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**THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND ITS  
RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPE: AN ANALYSIS  
OF ITS HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY  
RELEVANCE**

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## **Abstract**

Il Movimento dei Non Allineati è emerso come un gruppo di paesi che non si allineavano con nessuno dei due blocchi opposti durante la Guerra Fredda, il blocco comunista e il blocco capitalista. Dalla sua fondazione nel 1961, il movimento ha affrontato numerose trasformazioni e sfide.

Questa tesi si propone di analizzare la rilevanza storica e contemporanea del Movimento dei Non Allineati e le sue relazioni con l'Unione Europea, concentrandosi sulle ragioni per cui questi due attori internazionali hanno avuto interessi e obiettivi comuni o dissimili, nonché su come tali relazioni si siano sviluppate nel corso degli anni. Attraverso questa analisi, questa tesi mira a contribuire a una migliore comprensione del ruolo del Movimento dei Non Allineati nella formazione della politica globale.

## **Introduction**

It was the 60's. The tension from the Cold War split Europe and the rest of the world with its Iron Curtain. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA), the superpowers of the period, are indirectly involved in many conflicts. The specter of nuclear annihilation loomed large dividing the European continent into two ideological camps. A lot of alliances were set up far beyond the boundaries of Europe and led almost the entire planet to take a stand: with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or with the Warsaw Pact.

Amid this global chessboard of alliances and rivalries, a unique phenomenon emerged: in 1961, the Non-Aligned Movement arose. Not all the countries in the world chose indeed to join one of the two blocks: 25 countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America denied any colonial incorporation in order to remain independent.

At the helm of this revolutionary endeavor were visionary leaders who would become the main characters in the transformation of international relations during that era: the Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito, the Indonesian president Kusno Sosrodihardjo Sukarno, the United Arab Republic leader Gamal Abd el-Nasser and the Indian Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru were the main actors of the revolution in international relations at that time. They sought to break free from the suffocating dichotomy of East versus West, offering a compelling alternative to the world. From the 1st to the 6th of September 1961 the movement started to take shape in the Belgrade conference, a real historical success: 25 countries around the world came together to create an alternative movement, in order to oppose colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism, marking a pivotal moment in history. In 1964, the second summit took place in El Cairo (Egypt) and this time 46 nations

joined, many of them African nations, newly independent and seeking to assert their place on the global stage.

Fast forward to the present day the legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement endures. Nowadays, countries considered as “Non-Aligned”, or against the main world powers, are 120 along with 17 observer countries, in other words more than three quarter of the countries around the world.

This thesis aims to analyze the historical and contemporary relevance of the movement and its intricate relations with Europe, focusing on the reasons why these two international actors had common or dissimilar interests and goals, as well as to trace the evolution of their interactions over the years. Through this analysis, this thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the role of the Non-Aligned Movement in shaping the contours of global politics. The research conducted for this thesis draws from a wide array of sources, both online and in print. To describe historical events, I relied on academic books that delve into the history of the movement, while for discussing theories, viewpoints and critiques I mainly used articles and speeches from a diverse range of historians, scholars, politicians and experts in international relations. To ensure precision in technical terminology, I consulted online English dictionaries.

This thesis is organized into three distinct chapters. The first chapter, titled “Historical Evolution the Non-Aligned Movement”, discusses the historical foundation and development of the movement, with a particular focus on the theory of neutrality, the influential actors who shaped its course, the contrast between capitalism and communism and the two conferences that preceded the birth of the movement itself: the Bandung conference and the Belgrade conference. The second chapter is titled “The Non-Aligned Movement and its Relations with Europe” and seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the evolution of the relationship between these two international entities, with special attention given to Yugoslavia’s role as mediator in this complex dynamic. This chapter also emphasizes the differences and similarities between the two subjects, seeking to provide an explanation of the factors that contributed to the limited interaction between them. The third chapter, titled “The New Non-Aligned Movement”, narrates the theoretical and practical evolution of the movement in the new century, it concludes with a brief discussion of its ongoing relations with Europe. The university course called “History of International Relations” provided me with the opportunity to delve deeply into the dynamics that characterized the Cold War era. Through this thesis, I aimed to further explore the neutral side, specifically, the Non-Aligned movement, in order to analyze their position and crucial role during that historical period. In essence, this thesis represents an exploration of the Non-Aligned Movement and its complex connections with Europe. By shedding light on both their historical and contemporary relevance in the ever-evolving global political landscape, this research endeavors to contribute to the understanding of the complex dynamics that have shaped the course of international relations.

