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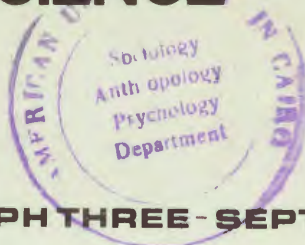
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NON-ALIGNMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Basic Features of the Present International System

PART I

NON-ALIGNMENT IN A CHANGING GLOBAL SYSTEM

Basic Features of the Present International System

by A. K. Damodaran

We are passing through a period of continuous flux and change in international relations; both the pace and the range are unprecedented. The relations between the great powers are being modified in imperceptible degrees, leading to perceptible consequences for the smaller powers, who themselves continue to react vigorously with each other, sometimes with an apparent indifference to the authority of the leaders of the world community. Many of the labels of the seventies continue to be relevant, but in many cases, there is a change of content in political situations and issues. Detente between the superpowers, which reached its apogee at Helsinki in 1975, is in temporary eclipse, and the received wisdom seems to be that we are passing through a second wave of the cold war.

This retreat from detente reached its climax towards the very end of the previous decade with the Afghan developments. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan represented the impact of internal developments in a neighboring country on a superpower's perception of its own strategic interest. The Afghan crisis continues to simmer even today, but well below the level of an international emergency. Many of the original problems sought to be solved both by the Soviet Union, the rebels and their friends continue to exist, but they are beginning to be accepted as a part of the international scene along with earlier unsolved crises like the ones in the Middle East and Cambodia. While there might be differences of opinion among regional and global powers about the exact solution to this particular problem, there is general agreement that a purely military solution is unrealistic; a political compromise has to be invented.

The earlier Cambodian problem has its external ramifications in the Soviet-China-Vietnam triangle. Here again, it would be naive to hope for a simple solution which would lead to a total withdrawal of the Vietnamese from Cambodia. A political solution based upon guarantees of non-interference from major powers could have been managed before the Pol Pot interlude, but now even this seems to be unlikely. Therefore, we will have to be prepared for another continuing crisis at a fairly high, but not internationally unacceptable, level.

The years since then have seen the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq conflict, which represents not so much a clash of interests between the superpowers, as their inability to influence basic events when powerful middle powers, with no exclusive loyalty to either bloc, are involved. This is, in fact, one of the classic dilemmas of non-alignment; freedom from exclusive loyalties protects us from superpower intervention, but it does not, by any means, assure us of the good offices of our own peers in the Movement. The authority of the Movement is moral, general and only persuasive. In such a situation, powerful sovereign states with an intense ideological motivation, as in this case, or with geopolitical insecurity, will be tempted to engage in a long war of attrition if the superpowers are themselves ambivalent in their loyalties. A little investigation would show how this is true of the attitudes of Moscow and Washington to Iran and Iraq. It was left, therefore, to the non-aligned and other Third World or regional agencies, like the Islamic Conference, to try to contain this war. As suggested above, these efforts could not succeed, and a

military solution of sorts seems to have been reached.

The Falklands war is, as of now, without any precedent or parallel. No one expected it to happen; not many people were delighted, in ideological or strategic terms, when it happened. The solution, when it came, was also not entirely satisfactory, even though many people felt that the use of force to change international borders had to be discouraged. There are, however, too many ambiguities in this case to encourage the hope that this would present a model for good behavior for other similarly "aggrieved" countries, particularly in Latin America. The original failure of the United States to prevent the breakout of this war, its continuing inability to restrain the level of fighting and its ultimate embarrassment in having to choose for a NATO ally against an OAS neighbor serve to underlie the insufficient authority of the superpowers in the contemporary international environment. In the most unexpected corner of the world, a new crisis could develop which could attract any major power, either of the two superpowers, or both. There is today as much risk of great power attraction towards local quarrels as the more familiar converse phenomenon of smaller powers being drawn into local conflicts originating in global rivalry.

While all this is true and detente is in eclipse, we should not overlook the fact that the actual understanding between the two superpowers on mutual self-denial in the direct use of force against each other remains one of the more reliable facts of world politics. Generalized obituaries on the superpower condominium tend to overlook this. We must remember that the new American administration has continued to observe the terms of the SALT II agreement, even though they have not ratified it. This is a central fact of global security, which could be interpreted as healthy or morbid, depending on one's point of view. It is also important to remember that during the last three years of deepening gloom and increasingly bitter antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union, not one of the innumerable agreements, understandings and protocols between the two countries on major questions of armament, spheres of influence, etc., has been violated. There have been examples of rhetorical brinkmanship, but both protagonists have been cool and restrained in action. This was most clearly shown during the Polish crisis.

Apart from their shared commitment to the preservation of peace between themselves and the avoidance of a global conflict, the two superpowers have other powerful constraints. Differences of opinion within the alliance systems on crucial strategic matters are now admitted to be major components in decision-making. The differences between the United States and her West European allies and Japan on arms deployment, economic collaboration with the Soviet Union and the solution of the world economic problems have all led to a situation in which a return to the easy certainties of the fifties is not possible.

There is no exact correspondence to this in the situation in the Eastern bloc. However, the problems posed by economic cooperation with the COMECON in the post-energy crisis environment and, more important, the continuing economic involvement of some of the socialist countries in the Western monetary system, have led to differing emphases on commonly accepted strategies and sometimes even an attempt to reject some of these strategies. The failure of Poland and Rumania to utilize Western credit effectively is shared to some extent by Yugoslavia, also outside the socialist alliance system; Hungary, on the other hand, within the system, seems to be doing well, at least in comparative terms.

