The Cold War and the Postcolonial Moment – Prehistory, Aims and Achievements of the Non-Aligned Movement 50 Years after Belgrade

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For many years, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has not been taken seriously in the studies of International Relations and by historians interested in the Cold War or decolonization. It was considered a phenomenon with a short history and of marginal impact. However, most of the studies focusing on the NAM narrate a different story: They understand the NAM as a result of successful national liberation struggles of anticolonial movements or as a reaction of governments to the Cold War. The „founding fathers" of non-alignment, namely Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito and Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser „invented" the idea in the 1950s to secure and to broaden the sovereignty of their states in international relations. Since that time, non-alignment has grown as a dominant diplomatic philosophy in the Afro-Asian world. From a simple idea based on anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-racism, it developed into a powerful concept of South-South cooperation. The first NAM summit, which took place in Belgrade exactly 50 years ago, assembled twenty-five countries. Today, the movement has 120 member states and 20 observers.

The conference „The Cold War and the Postcolonial Moment" was convened against this background to examine both the formation and the subsequent shaping of NAM. Hosted by the University of Zurich and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, the conference brought together an array of international scholars and diplomats, reflecting both academic and practitioners' perspectives. In his keynote address, DIETMAR ROTHERMUND (Heidelberg) detailed the larger historical developments that shaped, and at times also hindered, the movement. He showed, among other things, how the personal friendship between Nasser, Nehru and Tito was important for the creation of the movement, and how the international circumstances following the 1956 Brioni Agreement led to a gap of six years before the first actual conference was held. Tracing the movement past the Sino-Indian war, the Soviet war in Afghanistan and the developments of 1989, he demonstrated how the NAM reincarnated as the Global South at the Jakarta conference in 1992. The other keynote address was given by BUDIMIR LONČAR (Zagreb), the last Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia. He detailed his own life-long experience as a diplomat during the formation and development of the non-aligned movement, and provided context to the political forces that shaped it from the perspective of an active participant.

The panels of the first day focused primarily on the postcolonial context and ideological origins of the NAM, those of the second day on the Cold War and Yugoslavia's role. ČEDOMIR ŠTRBAC (Belgrade), and KWEKU AMPIAH (Leeds) emphasized the continuities: Štrbac, former Yugoslav ambassador to India, maintained that the concepts of coexistence and non-alignment have a long tradition in Yugoslav foreign policy. Ampiah demonstrated that the Belgrade conference was replete with references to the Bandung conference, concluding with the counterfactual statement, that without Bandung, there would have been no Belgrade. MADELEINE HERREN (Heidelberg) and CAROLIEN STOLTE (Leiden) on the other hand laid their focus on discontinuities between the anticolonial movements of the interwar period and the later NAM. Herren challenged several of the conventional starting points for the movement as well as related assumptions on its underlying motivations. One of these was the World Congress of Oppressed Peoples, convened in Brussels in 1927 to found the League against Impe-

rialism, which has subsequently been overemphasized for its parallels to the later NAM. Herren further stressed that NAM was a movement, not an organization, and should be treated as such. Stolte treated the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1947 as a transitional phase in Asian relations, and demonstrated that this conference, although often mentioned in passing as a prelude to Bandung and the later NAM, was actually much more closely related to the Asianist enthusiasm of the interwar period. To clarify this, research has to pay more attention to the semantic of the speeches of anti-colonial activists and non-aligned politicians. Scholars still tend to project back the understanding of the term „non-alignment" as it was used during the 1960s and 1970s into times when the term was only rarely employed.

Another debate evolved around the question who the main actors of NAM were. MRIDULA MUKHERJEE (New Delhi), director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and co-editor of Nehru's Selected Works, insisted on Nehru's towering leadership in the shaping of Indian foreign policy. RAJIV SIKRI (New Delhi), a former senior Indian diplomat, underlined the fact that non-alignment was one among several strategies of Indian foreign policy. His colleague CHANDRASHEKHAR DASGUPTA (New Delhi), gave an insightful example of this in India's choice to remain a member of the Commonwealth. JOŽE PIRJEVEC (Koper) directed the attention to the first Yugoslav ambassadors in New Delhi, Josip Djerdja and Josip Vilfan. According to him, Djerdja was the first Yugoslav diplomat to speak about a „third force" and a policy of „active coexistence" between East and West in 1951, influencing the thinking of Tito and his chief ideologist Edvard Kardelj.