# 1. Historical evolution of the Non-Aligned Movement

## 1.1 Decolonization

At the end of the Second World War, the major colonial powers at the time (United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Spain) were militarily and economically exhausted due to the conflict and they were not able to maintain the colonial occupation anymore.

As a result, the decolonization process became irreversible, despite the attempts of the colonial powers to hinder it. Principles like nationalism and freedom, coined by the same Western powers, spread so widely that international relations changed into the complete dismissal of colonialism in its every existing justification.

The wave of colonialism started in the Middle East in 1945, then shifted in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, eventually sweeping across North Africa in the 1950s (Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria) and culminating in sub-Saharan Africa in 1960, the so-called "Year of Africa".

The independence of India is regarded as an epochal turning point, gained in 1947, given the great demographic dimensions of the country and the relatively pacific method employed to achieve independence.

Completely different was the decolonization of the Far East, characterized by numerous crises and wars. Big attention is gained through the nationalization of the Suez Canal determined by the Egyptian president Gamal Abd el-Nasser in 1956, in order to explicitly demonstrate the choice of economic liberalization from the English colonizer.

The last important event of decolonization of major impact occurred in 1990 with the end of the Apartheid, the

*«policy that governed relations between South Africa's white minority and nonwhite majority for much of the latter half of the 20th century, sanctioning racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against nonwhites.»*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Apartheid, *The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 8th June 2023.

The era of global white dominance started in the 15th century started to seem permanently over, to the extent that the transition of Hong Kong and Macau to China, respectively in 1997 and 1999, or the independence of East Timor in 2002 will be considered as minor residual episodes in a historical process already over.

### Dates and events

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1944 | The English released Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from prison.  |
| 1945 | Egypt and other countries from North Africa and Middle East founded the Arab League.  |
| 1947 | Pakistan and India became independent.  |
| 1948 | Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi died assassinated. In South Africa the national-socialist party won: the apartheid started.  |
| 1949 | Mao Zedong founded the People's Republic of China. The United Nations entrusted to Italy the trusteeship of the former colony Somali.   |
| 1954 | The French army is defeated in the Dien Bien Phu fight in Vietnam: the European powers started to appear vulnerable facing the liberation wars. In Algeria, the National Front of |



|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | Liberation started the armed campaign against the French colonial government.   |
| 1955 | Twenty-nine “Non-Aligned” countries joined the Afro-Asian summit in Bandung.  |
| 1956 | The Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez canal: the French-English offense started against Egypt.  |
| 1958 | Egypt, Syria and Yemen founded the United Arab Republic, dissolved later in 1961.   |
| 1959 | The French general Charles De Gaulle officially recognized the Algerian self-determination. In Cuba, Fidel Castro took power. In the Belgian Congo, Patrice Lumumba led the revolt against Belgium. |
| 1960 | Sixteen countries of Middle Africa became independent.  |
| 1962 | Algeria became independent after eight years of war.  |
| 1966 | A summit of Third World countries took place in Havana (Cuba).  |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1970 | In Cambodia the guerilla of Khmer Rouge.  |
| 1975 | The Portuguese colonies Angola and Mozambique became independent.   |
| 1976 | The revolt of the black ghetto took place in South Africa.  |
| 1988 | In South Africa, Namibia became independent.  |
| 1990 | The abolition of Apartheid started in South Africa: Nelson Mandela, leader of the anti-Apartheid movements, is released after 26 years of prison. |
| 1994 | Palau became independent.   |
| 1997 | After 156 years of English dominance, Hong Kong returned to China.  |
| 1999 | Macau, Portuguese colony since 1957, returned to China. A referendum with the victory for independence took place in East Timor.                  |
| 2000 | The Panama Canal area returned to its country, it was former United States' property.   |

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about decolonization and conflict between 1945 and 2000, please refer to Libreria Geografica, Atlante Storico, pp. 184-185, 2019.

## 1.2 Tradition or progress?

Despite expectations, being a “Non-Aligned” country did not mean that it was a political fence sitter. Some of them were Communist states (for example Cambodia, Cuba, Laos and Vietnam) others were liberal democracies (for example India, Costa Rica and Jamaica), and others were conservative monarchies (for example Oman and Bahrain).

They did not totally reject either capitalism or communism. Their major concern was their apparent irrelevance in front of the issues that involved the whole world. All of those countries were potential victims in a future global war, even if they were neither the reason for nor a part of it.