In such a situation, when the Soviet Union itself is actively engaged in the search for economic and technological cooperation with the market economies, it would be difficult to enforce any policy of economic quarantine on the bloc. This is yet another reason why the situation today is much more confused, and to that extent possesses possibilities of change in a sense which could not have been imagined in the period of the first cold war.

Even more important than these difficulties within the socialist system are the problems in the triangular relationship between the Soviet Union, the United States and China. Earlier policies based on an either/or attitude, formulated during President Nixon's visit to Beijing, do not appear to be attractive enough today; there are unexpected difficulties with what appeared to be easily tractable issues like Taiwan. On the other side of the Ideological Divide, there seems to be enough reappraisal in both the socialist countries, based on their economic and political experience since the great schism took place in the early sixties, to justify a return to some sort of understanding at a low enough level, but on a definitely accepted common socialist ideology.

This brief and bald recital of incipient crises and actual ongoing conflicts in the world has, it will be noticed, left out the two most dangerous flashpoints in the globe today, the Arab-Israeli confrontation in the Middle East and the East-West tension in Europe. Both the Afghan crisis and the Iran-Iraq war have their own absolute significance, but their importance is much greater because of their links with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The involvement of the superpowers in the two developments is, in fact, integrally related to the older Middle East crisis, as represented in Israel's conflict situation with her neighbors and the new importance of the Gulf countries as a direct consequence of the energy crisis. World peace in our generation is not possible if the Palestine problem is not solved to the satisfaction of all the states and all the peoples in the area. The crises of the last three years seem to have climaxed themselves during the last few weeks in Israel's latest act of aggression and the inability or unwillingness of the United States to restrain it.

The European crisis is in one sense deeper and more serious; the failure of diplomacy here could mean a nuclear holocaust and the end of civilization as we know it. On the other hand, the very reality of this danger and the central nature of Europe to modern Western civilization and technology makes such a disaster most unlikely. Moreover, this is a crisis which has been proved over the years to be capable of quantification, organization and mutual arrangement between Moscow and Washington. That arrangement, as was suggested earlier, survived even the most bitter political exchanges in the fifties and again in the early eighties. Of the two major danger spots in the world, therefore, it would be more prudent for us to worry about the Middle East crisis in which Egypt is involved directly. India has, throughout the duration of this protracted and agonizing crisis, been fully committed to the Arab cause and is also deeply aware of the need to resolve the conflict not on the unilateral arrangements proposed by Israel, but by a general decision in which the Arab states, the great powers, Israel and the PLO are all equally involved.

II

The complexity of the international system today has been a subject of frequent comment during the last several years; nation states or groups of

nation states have never been moved by simple and isolated considerations of ideology, strategic interest or economic considerations. The three get mixed up, and there are dilemmas in many cases which make it difficult for any particular country to conform or to respond in a predictable manner to external developments at all times. The complexity is introduced primarily because there is an element of discontinuity whenever there are changes of leadership even in the most organized and institutionalized governments. Even when there is no coup d'etat, but only a change by constitutional means, there are differences of style and content. Ceylon in 1956 and Mauritius in 1982 are examples of this kind of activity. The changes of internal and external policies in Indonesia in 1965 and in Ethiopia, Liberia and Ghana in the seventies are examples of how an extraconstitutional change can lead to a change of policy, favorable or unfavorable, for one of the two alliance systems. Hence, there is a general mistrust within the smaller countries of interventionist and destabilizing attempts by the big powers. Contemporary history, however, has shown us that many of these changes are due to inadequate sensitivity to domestic deprivation and social injustice on the part of the ruling groups in the concerned state.

It is, however, interesting to note that ideology, as such, has played more of a domestic than an external role as an instrument of institutional change. We are far away from the heroic days of early revolution when rulers of post-revolutionary regimes regarded it incumbent upon them to export their philosophy and social achievements. Today, ideology becomes relevant in a negative sense as a defensive mechanism, rather than as an active motivator of policy. While this is true, it would be embarrassing for any major government not to come to the aid of an ideologically sympathetic foreign state if it is in difficulties due to external or internal revolt. This reluctant commitment to ideology would explain most of the actions of the two superpowers in those parts of the developing world where their immediate geopolitical and strategic interests are not involved. In the other case, of course, there is no reluctance to act. The reaction is immediate, effective and decisive, as in the case of Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan, Guatemala or El Salvador.

This is the situation today, but in this changing world of ours, we have sometimes seen violent shifts in commitment to specific ideologies between successive governments in the same country. There is no need to go into details. President Carter's obsession with human rights and President Reagan's insistence on supporting "authoritarian" governments against "totalitarian" revolution are examples of such discontinuity. When these, by a process of "linkage" are projected into the global arena, many of the allies of the United States find it difficult to accept the corollaries in strategy. It is these differences in detail between the U.S. and her allies which constitute one of the problems as well as the opportunities for Third World diplomacy today. In the Soviet Union also, there are bound to be problems of discontinuity when there is a change of government, even though by the very nature of the institutions concerned, these changes would be slow, labored and disguised over several years. This is what happened after the passing from the scene of Stalin and Khrushchev. Today, the Soviet leadership is much more of a collective organization, but they do have a certain narrow background in age, experience and ideological conditioning. In a more conventional sense they are also people belonging, mostly, to one small power structure, originally from the Ukraine. When these people give up their leadership, we should expect a totally unknown group to take over. The difference in outlook may not be of one, but of two generations. In such a situation, the whole basis of the Sino-

Soviet and the U.S.-Soviet relations could undergo a profound change. Such a conclusion is also borne out by the even more distorted leadership situation in China, where actual decision-making is limited to a very small number of able, but aged people, who are as much involved in fighting the battles of yesteryear as preparing for the challenges of tomorrow. Their successors would not necessarily have any commitment to the protocols and agreements entered into by their predecessors with the Soviet Union or with the United States. In other words, a pragmatic new beginning could be established, and the ensuing changes of the great power triangle are bound to affect all the countries of the world.

