong"³⁴

NOTES :

1. Arthur S. Banks and William Overstreet (ed): *Political Handbook of the World*, New York, 1981, p. 104
2. For details see Charles Scribners, *Treaties and Alliances of the World*, 1968, pp. 200-3
3. Staff Study, "Pakistan and the World", *Pakistan Horizon* vol. XVII No. 2, 1964, p. 106
4. For detailed discussion for leaving CENTO and SEATO, see Shamim Akhter, "Pakistan and the Great Powers" in Masuma Hasan (ed) *Pakistan in a Changing World*, Karachi, 1978, pp. 175-80
5. Dawn (Karachi), 10th and 11th June, 1979
6. Khurshid Hyder, 'Pakistan's Foreign Policy in the Early Seventies' in Masuma Hasan, op. cit. pp. 98-9
7. Thirty six countries of the Third World including NAM states but excluding India met and conferred at Lahore during Islamic Summit Conference (See Khurshid Hyder, op. cit. p. 99)
8. Foreign Affairs, Pakistan, Vol. V, Issue 7-8, 1978, p. 21
9. Dawn, September 8, 1983
10. Fact on File, Vol 39, p. 674
11. Dawn, March 5, 1983
12. *Ibid.*, September 8, 1979
13. *Ibid.*
14. A.T. Chaudhri, "Pakistan in Non-aligned Fold", Dawn, March 5, 1983
15. Dawn, September 15, 1979
16. *Ibid*, September 6, 1979
17. *Ibid*, September 3, 1979
18. Mujtaba Rizvi, Dr, "Pakistan and the Contemporary Inter-

national Scene", *Pakistan Horizon* Vol xxxI, Nos 2&3, 1978, p. 199

19. Foreign Affairs Pakistan, Vol VII, No. 5, 1980, p. 37, and Pakistan Yearbook, Lahore 1982-83, pp. 214-5
20. Dawn, March 4, 1983
21. Two additional seats were increased to accommodate PLO and SWAPO (Morning News, March 3, 1983)
22. Morning News, March 4, 1983
23. *Ibid.*
24. Dawn, March 1983
25. Morning News, March 8, 1983
26. *Ibid.*
27. Dawn, March 11, 1983
28. Dawn, March 11, 1983
29. Dawn, March 13, 1983
30. Facts on File, 1981 p. 106.
31. A.T. Chaudhry, op. cit.
32. Pakistan Yearbook, Lahore, 1983-84, p. 184
33. For example during Cairo Conference (1964) emphasis was laid upon condemnation of Western colonialism and retention of Foreign installations, but subsequently there was a change in the policy and during Algiers Conference (1973) appeal was made for the concerted action by the poor nations against the industrialized world (For details see Bank and Overstreet, op. cit. p. 607 and Facts on File, Vol 33, 1973 pp. 760-61)
34. Dawn, March, 11, 1983.