To better understand this concern, I mention a short part of the article written by the Cuban president Fidel Castro in “Non-Aligned Movement Demands: peace and economic development”:

*«The worst of the two dilemmas corresponds to the peoples of the third world. We could be swept from the face of the earth in a war for which we do not have the slightest responsibility and in which we take no part. We could be crushed by hunger and poverty by virtue of a world economic order which was not created by us and which emerged and developed in spite of us and against us.»<sup>3</sup>*

The Third World countries represented a wide variety of countries with completely different social, economic and political realities. At the end of the Second World War, many of these countries had to face the challenge of developing their economy, of dealing with social inequalities and of consolidating their political institutions after years of foreign colonial predominance.

The framework of tradition and progress was really important in this contest because while these countries were trying to embrace the progress and modernization, at the same time they had to balance those with their cultural, social and religious traditions that had deep roots in their society.

At the time, cultural and social traditions were a source of identity and cohesion. The wealth of values, beliefs and practices handed down for generations had been nourishing the soul of these societies for decades.

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<sup>3</sup> Castro, Fidel, *Non-Aligned Movement Demands: peace and economic development*, Taylor & Francis, p. 17., 1987.

But, at the same time, the Third World countries had to concretely face poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and social inequalities. Technological progress and economic development represented the ideal tools in order to overcome those challenges.

However, progress was not supposed to be just an imitation of the Western model, and the Third World countries understood this concept very well.

Therefore, during the Cold War, many countries of the Third World tried to balance modernization and economic development with the conservation of their cultural tradition. A great example could be India after its independence, headed by its Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

The leader Nehru indeed tried to promote a developing model based on the integration between economic and technological progress and the cultural richness and diversity of India. His developing policy was also known as “democratic socialism”, it was aimed to fight against poverty and social inequality but at the same time to ensure the preservation of Indian values and traditions.

Nehru promoted education, industrialization and technological development without replicating the Western culture’s model. He fostered the maintenance of cultural traditions, like art, literature, music and dance because he considered them as core elements of the Indian national identity.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.3 Capitalism, communism or neutralism?**

Any discussion about the Non-Aligned Movement and its connections to the Cold War requires first a clear definition of the terms and problems involved.

After the Second World War, all the countries main characters of the decolonization process gained huge importance, because the struggle for national emancipation of the colonized territories found its natural accomplishment in perpetrating an independence policy in the international field. The economic and political schemes based on the logic of the Cold War were considered

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<sup>4</sup> For more information about the concept of tradition in the decolonization process, please refer to Dinkel J., *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927-1992)*, 2018.

inappropriate to solve and to meet the problems and the expectations of the emerging economies, considered dangerous for the maintenance of peace and antithetic to the establishment of different types of cooperation against the problem of underdevelopment.

Even though they claimed neutrality, many of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement had closer relations with one of the two blocs, without officially entering into it.

On one hand there was capitalism, «*an economic and political system in which property, business, and industry are controlled by private owners rather than by the state, with the purpose of making a profit*<sup>5</sup>». It was typical of the leader United States of America and all its allies: the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Canada, Italy, Japan, Australia.

Capitalism was highly criticized by Third World countries, in particular by those countries that were closer to the leftist ideology, like Cuba.

One example is Fidel Castro, the president of Cuba, that wrote:

*«The developed capitalist powers refuse to resign themselves to giving up our natural resources, raw materials, markets and cheap labor. They refuse to resign themselves to giving up the idea of no longer selling their products at ever-higher prices and paying ever-lower prices for ours. They refuse to resign themselves to ending the systematic plunder of our economies and to accepting the existence of new forms of production and distribution of the social wealth than those of their old and rotten capitalism. In sum, they refuse to resign themselves to the true national independence of the former colonies and the liberation movements of the peoples.»<sup>6</sup>*

However, the feeling towards capitalism was diversified in the Third World countries and it depended on the specific positions and experiences of each country. Still, there were some common trends that characterized the perception of capitalism by the Non-Aligned countries during the Cold War.

The largest part of the Third World countries were colonized or exploited by capitalist countries. They considered capitalism as a system that constantly perpetrated oppression, economic injustice and resources' exploitation. They

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<sup>5</sup> Cambridge dictionary, *Meaning of capitalism in English*.

<sup>6</sup> Castro, Fidel, *Non-Aligned Movement Demands: peace and economic development*, Taylor & Francis, p. 17.

believed that capitalism promoted only the dominating economic powers, allowing them to benefit from the resources and the workforce of poorer countries.

Furthermore, many of the Third World countries saw capitalism as a system that perpetrated social inequalities both on the local and global level. The unbridled economic competition and the consistent profit seeking brought to an increasing gap between wealthy and powerful people and vulnerable and poorer people.

