

THE NON-ALIGNED POLICY IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS - A VIEW FROM SLOVENIA

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Abstract: It is known that during the Cold War, the world was divided into two poles, western and eastern, and that many Asian, African and Latin American countries decided to choose the “third way” in order to maintain their independence. With the progressive efforts of Yugoslavia, India, Egypt, Indonesia, Ghana, Cuba and other countries, the Non-Aligned Movement was founded in the early 1960s. This Movement played a significant role in the fight against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, apartheid, racism, including all other forms of foreign aggression and domination. Seeking its own path of development, the Non-Aligned Movement fought against bloc politics, which played a role in stabilizing international relations and ensuring international peace and security. After the end of the Cold War, a big question mark was placed on the relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement. Bearing in mind that the Non-Aligned Movement today consists of 120 countries, which is two-thirds of the total number of United Nations members, it cannot be disputed that the Non-Aligned Movement continues to play an important role in the development of modern international relations.

Key words: the Non-Aligned Movement, Cold War, Blocks, geopolitical prediction, international relations.

Introduction

When talking about the Non-Aligned policy, we should mention the Non-Aligned Movement, which was the result of the initiative in the 1950s

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and officially established in the 1960s. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was a forum of 120 developing world states that were not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. The Non-Aligned Movement was established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia through the initiative of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, Indonesian President Sukarno, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser and Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito. This led to the first Conference of Heads of State or Governments of Non-Aligned Countries. The purpose of the organisation was to ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries" in their "struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great power and bloc politics." The countries of the Non-Aligned Movement represented nearly two-thirds of the United Nations' members and contained 55% of the world population. Membership was particularly concentrated in countries considered to be developing or part of the Third World, though the Non-Aligned Movement also had a number of developed nations (Wikipedia, org). "In the 1950s, the so-called Non-aligned group represented a novel approach to international relations. Neutral nations had, of course, always existed, but their distinguishing feature had been a passive foreign policy. By contrast, the Non-aligned of the Cold War period did not perceive their neutrality to require non-involvement. They were active, occasionally shrill players promoting agendas established in forums designed to pool their strengths and enhance their influence, in effect forming an alliance of the Non-aligned. Though they were highly vocal in their complaints about international tensions, they knew how to profit from them. They learned how to play superpowers off against each other. And since they feared the Soviet Union more than they did the United States, they generally sided with the communists without feeling any reciprocal need to apply the same moral stringency to the Soviet Union as they did towards the United States." (Kissinger, 1996). In fact, the existence of two world-leading superpowers, which together with the countries, loyal or subordinated to them, was the basis of forming two blocs, economically, military, scientifically and politically strong. The reasons for entering the NAM were different from state to state, from region to region. All of them did not want to be the full member of the pro-US part or the pro-SU part of the globe. Somehow, they wanted to be independent as much as possible from the duties imposed or preferred by the SU or by the US. They definitely were not strong enough to

preserve this position, but, at the same time, they did not choose the policy of neutrality or non-activity. To preserve this position, they entered the alliance of the Non-aligned. This was the era of the so-called Cold War with two superpowers leading the biggest part of the world. In fact, this was the condition for the establishment of the NAM. Without the Cold War, such a movement would have no sense. Hence, it is reasonable for us to ask the question: Does the current world situation find the creation of a new non-aligned group of countries and to what extent would this be politically justified? The basic condition for establishing such a movement is whether there is a real possibility of some kind of a new Cold War. In the second half of the 2010s, the US policy was led by President Donald Trump, whose major idea of his policy was "America first". The policy was kind of isolationist, weakening strong political and economic relations with the EU, weakening the NATO alliance. The result was a strong positive impact on the American economy, with substantial economic growth, minimizing the unemployment rate. But without strong allies, America would not and could not be a world superpower. Russia had economic problems as a result of the imposed economic sanctions, which were imposed because of the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and its policy against the eastern part of Ukraine. China's economy was growing and becoming more powerful and more influential. But, at that time, China was an important big country and still not a superpower spreading its political intention worldwide. In many of the analysis emerging in this period, we could find the predictions that there is no possibility of some new Cold War and that a multipolar world would be the future global situation.

New geopolitical predictions about international relations

Those predictions changed in the 2020s. The possibility of some kind of a new cold war is becoming a real possibility. There are some signs that each big and powerful state, especially the US, Russia and China, are expected to diminish the cooperation with another superpower, but at the same time enforcing the political, economic and security cooperation with their allies. No more America first, but the aim to defend and unite democracy. "We're going to rebuild our alliances. We're going to reengage the world and take on the enormous challenges we face dealing with the pandemic, dealing with global warming and again, standing up for democracy and human rights around the world. Though many of these values have come under intense pressure in recent years, even

pushed to the brink in the last weeks, the American people are going to emerge from this moment more determined and better equipped to unite the world to defend democracy because we have fought for it ourselves", President Biden said (Biden 1, 2021).