The historical context in which the NAM emerged was present in every paper. Some speakers paid special attention to this aspect, challenging the view that NAM was just a result of the Cold War. Instead, SVETOZAR RAJAK (London) argued that the Yugoslav leadership began searching for common ground between the two Blocs soon after the break-up with the Soviet Bloc in 1948. However, it was the normalization of relations with the USSR starting in 1954 which allowed Tito maneuvering space for his policy of equidistance. ITTY ABRAHAM (Austin) spoke about the links between postcolonial issues and non-alignment. Decolonization coincided with the rise of the territorial nation-state as predominant form of political organization around the world. International recognition of sovereignty became a priority for all governments, and the self-imposed limits of the NAM critique of the existing international order were conditioned accordingly. ADITYA MUKHERJEE (New Delhi) looked at the economic foundations of non-alignment, demonstrating how concerns surrounding developmental issues influenced India's share to NAM. Finally, ELHAM MANEA (Zurich) and IVAN IVEKOVIĆ (Cairo) broadened the discussion by looking at Arab elites, who are either organized in a traditional tribal system as in Libya, Saudi-Arabia or Syria, or controlling their national state by means of a strong army, as in Egypt. All these papers showed that a global perspective is indispensable to explore the variety of aspects and contributions constituting the movement.

Relatively few papers dealt with the history of the movement after Belgrade 1961, mainly focusing on the question whether there was a clearly defined non-aligned policy and how it changed over the time. LORENZ LÜTHI (Montreal) examined the policies of Yugoslavia, Egypt and India, comparing their dealings with the German question, with nuclear weapons, the Indochina conflict and the Arab-Israel conflict. He concluded that there was hardly any coherent NAM policy, each country acting in accordance with its national interest. AMIT DAS GUPTA (Berlin/Bremen) proposed that the non-aligned countries did not keep themselves busy with the German question, but the construction of the Berlin Wall less than three weeks before the opening of the Belgrade summit, helped the two Germanies keep the NAM busy with allurements and threats over the recognition of the GDR. TVRTKO JAKOVINA (Zagreb) demonstrated how Yugoslav foreign policy changed after Tito's death in 1980, making a point that the policy towards NAM and the United Nations was not identical. All these papers argued that the term non-aligned policy as a

term refers to a very flexible political concept, differing in time and space. More case studies are required to thoroughly understand the functioning and meaning of non-alignment.

A third group of papers examined the long neglected relationship between the public, the media and the NAM summits: The economically and militarily weak non-aligned countries tried to achieve their foreign policy aims by influencing an imagined „world opinion". MARIA FRAMKE (Bremen) focused on India in the 1930s. She demonstrated that, despite the focus that is generally put on Indian nationalism in this time frame, with Nehru as the only actor interested in world affairs, the 1930s Indian press tells a very different story and shows a marked interest in international developments. NAOKO SHIMAZU (London) then looked at the Bandung conference from a cultural perspective, detailing the performance of that conference as an event that consciously attempted to engage the public. JÜRGEN DINKEL (Giessen) examined the various non-aligned summits as consciously shaped media events, demonstrating how non-alignment was performed to the press. He argued that the public attention the non-aligned states gained during the conferences has kept the loose supranational coalition together and has enabled the NAM to influence world politics in various degrees. NATAŠA MIŠKOVIĆ (Zurich) presented Belgrade as the venue for the first NAM summit. She showed that the conference was of absolute priority to Tito's regime and cost the country a large amount of money. Involving many Belgraders in its preparation, the summit contributed to the stabilization of Tito's regime. In the aftermath, the early 1960s would be regarded as the golden age of Titoism. On a more abstract level, GOPALAN BALACHANDRAN (Geneva) showed in a witty thought experiment how important it is to critically analyse the historiographical tradition of NAM literature. This group of papers highlighted the soft power of international movements and conferences. The summits provided a space where elites from postcolonial countries attained representation, where new group identities could be created and where the participating countries could influence world politics through symbolic actions.

The conference ended with a public roundtable on „The Non-Aligned Movement after 1989". The discussion which followed the opening statements of moderator BERNARD IMHASLY (Mumbai), BUDIMIR LONČAR, CHANDRASHEKHAR DASGUPTA, IVAN IVEKOVIĆ and CLAUDE ALTERMATT (Berne) clearly showed that among the practitioners, no consensus could be reached about the meaning, influence and actual relevance of the NAM. For those with a moral point of view, NAM seems an important platform to resolve the problems of the Global South. Those with a more realistic approach pointed to the failures and weaknesses of the NAM. The movement has no permanent headquarters, and the widely differing interests of the member states prevent a coherent policy. This debate is not new to the historian. NAM's relevance has been discussed from the beginning, and the question why it continues to exist seems much more fruitful. What do member states and diplomats expect from a non-aligned policy, what does it mean in different countries and periods, and in which situations do member states find a common voice?