However, these countries did not completely dismiss capitalism, they sometimes agreed or shared some of its components. As an example, many of them agreed on the fact that capitalism was somehow an useful tool in order to promote economic development and industrialization. Moreover, they saw the international trade system based on capitalism as an opportunity to access global markets, to export their own products and to import goods and technologies needed for development.

In order to better understand this dynamic, I will bring up the example of Egypt: this country maintained a Non-Aligned position during the Cold War. However, despite its socialist policies, Egypt pursued economic reforms in order to attract foreign investments and to promote the development of the key sectors for private enterprises, especially in the technological and industrial sectors.

On the other hand there was communism,

*«a political and economic doctrine that aims to replace private property and a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of at least the major means of production (for example mines, mills and factories) and the natural resources of a society.»<sup>7</sup>*

It was typical of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and East Germany.

Actually, many countries of the movement were communist countries: for example, Vietnam joined the Non-Aligned Movement right when the communist party took power in the country in 1976, after the win of the Vietnam war. Another example could be Cuba, in 1959 the Cuban president Fidel Castro established a communist

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<sup>7</sup> Dagger, Richard, Ball, Terence, *communism*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 27th June 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/communism>. Accessed 17th July 2023.

government, even though he has said multiple times that it was a socialist government, and after that joined the movement.

Communist countries joined the movement mainly because they wanted to maintain a neutral and independent position in the Cold War context. The main reason was the achievement of goals of maintenance of national sovereignty, multilateralism, disarmament, peace and economic development.

In addition, these countries considered themselves as the “Third Front” in a world divided in two opposed blocs. They hoped they could promote increasing international cooperation and that they could be recognized as independent actors in the global context. They constantly tried to influence international politics based on their specific needs and interests.

Within this framework, neutralism represented perfectly the idea of the Non-Aligned Movement. Neutralism is «*the peacetime policy of avoiding political or ideological affiliations with major power blocs*».<sup>8</sup>

However the neutralism of the Non-Aligned countries was considered a «*positive neutralism*»<sup>9</sup> because they advocated a constant political presence in the global contest, they refused to accept a world divided into two opposite blocs.

Positive neutralism was an active policy firstly developed in Southern and Western Asia, in India and especially in Indonesia. It was focused on the promotion of values like peace, cooperation, sustainable development and mutual respect of national sovereignty.

The requirements for a country to be considered Non-Aligned were outlined during the preliminary meeting for the conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961:

*«A nonaligned country should adopt an independent foreign policy based on co-existence of States with different political and social systems and on nonalignment, or should be showing a trend in favour of such a policy, and consistently support movements of national independence. Such a State must not be a member of a multilateral military alliance concluded in the context of the Great Power conflict; if it has a bilateral military agreement with a Great Power or if*

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<sup>8</sup> Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. *neutralism*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2nd June 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neutralism>. Accessed 18th July 2023.

<sup>9</sup> G. Calchi Novati, *Non allineati, Paesi*, Enciclopedia italiana, V Appendice, 1993. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paesi-non-allineati\\_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/paesi-non-allineati_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/) Accessed 18th July 2023.

*it is a member of a regional defense pact, such an agreement or pact should not be deliberately concluded in the context of the Great Power conflicts.»<sup>10</sup>*

In the 1950s, the Prime Ministers of India and China adopted the so-called “Panch Shilla” principles, the five principles of peaceful co-existence that explained why the neutralism of the Non-Aligned countries was really different from the conventional one.

The principles were:

1. *«Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty;*
2. *non-aggression;*
3. *non-interference in each other’s internal affairs;*
4. *equality and mutual benefit;*
5. *peaceful co-existence.»<sup>11</sup>*

In those years, these principles were subscribed by Laos, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Burma and Indonesia. Afterwards, the principles were indirectly accepted by all the other neutralist countries. *«The countries that subscribed to these principles were indirectly opposed to regional alliances and also denied the right to collective self-defense to nations.»<sup>12</sup>* However, that implied some elements that were not considered ethical and coherent with the idea of Non-Alignment, for example the fact that they denied regional alliances but simultaneously regional alliances were meant to safeguard international peace.

The situation changed with the Bandung conference, where the Panch Shilla principles were one of the main topics.