Apart from individual changes, there are fundamental internal problems which would express themselves in external policies. Post-revolutionary Marxism is passing through a period of self-questioning in the East, just as the welfare state in the West, predicated upon continuing economic growth at home and the perpetuation of an economically advantageous relationship with the developing world abroad, is passing through a period of qualitative change. What will emerge from this: anarchism, anomie or just plain simple conservative reaction of the old-fashioned type? It is difficult to predict. The developments in Poland are linked with the ideological problems of Western capitalism: Euro-communism in Italy, Spain and France, the persistence of the militaristic ethos in Spain, or the revival of conservatism in Britain and Scandinavia. Socialism is in some countries in an aggressive phase, but in its very success it seems to have become tamed into social democracy. China and Yugoslavia are making interesting experiments with economic management which are bound to have indirect consequences, not only on their external affiliations, but also on their domestic organization, ownership of the means of production and control of political institutions. The Soviet Union herself is not troubled as yet by dissident movements, the intensity of which brought the Polish system to a standstill. It would, however, be a highly simplistic picture of that society to think that contemporary developments in Marxist and post-Marxist thinking are not affecting the intellectuals in that society. In the altered conditions which are bound to emerge after a new and younger leadership takes over, there might emerge basic changes in Soviet society which will have far-reaching effects on the other members of the Socialist bloc.

Corresponding to these changes in the developed world, we find shallower, but more frequent and generally more effective ideological developments in the Third World. An exhaustive survey of these developments would not be very productive, because they are mostly local adaptations of Western ideologies. The emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, however, is a qualitatively different phenomenon. All assessments of strategies by individual developing countries in the Afro-Asian world, as well as by the superpowers in relation to these countries, will have to take into account this clamorous reassertion of ancient values in a powerful, relevant and effective contemporary form. Whether this is limited to Iran, or whether it will sprawl over into the neighboring countries is one of the great question marks of the next two decades. Related to this question is the success of the secular ideology, or, more accurately, the example of the practicing multireligious society, of which India and Egypt are notable examples.

Decisions in strategic matters and foreign policies are usually made by isolated decision-makers working on highly esoteric information. A new development, which has become a major factor in international relations during the last three or four years, has been the demand by ordinary people to have a share in this decision-making, particularly from the emotive angles of nuclear

disarmament and environmental purity. All types of societies with differing degrees of effectiveness in their law and order apparatus are learning to contend with popular demonstrations against many state policies. The habit of civil disobedience in the least likely societies is a new factor which has to be taken into account in this last quarter of the twentieth century.

The unilateral disarmament movement in Europe is, unlike its predecessor of the late forties and the fifties, totally free of the taint of extraterritorial links. It is, by all accounts, a grassroots movement which the local communists have joined but did not help originate. In an entirely unrelated area, the struggle of the Arabs against Israel in the occupied territories -- the militant civil disobedience of the Arabs in the West Bank -- is a reminder of the new limitations which the most arrogant state power has to recognize in the modern world. This survey, even though perfunctory, of some of these dilemmas which face the nation-state today in its policy options, is useful for appreciating some of the difficulties which all our countries are facing and will be facing in the near future. There are conflicts between regional and ideological loyalties, between sectarian and religious links, between old alliances and new economic relations. A list is not necessary, but the reactions of the Caribbean states to the Falkland developments, when contrasted with Cuba's anxious partisanship of the military dictatorship in Argentina, highlight some of these problems. We can also see the same in an infinite variety of attitudes in the case of various Arab and Muslim states to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

One fundamental ideological problem of the developing world continues to be our inability to devise a method of orderly change from inherited political institutions, which are unfair and oppressive in modern conditions, to stable working democracies representative of the people. This is a problem which each individual country has to face by itself. The overwhelming presence of the great external powers, who have a stake in continuing convenient arrangements in a post-colonial society and discouraging change because it might affect their own financial and commercial interests, is an important, but not a decisive factor. The decisive factors still continue to be domestic forces and the way they are controlled by the intelligent leadership of a particular group at a particular time. This is the reason why we see a bewildering variety of technical dictatorships acceptable to the people throughout the world. It is, however, an unsatisfactory situation, and its continuation makes it that much easier for neocolonialism in its crude, as well as its subtler forms, to be practised in our countries.

III

The picture of the international situation today, which emerges from the foregoing analysis, is a disturbing, confusing, in many ways contradictory, but by no means a hopeless one. The main features are the continuing authority of the two superpowers in an ultimate crisis and their relative impotence, both in their own alliance systems and in their economic or political constituencies, when an ultimate crisis is not seriously envisaged. In other words, many explosive developments during the last two or three years have taken place under the umbrella of the condominium but with moderate participation by the

superpowers.* In a certain sense, one can argue, adapting Machiavelli, that what the sovereign permits, he commands. In actual practice, however, many of the actions of the smaller powers are products of domestic social or economic forces, or the results of ancient feuds and local rivalries. The problem is that no one can say for certain that a particular incident would not escalate to an intolerable global level, possibly above the nuclear threshold. This is the danger with which we have to learn to live. At the same time, we have the comforting knowledge that the United Nations system has, on the whole, endured, even though it has been challenged, defied and violated by individual powers, and that the world order, as was conceived after the Second World War, continues to function. It is not only the big powers who are the beneficiaries of the U.N. system as it is now organized; the smaller powers are also beneficiaries. Their survival and prosperity depend on the rule of law in world politics. The Non-Aligned Movement, to which Egypt and India have contributed so much, is based on the theory that it is possible for the weak nations of the world to use the U.N. system against frustrations and repeated disappointments to bring about a peaceful change. When, however, change is attempted outside the U.N. system or against the U.N. principles, then the non-aligned countries have to sit up and take notice and effectively react in the only manner possible: by improving the solidarity and organizational effectiveness of the Movement and channeling it toward specific, immediate, time-bound economic and political programs.