China is a key geopolitical rival to the US, and tensions between Beijing and Washington increased in the later stages of the Trump presidency, with clashes on issues relating to trade, technology, regional security and human rights. Recently, the State Department issued a statement that the administration of President Biden wants to keep up with allies and partners before it gets in touch with China (Biden 2, 2021). President Biden is engineering a sharp shift in policy towards China, focused on gathering allies to counter Beijing's coercive diplomacy around the world and ensuring that China does not gain a permanent advantage in critical technologies. At first glance, it seems to adopt much of the Trump administration's conviction that the world's two biggest powers are veering dangerously toward confrontation, a clear change in tone from the Obama years (Sanger, Crowley, 2021). At the meeting of Chinese and U.S. high officials in Alaska, Chinese officials accused the US of inciting countries "to attack China", while the US said China had "arrived intent on grandstanding". Relations between the two superpowers are at their most strained for years. The US has pledged to raise contentious issues such as Beijing's treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. The ill-tempered talks in Anchorage involved Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan on the US side, facing off with China's most senior foreign policy official, Yang Jiechi, and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Are the US and China in a new 'Cold War'? (BBC, 2 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic showed the split among important world powers. The EU ordered the vaccine only from the western pharmaceutical companies, while the media several times informed the EU citizens that the Russian and Chinese vaccines are not reliable. "Pandemic is abused by politicians in order to achieve internal political goals, so is the battle against the new virus the part of the new cold war." (Cibej 2, 2021). In January 2021, the EU High Representative Mr Borell paid a visit to the Russian Foreign Minister Mr Lavrov, and they gave the impression that "Neither the European Union nor Russia have a vital need to cooperate." (Cibej 1, 2021). On February 11, 2021, China banned BBC World News from broadcasting, reportedly because of the wrong reports on the vaccine abuse in some parts of the country (BBC, 1, 2021). It is more or less evident that the world is going towards a kind of the cold war. It is difficult to find out when or if it would happen, and how it would look.

What will be the frontiers of a certain block, and how many blocks will emerge from the actual situation? But it is evident that the US, China and Russia are active in getting as many friendly countries as possible with the aim to embrace them into their block.

Foreign policy positioning of the Western Balkans - aligned or non-aligned policy?

It is more or less clear that the US is interested in the Western Balkans. After the election of the new U.S. president, it seems that the international policy towards the WB has changed. Analysts believe that the arrival of the new U.S. administration headed by President Joseph Biden is the key element for political changes in the Western Balkans, and particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina. The new U.S. administration in collaboration with the EU has to seek ways that will lead the country to necessary political changes, which will ultimately result in prosperity of the Western Balkan countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have the political will or strong institutions, which is why Bosnia and Herzegovina will need assistance from U.S. security-intelligence agencies, similar to the one provided to Italy after World War II. The current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is similar to the one in Italy after WWII. The encouraging fact is that in his conversation with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the newly elected U.S. President Joseph Biden touched upon the Western Balkans as well (Ifimes, 2020). Yet, it has not been clear which state would belong to which side. The majority of states still let the door open and leave it to the future to decide where to align. The EU is still open to all possibilities, although it is more probable that the majority of its members would align to the western side. The High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mr Borrell said: "Accepting the invitation of the Robert Schuman Foundation, I presented on last Monday some of our principles on which we will operate this year: diminish the tensions in our neighbourhood, organise a new start with the US, re-equalize our relations with China, actualize our strategic autonomy and restore the multilateralism." (Borell, 2021). It is now time to take the strategic decision for the future position of every state. We can expect more options, such as adhering to the pro-American bloc or the Chinese or Russian bloc. The third option is to remain neutral with a passive foreign policy. However, an old proverb says: "There are only dead dogs in the middle of the road", which means that it will not be easy to remain passive and completely neutral! Those who will not want to join any

major group will be forced to align among themselves. Right now it is still too early to make any decision on this matter, but sooner or later such a decision will have to be taken.

Conclusions

We can expect that some kind of new Non-Aligned Movement will emerge. It is impossible to predict how it will be organised and how it will function. But, probably, the leading countries of such a movement will thoroughly study how the NAM functioned, and what can be seen from the historical point of view as successful with many important positive results, especially in the process of decolonisation and race discrimination and the way towards the independent political orientation of newly created independent states. It is not easy for small states to stay neutral or non-aligned. They are simply too vulnerable in economic terms. They are far from being self-sufficient and need to cooperate strongly with other economies. It is difficult to cooperate if there are not good political relations. Strong economies can afford to remain neutral or non-aligned. Weak and small economies cannot. Slovenia is definitely a small economy, extremely dependent on economic relations with the EU countries. Slovenia is a cultural, economic and traditional partner of the Western European countries. The dependence on the Western economy is prevailing. Although there is some sentiment for the Non-Aligned Movement in Slovenia, the current foreign policy orientation indicates a lack of self-confidence to remain politically neutral or non-aligned.

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