#### **1.4 Before the Bandung conference: the Asian Relations conferences**

A decade before the first official meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, namely from 23th March to 2nd April 1947, the Indian president Jawaharlal Nehru organized and led the first Asian Relations conference in New Delhi. His goal was to bring together all the leading and important men and women of Asia on an

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<sup>10</sup> Fischer, Thomas, et al. “Introduction: Neutrality and Nonalignment in World Politics during the Cold War.” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2016, p. 9, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26925637>. Accessed 4 Sept. 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Regional Alliances, *“Panchshila” and Bandung*, Pakistan Horizon, September 1956.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem* Regional Alliances, *“Panchshila” and Bandung*, Pakistan Horizon, September 1956.



exclusive platform in order to analyze common problems to the people of the continent, focusing the attention on cultural, social and economic issues.

Attended by the representatives and delegates of 28 different countries, this conference was historically remembered for being the first big conference organized specifically and only for Asian countries.

Since the conference was a “non-political” one, the participants did not adopt any resolutions at the end of it.

The topics that were examined were:

1. *«National Movements for Freedom;*
2. *Racial Problems;*
3. *Migration;*
4. *Transition from Colonial to National Economy;*
5. *Agricultural Reconstruction and Industrial Development;*
6. *Labour and Social Services;*
7. *Cultural Problems;*
8. *Status of Women and Women’s Movements.»*<sup>13</sup>

The discussions concerned mainly the scientific research area. Many countries stressed the need for reliable scientific equipment, in order to face the possible new war caused by the disputes between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Preceding the Bandung conference, in January 1949 another Asian Relations Conference was held in order to discuss and deal with the bad situation of Indonesia, which at the time was hardly fighting for independence from the Netherlands. Delegates and representatives of 19 countries participated in the conference.

Unlike the first conference, at the end of the second one the participants adopted an official resolution that targeted the promotion of consultation and cooperation of the participating countries within the framework of the United Nations’ organization.

Five years later, one year before the Bandung conference, the Prime Ministers of Ceylon, Burma, Pakistan, India and Indonesia met at the Colombo Powers Conference, held in Colombo. On this occasion, Indonesia proposed to organize a big conference of both Asian and African countries: the Bandung conference.

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<sup>13</sup> McCallum, J. A. “*The Asian Relations Conference.*” *The Australian Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1947, pp. 14, JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20631455>. Accessed 29 Aug. 2023.

## **1.5 The Middle Way: the Bandung conference**

From the 18th to the 24th April 1955 the 29 main leaders, representing more than half of the global population, of the Third World countries met up in Indonesia for the Bandung conference, also remembered as the Afro-Asian conference. The choice of the Bandung city as headquarter was strategic, because it was located in a central position compared to the participating countries. The conference was jointly organized by Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma and India.

It must be pointed out the fact that, at the time of the meeting, much of the Global South was still under European colonial control, namely across Africa only six countries were already independent.

The schedule of the conference included plenary sessions, business meetings and round table discussions over a wide range of topics, including peace and international security, colonialism, cultural cooperation and economic development.

The participating countries were:

1. Afghanistan;
2. Burma (current Myanmar);
3. Ceylon (current Sri Lanka);
4. Cambodia;
5. Cyprus;
6. United Arab Republic (union between Egypt and Syria, today know as Egypt);
7. Ethiopia;
8. Ghana;
9. Guinea;
10. India;
11. Indonesia;
12. Iran;
13. Iraq;

14. Japan;
15. Jordan;
16. Laos;
17. Lebanon;
18. Liberia;
19. Libya;
20. Nepal;
21. Pakistan;
22. People's Republic of China;
23. The Philippines;
24. Saudi Arabia;
25. Sudan;
26. Syria;
27. Turkey;
28. North Vietnam (Vietnam at the time);
29. South Vietnam (Vietnam at the time);
30. Yemen.<sup>14</sup>

The conference officially aimed to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation. *The main topic was the opposition to colonialism and neocolonialism. Through international cooperation, the future members of the Non-Aligned Movement, especially the dominant large countries (like Yugoslavia, Egypt, Indonesia and India) wanted to increase their influence in international affairs.*<sup>15</sup>

Through the conference, it was pointed out the fact that the U.S. and the USSR's policies were producing nothing but underdevelopment.

At the end of the conference, on 24th April 1955, the participating countries unanimously adopted the "Declaration on Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation". It was a ten-point declaration that integrated the principles of the

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<sup>14</sup> For more information about the Non-Aligned Movement's structure, please refer to Dinkel J., *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927-1992)*, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> M. Lorenz, Luthi, *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War, 1961-1973*, *Journal of Cold War studies*, October 2016, p.99.