A very brief survey of possible danger spots on the world map today will bear out the need for circumspection, planned strategy and urgent politico-economic action on the part of the Movement. In Latin America, the primary danger continues to be the inability of the indigenous societies to evolve into autonomous and fully participatory governments on a multiracial, multiclass basis, even after more than a century of technical political freedom. The contradictory roles played by the Church and the military elites in different Latin American states show that no common prescription is available. Over and above this general problem is the survival of old territorial claims which could spark, without warning, another Falklands crisis, drawing in bigger powers. The role of ideologically motivated nations of the Left and the Right, such as Cuba and Guatemala, make the Caribbean a particularly sensitive area. The problem of loyalties is also there. There is no such thing as an exclusive Latin American identity. The Caribbean nations were against Argentina and with Great Britain in the recent war, because of their nervousness about territorial claims by Venezuela and Honduras, and also because of their fear of the Cuban influence. Cuba found herself on the ideologically wrong side because of continental solidarity. These Latin American problems become much more dangerous than they would be in a continent comfortably remote from the foci of power. As the continuing problems of the Reagan administration have proved, Latin American crises tend to produce exaggerated results in U.S. politics with unforeseeable consequences everywhere.

In Africa, the territorial disputes left behind by the European empires continue to fester, and the OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement are still grappling with them. In some North African countries, like Niger and Chad, these are complicated by the fact that some of these countries possess valuable mineral resources of immediate utility to the great powers. There is also the

*Afghanistan is an exception.

impact of revolutionary doctrines from neighboring countries. These, together with chronic poverty and deprivation, make the situation in the Sahel countries fragile. There are in Western Africa, also, incipient border conflicts. They are, of course, nowhere nearly as dangerous as the territorial claims which have led to the ongoing war between Somalia and Ethiopia.

It is in the southern part of the continent, however, that the greatest danger exists. South Africa is passing through a siege psychosis. Both Angola and Namibia have been the targets of her intervention in the name of "hot pursuit." The only mitigating feature about the South African situation is that the diplomatic dialogue is continuing and that some of the frontline states, like Zambia, are trying to work out an accommodation, if not a solution. But our experience of the behavior of South Africa and Israel as members of the world community should teach us to be cautious about Pretoria's good conduct in the next decade. What we have to recognize is that South Africa is passing through a revisionist and aggressive period of policy reassessment, both at home and abroad, and that we should be prepared for illegal and extralegal activities by Pretoria to defend what she considers to be her own interests in the next decade. Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar are all ideologically unwelcome neighbors; so also are Mozambique and Angola. The recent attempt to "help" Swaziland by giving her a part of one of the homelands had two purposes: to deprive the Blacks in that territory of South African citizenship and the economic benefits which accrue from it, and also to encourage Swaziland to claim a large part of Mozambique.

The situation in the Middle East is, as has been emphasized earlier, the most immediately dangerous in the world today. Its very prominence makes it unnecessary to give a detailed analysis. One should, however, notice the single most conspicuous development over the last two years: the repeated ability of Israel to flout conventional international law, the rules of the U.N. system and popular opinion all over the world with total immunity. There is no immediate and easy solution in sight for this problem. A way will have to be found primarily from the countries directly involved, with the help of both the superpowers and the U.N. system, and with all the moral and political strength of the Non-Aligned Movement, to bring about an agreed solution to the problem of Israel's insecurity and the rights of the dispossessed people of Palestine. Here again, the direct involvement of the United States in the problem, because of the Jewish element in the U.S. population -- more particularly in the U.S. elite -- is important. A dangerous element is the continuing exclusion of the Soviet Union from the decision-making process.

The Afghanistan problem and the Iran-Iraq confrontation have their separate rationale. They are not necessarily connected with the Arab-Israeli conflict, but as the months pass by without any solution, these two crises might merge into the bigger problem toward the West, because of the presence of an entirely new major force in the field, i.e., Islamic revivalism in Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, who have been insulated up to now from physical conflict, but are vulnerable both because of their oil wells and their expatriate Shiite and Palestinian minorities. A new diaspora of the Palestinians, starting with their physical removal from Lebanon, would not alleviate the problem, but lead to its proliferation throughout the Arab world.

Until recently, there has been an absence of exclusive loyalties of the two superpowers to either of the antagonists in the Iran-Iraq war. This has been a moderating influence, but further polarization could lead to a

dangerously explosive situation, quite apart from the older familiar fears about "warm waters" and oilfields. The U.S. decision to regard the Afghan crisis almost exclusively from the point of view of the safety of the oilfields and the Soviet influence in South Yemen and Ethiopia make a direct confrontation possible. Any one of these separate reasons may not be strong enough to produce a major conflict. A combination of all of them at a historically tragic moment could well precipitate a crisis in which the whole region could be involved. This is the reason why the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole and significant members of the Movement with a proven record of moderation should do everything to prevent such a catastrophe.