To sum up, the conference provoked a stimulating dialogue between scholars and diplomats. It made clear that both narratives of the Non-Aligned Movement — the narrative of a coalition with no impact and the success story — have to be distinguished further. A high degree of uncertainty still exists about the definition of non-alignment and the methods of analysing non-alignment, the NAM and its impact. Furthermore, the global perspective requires an unusually high degree of necessary language skills. Most participants being experts either in Indian, Yugoslav or Egyptian history, they tended to explain the emergence of non-alignment solely out of a distinct national, overestimating the importance of regional factors compared with global developments. Despite these difficulties, all papers contributed to a better understanding of the NAM, pointing out new fields of research, highlighting a range of neglected actors, and underlining the fact that the extent of cooperation between anticolonial movements and later non-aligned states varied through-

out the 20th century. But more research has to be done to identify these periods and to explain these fluctuations. It was obvious that scholars interested in the NAM, decolonization, the Cold War or International Organizations would benefit considerably from an intensified dialogue. A first step to bridge the gap between the various approaches has been taken at this informative conference, in an open-minded atmosphere, assigning the Non-Aligned Movement the seminal place it deserves in the history of the second half of the 20th century.

Conference Overview:

Welcome Addresses
Nada Boškovska, University of Zurich; Andreas Fischer, President, University of Zurich; Frank Schimmelfennig, Head, Department of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences ETH; and Harald Fischer-Tiné, ETH

Key Note Addresses
Dietmar Rothermund, University of Heidelberg: The Era of Non-Alignment
Budimir Lončar, former Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, Head of the President's Advisory Board on Foreign Policy and International Relations, Zagreb (Croatia)

Panel I: Who invented Non-Alignment?
Chair: Nada Boškovska, University of Zurich

Madeleine Herren, University of Heidelberg
Introduction

Maria Framke, Jacobs University, Bremen
The 1930s in India: the formative period for non-alignment?

Mridula Mukherjee, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi
Nehru and the Non-Aligned Movement: Some Reflections

Čedomir Štrbac, Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgrade
Coexistence and Non-Alignment in Yugoslav Foreign Policy

Panel II: Non-Alignment as a Political Movement of Postcolonialism
Chair: Harald Fischer-Tiné, ETH Zurich

Carolien Stolte, University of Leiden
‚The Asiatic Hour': The Asian Relations Conference (New Delhi 1947) as a Transitional Phase in Asian Relations

Kweku Ampiah, University of Leeds
The Non-aligned Movement and its References to the Bandung Conference

Jürgen Dinkel, University of Giessen
‚To grab the Headlines in the World Press'. Non-Aligned Summits as Media Events

Itty Abraham, University of Texas, Austin
The Necessity of Recognition: A Prolegomena to Non-Alignment as Movement

Panel III: NAM as a Project of the Postcolonial Elites
Chair: Corinne Pernet, University of St. Gallen

Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, Former Indian Foreign Service, New Delhi:
India's Relations with the Commonwealth and its Influence on Foreign Policy

Naoko Shimazu, Birkbeck College, University of London
The Festival of Nations: A Cultural History of the Bandung Conference

Elham Manea, Department for Political Science, University of Zurich
Arab Elites in the Middle East during the 1950s

Aditya Mukherjee, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
The Economic Foundations of Non-Alignment

Panel IV: The NAM as a Cold War Necessity
Chair: Andreas Wenger, ETH Zurich

Gopalan Balachandran, Graduate Institute, Geneva
Recuperating the Global South: Super-Power Rivalries, Non-Alignment, and the Politics of Historical Memory

Rajiv Sikri, former Indian Foreign Service, New Delhi
The Idea of ‚Tilt' in India's Foreign Policy

Lorenz Lüthi, McGill University, Montreal
The Non-Aligned: Apart from and still within the Cold War

Amit Das Gupta, Institute of Contemporary History, Berlin

The Non-Aligned and the German Question

Ivan Iveković, The American University in Cairo
The NAM and the Ongoing Arab Revolts

Panel V: Yugoslavia's Role in Non-Alignment
Chair: Jeronim Perović, University of Zurich

Jože Pirjevec, University of Primorska, Koper:
The First Steps of Yugoslav Non-Aligned Foreign Policy: Ambassadors Djerdja and Vilfan in New Delhi

Svetozar Rajak, London School of Economics, London
Yugoslav–Soviet Normalization, 1953-1956 and the Beginning of the Yugoslav Road to Non-alignment

Nataša Mišković, University of Zurich
To Be a Good Host: Belgrade and the First Summit of the Non-Aligned

Tvrtko Jakovina, University of Zagreb
Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1970s and 1980s

Concluding Remarks
Mridula Mukherjee, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
Nataša Mišković, University of Zurich

Round Table Discussion: The Non-Aligned Movement after 1989
Moderation: Bernard Imhasly, former correspondent Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Mumbai
Budimir Lončar, former Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, Head of the President's Advisory Board on Foreign Policy and International Relations, Zagreb (Croatia)
Ambassador Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, Former Indian Foreign Service, New Delhi
Ivan Iveković, American University in Cairo, former Yugoslav Ambassador to Egypt, Cairo
Claude Altermatt, historian and diplomat, Swiss Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Berne

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