United Nations charter, the above-mentioned Nehru's Five Principles and Seven Principles put forward by Pakistan, the so-called "Seven Pillars of Peace".<sup>16</sup>

The ten points were:

1. *Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;*
2. *respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations;*
3. *recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small;*
4. *abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country;*
5. *respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations;*
6. *a) abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers;*  
*(b) abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries;*
7. *refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country;*
8. *settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations;*
9. *promotion of mutual interests and co-operation;*
10. *respect for justice and international obligations.*<sup>17</sup>

The 10-points reflected the values of independence, peace, social justice and cooperation among Third World countries. They also highlighted the importance of mutual respect and of the fight against colonialism and imperialism.

It provided a common guideline for the economic and political cooperation of the Non-Aligned countries, demonstrating a new desire to work together in order to face global challenges.

The political impact of the conference and its declaration was massive. Following 1955, people began for the first time to talk and discuss about the Non-Aligned perspective. The birth of third "worldism" pride occurred. The idea of the Third World emerged, but it has also emerged the idea of a real Third Bloc, a bloc of the Non-Aligned countries. For the first time, the world was divided into three parts.

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<sup>16</sup> Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "*Bandung Conference*". Encyclopedia Britannica, 11 May. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Bandung-Conference>. Accessed 24th July 2023.

<sup>17</sup>Bandung Spirit, *Bandung Principles*, 24th April 2010, <https://bandungspirit.org/spip.php?article 99>. Accessed 24th July 2023.

Indeed, the conference was attended by a huge number of journalists and correspondents from international media.

The conference contributed to the creation of real solidarity among the Third World countries, forums were created in order to meet, discuss and face common challenges, including the promotion of human rights and equality.

The biggest effect of the conference was the huge contribution to the decolonization process, it indeed actively supported the process in the rest of the world, providing political and economic support to those countries that were seeking independence for a long time.

Although the conference was really praised for bringing solidarity among Third World countries, it was highly criticized due to various elements: first of all, due to the fact that it was addressed to only africans and asian countries, it excluded a lot of those states that were still under colonial control, causing an important lack of representation. Then, the conference faced a lot of limits in practical action terms, many critics claimed that the conference did not convert its declaration and shared principles into practical actions. This could be because of the limited financial and political resources of the participating countries.

Furthermore, even though it has never been officially confirmed, many critics claimed that the conference was influenced by foreign powers or by specific political interests of some of the participants. One practical example could be the fact that some critics argued that the United States of America tried to put pressure on Indonesia, the host country of the conference, in order to discourage the participation of some communist countries at the conference or to influence the agenda aiming to favor the United States' interests.

Speaking of foreign powers, the conference was viewed with some concern by the Western countries, mainly because of the possibility that it could strengthen the political and economic influence of the Asian and African countries and, at the same time, weaken the colonial dominance and the hegemony of the Western countries.

The reaction of the Western countries highlighted the tensions and the challenges of the Cold War and it influenced how the conference was seen on the global level.

However, it should be emphasized the fact that the Bandung conference was a really complex event characterized by different political dynamics and interests at stake.

It is important to understand the fact that these critics and controversies are needed in order to have a more complete vision of the historical event. These aspects prove the fact that, just like many other international initiatives, there is always space for debates and considerations of its implications and its long-term consequences.

Moreover, the Bandung's conference legacy continued beyond the 1955 official event: several participating countries continued to hold discussions and meetings to further promote the principles of solidarity, peaceful coexistence and mutual cooperation, culminating in the Belgrade conference of 1961.<sup>18</sup>

## **1.6 The main characters: the Third World**

The word "Third World" was originally coined during the Cold War in order to identify all those countries that did not take part in any of the two blocs of the main powers at the time: the Western and the Eastern bloc, also known as respectively "First World" and "Second World".

The Non-Aligned Movement was an initiative created during the Cold War, specifically the idea was born during the Bandung conference. As already mentioned, the main goal was to promote cooperation among the Third World countries, without taking an official side to any of the two blocs.

In the context of the Non-Aligned Movement, some main actors had a meaningful impact on its evolution: first of all, one of the most influential actors was Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime minister of India from 1947 to 1964 and co-founder of the movement. He played a really important role in promoting sustainable development, political neutralism and cooperation among Third World countries, inspiring many other leaders of the movement.

Before the Bandung conference, namely on 7th September 1946 he said:

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<sup>18</sup> For more information about the Bandung conference, please refer to Lee C., *Making a world after empire: the Bandung moment and its political afterlives*, 2010.