South Asia and the Indian Ocean region have been directly affected by the developments in Southwest Asia. Both India and Pakistan have been able to withstand the pressures of the energy crisis, to a great extent, by their economic links with the Arab countries. The conversion of the Indian Ocean into an area of dense naval activity by the United States and the response of the Soviet Union have led to an accentuation of a process of militarization which began in the late sixties. The relations between the countries of South Asia are comparatively normal, and even where there are strong differences of view, as between India and Nepal on the "zone of peace" proposal, or between India and Pakistan about the actual details of the No War Pact, a diplomatic dialogue is going on. There is an increase in economic and cultural exchanges between the two largest countries of the region. The question of economic cooperation between the countries of South Asia is being taken up seriously by all countries. While all this is true, it is an unfortunate fact that a comparatively controlled, restrained and bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan, which was carefully being constructed by political restraint and diplomatic skill on both sides, has been disturbed. Linking the subcontinent by global and extraregional conflicts has raised the possibility of an escalating arms race, unhelpful to the development plans of both countries.

This is fraught with dangerous consequences; there are crises in the Third World of much more dangerous dimensions than merely military ones which can be anticipated, prevented or absorbed. Such crises have their origin in poverty and deprivation -- the result of centuries of domestic exploitation and foreign imperialism. The countries of the subcontinent need goodwill from all the members of the world community (particularly the "artistocrats" in that community) to progress in an orderly and peaceful manner. It is this which has been interrupted by these latest developments.

The problems in Southeast Asia between ASEAN, the Indo-Chinese countries and Northeast Asia, where Taiwan, China and the two Koreas are leading a life of uneasy and unpleasant coexistence, are also too well-known to require any detailed analysis. It is only necessary to point out that all these local conflicts derive their strength and stamina from linkages with the global antagonism between the two superpowers. This continues to be the single-most dominant problem of our age. Until 20 years ago, Europe was the sole center of this conflict in its specific military form, in its conventional and nuclear aspects. Today, the confrontation has been extended, because of technical developments, to the East also, where the Chinese and the Soviet armies are facing each other, and new military arrangements are being worked out to face the alleged Soviet threat. It is in this field that the last 18 months of the Reagan Administration have brought a wholly new and dangerous factor into the strategic situation. The idea that nuclear wars are winnable, controllable and the destruction limited to tolerable levels is now respectable doctrine. This

is something which cannot be accepted by sane people anywhere. Hiroshima and Nagasaki began in the "nice" calculation of comparative costs and lives involved in a protracted, conventional war, or an immediate nuclear end to the Pacific war. The doctrine of a nuclear deterrent against a supposedly overwhelming conventional force originated in the special circumstances of the late forties. To give it permanent validity and to include it as an option in a future global conflict has not been found acceptable by the large masses of people in Western Europe, which is, in every likely scenario, bound to be the area where theater nuclear weapons will be used.

One of the more hopeful signs in today's world is the reassertion of popular will against such dangerous policies. The announcement by the Soviet government that they will never be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict, is, in this connection, a major positive development. China made this promise at the time of her first nuclear test in 1964. It is necessary for the non-aligned world to raise its collective voice against the use of nuclear weapons of any type, anywhere, anytime.

IV

On the whole, it is a bleak, unpromising and arid international landscape which the poor countries of the world are facing today. The decisions are made by the strong or, in isolated cases, away from the self-interest of the strong, by the less weak against the weak. The conflicts at all levels are unfortunately interlinked, global considerations overrule local ones, and patron states control the actions of their clients. While this is true, we have also noticed that there is considerable maneuvering room for the lesser powers, primarily because there is today an imperfect but effective international system based upon the United Nations, its Security Council, its General Assembly and the various subsidiary agencies. The existence of these organizations and the involvement of the major powers in most of their activities make it possible to avert a crisis at the last moment. If this has not been possible, the conflict has been successfully contained early enough or kept to a low enough level that it has been tolerable to the rest of the world.

As founder-members of the Non-Aligned Movement, India and Egypt have to utilize the strength and the moral authority of the Movement within the framework of the world power system. The Movement began in its pre-institutional days as a collective campaign against colonialism; it inevitably developed later into an organization for solidarity against neocolonialist interventions of all kinds. In 1961, the problem of decolonization was on the way to a complete solution. The disappearance of the two major empires made the subsidiary ones ultimately nonviable, and the disappearance of the Portuguese empire was only a matter of time. Even here, however, it should be noted that the forces for dissolution came from the effective blending of wars of liberation and world public opinion expressed through the United Nations, having its impact on an anachronistic regime in the metropolitan country. The problems left behind by the passing of the Portuguese empire in its former colonies are contemporary ideological ones which have their roots in the social process which they share with the rest of the developing world. Of the two remaining colonies in Africa, Zimbabwe became independent two years ago -- again by a mixture of struggle and negotiation -- and we are all watching, with hope tinged with apprehension, the latest developments in the Namibia

situation.

The emergence of a large number of newly independent countries on the international scene led to the enlargement of the membership of the Non-Aligned Movement. During the last five years, it has become nearly universal as far as the developing world is concerned. Today, it is not only common sense, but a question of identity for a Third World country to belong to the Non-Aligned Movement. All newly independent countries nowadays automatically join the organization. Some who were held back for decades due to specific regional or ideological bias have now asked for and accepted membership. Such an expansion has inevitably led to an increase of contradictions and tensions within the Movement. It is suggested that this is, however, not an entirely new phenomenon. Even in 1961, we had this problem on a reduced scale. In Bandung, the precursor of the Non-Aligned Movement, the problem was acute. We have, however, over the years learned to live with it by arriving at consensus decisions on political matters, deferring to regional demands and intermeshing the program of the Movement with the actual strategy of the Group of 77 in the United Nations and the other subsidiary agencies. On disarmament, on racial discrimination, on decolonization and most of all on development, the Non-Aligned countries have lobbied effectively in the United Nations.

Because of the very structure of the United Nations and the concentration of power in the big powers, we have learned over the years to accommodate ourselves to the realities of the situation and to try to bring about changes in the world economic order by persuasion, propaganda and negotiation. In this activity, we have not denied ourselves the assistance of sympathetic groups in the developed world. The Scandinavian nations and the Netherlands, and important progressive groups in several capitalist countries have been with us in our efforts to bring about a more equitable economic system. The socialist countries, unfortunately, have detached themselves from the North-South dialogue on the plea that they are free of the original sin of imperialism. They have, however, helped us in our individual development efforts by assisting us in building up a reliable base of heavy industry and generally strengthening the economic public sector. To that extent, they have played an important role in purely bilateral terms in our economic planning. To complete the picture, we should not forget the active role played by individual developed nations in giving us bilateral assistance and the equally important large volume of assistance channeled through the global monetary institutions. We all have our serious complaints about the detailed activity of the World Bank and the IMF; there is, however, no denying the formative role they have played in the construction of our economies.

The North-South dialogue today has reached a critical stage. Countries like India and Egypt, who belong to neither end of the ideological spectrum in the Non-Aligned Movement, have to help in bringing this dialogue to a successful conclusion. In this connection, we have to do our best to persuade the Western capitalist countries, more particularly Japan, West Germany and the United States, of the need for much more understanding than they have shown of the socio-political consequences of apparently impeccable economic practices in weak, vulnerable societies. This has now become immediately topical in view of the U.S. Administration's strategy of encouraging the market economy system at the expense of public ownership. There is no simple solution to the problem, and a dialogue with the U.S., to be effective, will have to eschew simplistic dogmas and take into account the complex social and political consequences of economic policies in typical "pre-revolutionary" societies. Factors not merely

economic but also political and strategic will have to be brought to the attention of the United States and the world monetary institutions, so that a simple prescription of fiscal controls is not applied to all countries without due regard to a deprived population's tolerance limits. The important thing is to avoid irritating rhetoric of all kinds and to discover areas of mutual accommodation in an admittedly difficult period of recession and unemployment for the developed countries.

Any agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement in economic matters today should also include a specific proposal to associate the socialist countries with this dialogue. The new vulnerability experienced by the smaller socialist countries during the last two years would have led to a reappraisal in socialist thinking about the relations between the capitalist and socialist economic systems and in trade and technology interchange. Both the groups of countries have to regulate their relations with the Third World, not separately, but in an informed and constructive manner. Here again, countries like India, Egypt and Yugoslavia, with their special experience and expertise, could help in reaching new solutions and arrangements which would not exclude any individual country or group of countries.

These economic problems, however important, cannot be divorced from political and strategic ones. To the millions of people living below the poverty line, the choice of alternatives between death by nuclear annihilation or by the slow process of "disease, famine and mutual slaughter" is an unpleasant one. Equal importance has to be given to creating peace in a meaningful manner, not merely by preventing war, but by building institutional bulwarks against the forces of anarchy, both national and international. For this purpose, the Non-Aligned Movement will have to have a much more serious, detailed and sophisticated program of action in order to promote collective self-reliance between the developing countries and to increase their bargaining power. Presently, the metropolitan countries dominate. In many Third World countries there is no administrative technology or managerial infrastructure. It should be our business during the coming decades to replace these post-colonial links with vibrant, new relationships between these countries, who are so much better able to appreciate each other's problems.

Concepts like appropriate technology, technical and economic cooperation between the developing countries and collective self-reliance will have meaning only when there is a continuous monitoring of the global situation and a detailed assessment of the individual needs of the individual countries. A political secretariat for the Non-Aligned Movement would be a doubtful benefit; it would exaggerate beyond tolerable limits the ideological predilections of the country which happens to be the chairman of the conference. Whatever one calls it -- secretariat or research institute -- a permanent organization for collection of facts, coordination, research and monitoring, using the most modern computer techniques to marry the various demands in the individual countries with the existing facilities in the Third World itself, would be an essential preliminary to collective self-reliance.

It is important to note that the Non-Aligned Movement's ideology of collective self-reliance is not an exclusivist or confrontationist one. It is an attempt within the framework of the present world order to derive the maximum benefit of existing possibilities. This does not mean that we are satisfied with the present scheme of things which is grossly unfair both within

individual societies and between sovereign states. The members of the Non-Aligned Movement have, however, believed that the reform of the international system should come about through persuasion and propaganda, not through confrontation or through a struggle between groups of nations. The same approach applies to our attitude towards the rather peculiar and distorted reflection of reality which is embodied in the structure of the United Nations today. It represents the freezing of a very ephemeral state of things in 1945. Even then it was not true. For twenty years, this arrangement ignored the People's Republic of China. Today, it has no relation with the living reality of power relations within the world. The existence of the veto or the principle of unanimity makes it possible for the Israels of the world to escape justice. All this will have to be changed, but the changes will be at a rather stately pace, dictated by the "contending and colluding" interests of the great powers and the solidarity, in the face of subversion and destabilization, of the weak nations.

There are certain items which should be priorities on the agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement today:

1. the reform of the U.N. Charter;
2. the democratization of the international economic order -- specifically, the restructuring of the world monetary institutions according to more equitable principles;
3. a rational apportionment of the untapped mineral and protein resources of the seas which today only some of the advanced nations are technologically capable of exploiting: this should be based on a compromise between the right of each individual nation-state, big or small, to a lawful share of this common heritage of mankind;
4. a global program diverting at least a fraction of the national wealth now used for armaments toward development projects for individual Third World countries: these projects should include a strengthening of existing facilities and the creation of new ones for supplying financial credit and technical knowhow.

These are ambitious, but undramatic ideas. The magic of rhetoric, which infuses political grievances and historical tragedies, is lacking, but if the Non-Aligned Movement directs its vast energies to realizing these goals, we would have gone some way to beginning to solve our collective and separate difficulties.