“We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale”.<sup>19</sup>

He was a big supporter of the right of the nations to choose its own way of development and take its decisions independently, without pressure from foreign powers. He was also a big supporter of the idea of pacific coexistence, he tried to establish friendly relations with countries characterized by different ideologies and to favor economic and cultural cooperation. Nehru continued to play a really important role in the Non-Aligned Movement until his death in 1964.

Another key actor of the new Non-Aligned Movement was Gamal Abdel Nasser, Prime minister of Egypt in 1964 and President from 1956 to 1970. His charisma and political influence were crucial in order to guide the movement towards the fight against colonialism and imperialism. Nasser raised the issue about national sovereignty and the need to erase the foreign domain. One crucial moment of his leadership and commitment towards the Non-Aligned Movement was the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, shortly after the end of the conference. In response to the joint invasion of Egypt from the United Kingdom and France against the Suez Canal, Nasser received huge international support, mainly from Third World countries that saw the invasion as an attempt to endure the colonial hegemony. Indeed, the Suez crisis strengthened Nasser’s position as a symbol of resistance against foreign interference. His commitment has given a permanent mark in the history of international politics.

One more leading actor in the new Non-Aligned Movement was Josip Broz Tito, president of Yugoslavia from 1953 to 1980.<sup>20</sup> He was known for his independent foreign policy and for his refusal to submit to the super powers’ pressures, despite the challenges and threats that Yugoslavia had to face during those years. In the context of the Bandung conference, he highlighted many times the importance of an independent foreign policy, of the national self-determination and of the sovereignty of peoples, encouraging the participating countries to come together

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<sup>19</sup> *Jawaharlal Nehru*, *India Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1985, p. 74, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45072023>. Accessed 29 Aug. 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Tito, Josip Broz, *In Mental Maps in the Early Cold War Era, 1945–68*, Perovic, 2011. p. 145.

in order to endure national sovereignty. The vision was reflected in his approach to domestic politics in Yugoslavia, a country characterized by different ethnic groups and nationalities where he tried to maintain the balance through *“the Yugoslav path to socialism”*.<sup>21</sup> Tito led indirectly the Non-Aligned Movement until his death in 1980, his leadership was valuable for the history of independence of the Third World countries.

Before the Belgrade conference, in 1961, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Josip Broz Tito were the three main characters of the Non-Aligned Movement. These leaders were already known as authoritative promoters of the movement, each of them had its own vision in order to protect and promote the Third World's interests. These three leaders continued to shape the movement, also after the Belgrade conference, spreading independence, social justice and equality among nations and creating a new political power on the international scene.

Tito, Nasser and Nehru were not the only important actors, as the Bandung Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement also included many other significant states and leaders, including:

- Kusno Sosrodihardjo, better known as Sukarno, the president of Indonesia, as the main organizer of the conference, he was acknowledged for enforcing the unity among the participating countries and for promoting a vision of a united Asia and Third World;
- Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana and one of the most important Pan-African leaders, during the conference he actively promoted the unity among African countries;
- Julius Nyerere, first president of Tanzania, he constantly promoted equality among nations, social justice and sustainable development;
- Gemal Salem, member of the Egyptian Free Officers who led the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 and another representative of Egypt during the conference, his involvement reflected the importance that Egypt gave to the movement and to the fight against colonialism and imperialism.

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<sup>21</sup> Ivešić, T, . *The Yugoslav National Idea Under Socialism: What Happens When a Soft Nation-Building Project Is Abandoned?*, p. 150.



These leaders and states, along with many others, played an essential role in shaping the Non-Aligned Movement idea and promoting independence, peace and cooperation among Third World countries. The Bandung conference provided an important platform for dialogue and networking among these key figures, thereby creating a lasting impact on international politics.

### **1.7 Belgrade: the 1961 Non-Aligned conference**

From the 1st to the 6th of September 1961 25 countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement on four continents joined the Belgrade conference. The conference took place in Belgrad, in the Yugoslavian Parliament, hosted by Josip Broz Tito, one of the most relevant and important characters in the movement. Among the participants there were leaders and delegates from different parts of the world, representing Africa, Asia, South America, and other countries around the globe.

The participating countries were:

1. Afghanistan;
2. Burma (current Myanmar);
3. Ceylon (current Sri Lanka);
4. United Arab Republic (union between Egypt and Syria, today known as Egypt);
5. Ethiopia;
6. Ghana;
7. Guinea;
8. India;
9. Indonesia;
10. Iraq;
11. Yugoslavia;
12. Liberia;
13. Nepal;

14. North Yemen (current Yemen);
15. South Yemen (current Yemen);
16. Algeria;
17. Morocco;
18. Tunisia;
19. Libya;
20. Argentina;
21. Bolivia;
22. Brazil;
23. Chile;
24. Colombia;
25. Mexico;
26. Venezuela.<sup>22</sup>

The Belgrade conference was the first official meeting of the leaders of the Non-Aligned countries and it played a crucial role in the definition of the ideology and of the goals of the movement.