The Impact of the Present International System
on the Non-Aligned Movement

by V. P. Dutt

Non-alignment has come to mean all things to all men. Some of the worst offenders have become its most vocal champions -- provided they can use it to bring about a change of course in foreign policy. But is there a real historical core to non-alignment, apart from the criteria or yardsticks formally laid down by the Movement's bureau? Can we identify some elements and features which gave non-alignment a habitat and a local name, if one may misuse and turn around the Shakespearean phrase? Perhaps one should begin with the negative process of rejecting what non-alignment is not.

Jawaharlal Nehru was emphatic that non-alignment was not coterminous with equidistance. He rejected the concept of maintaining a scales-like balance of relations with other countries, chiefly the big powers. He valued and asserted independent judgment, but he did not accept artificial parity in responses to the powerful countries. A former Foreign Minister of India, whom Nehru brought into his cabinet, said, at a meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee on external affairs, that he could not be so dense as to equate friend and foe -- those who sided with us and stood by us and those who generally adopted inimical stances. The concept of non-alignment could not be invoked to make India friendless and, what was worse, to lose all sense of discrimination. The fundamental interests of the country were of fundamental importance, no matter whether the country in question was Yugoslavia, Egypt or India.

Nehru and others who founded the Non-Aligned Movement invited all struggling and emerging countries of the world to join together, chiefly to retain freedom of judgment and the right of initiative and to boost the independence of Asian, African and Latin American countries. He was not prepared to preempt any stance just because it was either advocated or not advocated by one quarter or the other. Thus the right to independent judgment is one element of the hard core in the concept of non-alignment. So too, the struggle against imperialism and what Nehru called neocolonialism -- an attempt at the return of imperialism in various forms: political, and even more menacingly, economic. This was the root, the rationale, the *raison d'être* of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Yet the third kernel of non-alignment, paradoxical as it might seem, was moderation: an effort to maintain good relations with all big powers -- indeed, with as many countries as possible -- consistent with the country's national interests; building of bridges of understanding; lowering of international tensions and promotion of world peace. All three ingredients went together.

Not all the non-aligned countries, especially as the Movement expanded and became more and more diffuse, combined all three elements in any fair measure, but India did, no matter which government was in power, and if the balance tilted too far in one direction, a conscious effort was made to bring it back into more reasonable relationship. Not equidistance, not artificial equating, but, all the same, a serious effort to promote good relations (at least working relations) to the maximum extent possible, with all the major and minor

countries and powers, but without sacrificing national interests and security considerations.

Non-alignment was conceived as one answer to the setting-up of hostile military blocs and thereby dividing the world ideologically, but even more importantly, dividing it with regard to power and influence. This aggressive division was dominance by another name, by other means and through another route. Military blocs were the consequence of the cold war, instruments of pressure and global confrontation and a symbol of foreign control and intervention. It was essential, even for nominal non-alignment, to reject or abstain from military blocs of the big powers. That was the irreducible minimum.

But non-alignment was not an attempt at the creation of a new bloc. In fact, non-alignment was against any bloc-system. It is not coincidental that we refer to the non-aligned countries' struggle as the Non-Aligned Movement. That is to demarcate it from bloc-building. Non-alignment emphatically stood for the democratization of the world system, decentralization of the world power structure and democratization of international relations. Non-alignment emphatically opposed hierarchical stratification of the world structure and stood for autonomy in this international system. The Lusaka Declaration of 1970 noted:

International relations are entering a phase characterized by increasing interdependence and also by the desire of States to pursue independent policies. The democratization of international relations is therefore an imperative necessity of our time. . . .

. . . The policy of non-alignment, together with other peace-loving, democratic and progressive forces, constitutes an important and irreplaceable factor in the struggle for the freedom and independence of peoples and countries, for general peace and equal security for all States. . . for the democratization of international relations, for general and equitable cooperation, for economic development and social progress. . . .

They (the Heads of State or Government) stressed the need to develop solidarity and cooperation among all the member countries. . . with due regard for the democratic character of the Movement.

It is often overlooked that the Non-Aligned Movement has spawned a whole new historical era. The birth of new forces, the rise of new powers and the decline of some of the old ones heralded a new epoch. The very collapse of the imperialist system, the emergence of independent countries on a massive scale and the rise of socialist countries were in themselves shattering events, not equaled in earlier times.

History has seen the rise and fall of great civilizations, of great powers, and the process continues. Britain ruled the waves, but Pax Britannia had to give way to the manifest destiny of the Eagle and the Stars and Stripes. The dominance of Western Europe was replaced by the dominance of the U.S.A. Now another power, the U.S.S.R., has risen to challenge this supremacy and to

assert equality, if not superiority. Increasingly, it will not brook unilateral advantages enjoyed earlier by Western powers, nor will it accept any divine right of America and its allies to dominate the Indian Ocean, to exercise suzerainty over the Gulf, to reserve the Mediterranean all to themselves and to claim sway over the Pacific.

The United States has so far been unable and unwilling to accept parity of power with the Soviets and the logic of its implications. It rejects the idea of equality of power and hopes to revive the times when it will prevail. This gives a field day to the hawks and the "strategists" who think chiefly in terms of military preponderance and military solutions. Their calls for a tit-for-tat policy -- a policy of showdowns, of testing of will and resolve, and of the achievement of military superiority -- fall on receptive ears but cannot provide a viable framework of an alternative policy.

The U.S. quandary is sharpened by the increasing capacity of the Soviet Union to intervene in explosive situations around the globe and a willingness to make a more liberal but selective use of that capacity. The Soviets are not solidly running around to put their hand in every fire raging anywhere in the world. The general thrust of their policy remains cautious, but they have increasingly made good use of the opportunities afforded by the upsurge for change and socio-economic transformation and by the resurgence of nationalism in many areas and regions. This has given the Americans the frustrating feeling of "Prometheus bound."

The complexity of the situation is compounded by the phenomenal growth of the Non-Aligned Movement: the backbone of the developing community numbers some 120 countries, which can no longer be ordered to march about, and over many of whom the control of the big powers is either tenuous or chimerical. Despite their inner contradictions, their often differing needs, their lack of military muscle and power, and their economic backwardness, they have become some kind of force to reckon with and at least one significant factor in international affairs.

If to this complexity one adds the complex and contradictory nature of the power phenomenon, one has a virtually complete picture of the international situation today. The big powers have fast accumulated an increasingly frightening measure of military power -- the capacity for overkill, newer and more horrendous systems of weapons -- but, equally, the constraints on the use of these awesome weapons have shown no tendency to diminish. The power to destroy is there, but it cannot be used at will. Around their periphery and their security line, the big powers can often act bloody-minded, but they have lost the control over events further off and cannot apply their power wilfully.

This, however, is only one side of the picture. It is a partial view: correct, but nevertheless subject to severe limitations. The other side is the availability of a disproportionate degree of power to the big powers and their capacity to take recourse to it in certain situations. Recent events in Afghanistan, El Salvador and now Lebanon testify to this other side of the picture. The U.S.A. remains a great power and is willing and able to use that power in many situations. Indeed, it has served notice of its intention to use force wherever necessary in the name of fighting Soviet expansionism.

The big powers can apply pressure directly or function through surrogates. Recent tragic events in Lebanon are an eloquent proof of this ability to

control or influence events through client states. The blatant aggression of Israel has been made possible by the total support extended by the United States. Unfortunately, the disarray among the Arab ranks has enabled Israel, with U.S. backing, to expand its aggressive designs in West Asia and to get away with it. It would be idle to pretend that the Non-Aligned Movement has not received a set-back. The Movement never claimed military strength. But its moral voice was strong. The utter helplessness, first in the Iraq-Iran war and now in face of the Israeli aggression in Lebanon, has left a deep wound. It would take much time and effort to overcome the consequences of such helplessness.

In a way, the very success of the Movement tended to be its undoing. From 26-plus two decades ago, its membership has swollen to 96-plus. There could not be a higher testament to its pull and tug or to the fact that its rationale was being accepted by a very large majority of the world. Its very numbers have created a difficult and dangerous situation. The success has produced complex new problems. It has gained strength from diversity, but this diversity now threatens to take it to the edge of heterogeneity. The dilution of the original criteria of membership and the failure to specify some precise criteria for the admission of new members, plus the open-door policy pursued in recent years have often produced a cacophony of voices. It has become a mini-U.N.

In economic terms, too, the distance between the developed and the developing countries has grown. The developed countries possess massive economic power, but they are unable to overcome the world's economic problems and are helpless before the crisis that continues to afflict their economies. They find it excruciatingly painful to get out of the vicious circle of "stagflation." For the developing countries generally, the picture is even more dim and dismal. One section of countries, blessed with oil resources, has partially broken through the vicious circle. Yet it has not displayed the will and the capacity to come out of the economic octopus of the West.

Still another important aspect of the world scene may be noted: the resurgence of the cold war; the beating that detente has taken and the new and more alarming arms race between the two superpowers. The threat of war once again casts its evil shadow over continents and oceans. But it needs to be remembered that this instability and the breakdown of detente is really the result of the transitional nature of this era and the inability of the hitherto-dominant powers to adjust and reconcile themselves to the new realities.

In this complicated scenario only the perversely ignorant can question the imperative validity of non-alignment. True, as I have mentioned earlier, the non-aligned are more disunited than before. The very number of countries that have now flocked into the Movement makes for more diversity, diffusion and some blurring of focus. The new cold war is also having the same, if not a worse, deleterious effect as the earlier one on the unity of purpose of the non-aligned nations. The economic problems too have multiplied. But the broad nature of the role that the non-aligned should play can hardly be open to doubt.

No country can stand alone these days. Even China has sadly learned this truth, although it may be striving for various unnatural alliances. The maximum unity of the non-aligned countries is necessarily a starting point, and

persistent efforts are needed towards that direction.

It needs no clairvoyance to perceive that the more the non-aligned can act in unison, the more effective they will be. Acting individually and in isolation will lead them nowhere. But to be more effective they must firm up the hard core thrust of the Movement. In other words, what are the tasks of non-alignment even in this changing situation? The strengthening of the independence of the emerging countries, the rejection of various forms of imperialist control and influences, the striving for a new world economic order, yet at the same time endeavoring to maintain moderation, to diffuse tensions, to help the world pass through this historical phase of changing power relations and to make the transition less violent, and the finding of regional, non-aligned solutions to problems of various areas and regions should be its main goals.

A central approach now has to be the effort to encourage countries of various regions to cooperate and look for direct solutions without inviting the interference, direct or subversive, of the big powers. Faced with a grim situation in which superpower conflict is spilling over into various regions, this central approach ought to revolve around warding off or mitigating the extent of big-power intrusion and working for regional, non-aligned responses and approaches. This may not necessarily succeed everywhere or, initially, anywhere at present, but it can help advance a trend which could gradually gather momentum.

But how do Third World countries combine the struggle for independence, autonomy and liberation with the equally paramount need for peace, reduction of tensions and confidence-building steps. This is not a cliché. Today there are 50,000 atomic weapons around the globe. The world is spending one million dollars per minute on arms. A revival of detente is an emergent necessity. Yet detente should not be false, partial and at the expense of the struggling countries. It is in this complex and often contradictory situation that the Non-Aligned Movement is to rediscover its faith, its élan and its relevance.