The participating countries were all drawn to Belgrade by one desire: to appeal to the world to join the common struggle for the preservation of peace.

During the meeting, the participating countries discussed crucial issues regarding peace, security, economic development and national independence. It highlighted the importance of resistance against imperialism, neocolonialism and adoption of a neutrality policy in order to not be forced to take side to one of the two dominant blocs during the Cold War.

The Belgrade Conference was a significant step for the Non-Aligned Movement, it helped to solidify the group's identity as a relevant voice in international politics during the Cold War and beyond.

Apart from the Cold War and decolonization issues, during the conference the representative members participating to the conference had to deal with other challenges in that time international relations, including:

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<sup>22</sup> For more information about the Non-Aligned Movement's structure, please refer to Dinkel J., *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927-1992)*, 2018.

- the Berlin crisis, the capital of Germany was split among the four winning powers of the Second World War (United States of America, United Kingdom, France and Soviet Union), becoming a focal spot of the tensions between West and East and culminating in 1961 with the construction of the Berlin wall that divided the capital in two parts, symbolizing perfectly the Cold War;
- the nuclear arms race, the race developed between 1950s and 1960s, both U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. developed increasingly powerful nuclear armories bringing an alarming global instability and the chance of a real nuclear war;
- the Cuban crisis, in 1962 the Soviet Union secretly set nuclear missiles in Cuba, just a few kilometers from the United States' coast, bringing the world on the edge of a possible nuclear war, the situation was fixed through negotiations between U.S.A. and the Soviet Union.

The delegates assembled in the conference hall decided that they had to give immediate attention and discuss the following questions:

- *the general situation in the world;*
- *the establishment and strengthening of international peace and security;*
- *respect for the rights of Nations to self-determination;*
- *the struggle against imperialism;*
- *liquidation of colonialism and neocolonialism;*
- *respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs;*
- *racial discrimination and the policy of Apartheid;*
- *general and complete disarmament;*
- *the bending of nuclear experiments;*
- *maintenance of military bases on foreign territory;*
- *peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems;*
- *the role and structure of the United Nations and the application of its resolutions;*
- *unequal economic development;*
- *the improvement of international economic and technical cooperation.*<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, in order to demonstrate Non-Aligned neutralism, the activity of the delegates was marked in a peaceful and symbolic way: each head of delegation

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<sup>23</sup> Melchionni, Maria Grazia, La Conferenza Dei Paesi Non Allineati a Belgrado." Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali, 1961, pp. 596-597. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42735098>. Accessed 31 August. 2023.

planted a tree in the new park in front of the building of the Federal Executive Council.

Both in the Bandung conference and in the Belgrade conference the leaders Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavia), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt) and Jawaharlal Nehru (India) played the most important role.

The image below is considered a symbol of the Belgrade conference, in which we can see the three leaders speaking animatedly during the meeting. (See figure 1). The three leaders still nowadays are considered as symbols and spokesmen of the Non-Aligned Movement, they dedicated large part of their political life to the promotion and consolidation of the movement so that Yugoslavia, Egypt and India played a relevant role in the movement. They mainly took care of facilitating the dialogue among the participating countries and of promoting the independence of those countries still under West or East blocs' control. <sup>24</sup>

**Figure 1: Portrait of Josip Broz Tito, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Jawaharlal Nehru at the Belgrade Conference, 1961.**



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<sup>24</sup> For more information about the Belgrade conference, please refer to Melchionni, Maria Grazia, *La Conferenza Dei Paesi Non Allineati a Belgrado*.

<sup>25</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru at the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations held in Belgrade September 1961 with Nasser and Tito, September 1961.

At its end, the Belgrade Conference produced several final documents and declarations.

On the fifth day the delegates met one more time to approve and adopt unanimously the “*Statement on the Dangers of War and an Appeal for Peace*” and “*Declaration of the Head of States and Government of the Non-Aligned*”<sup>26</sup>, both documents represented the founding statements of the Non-Aligned Movement, in which the participating countries promised commitment in maintaining independence, neutralism and non-alignment in the Cold War contest, additionally they highlighted the importance of pursuing a peace and international cooperation policy and of solving conflicts in a peaceful way.

Subsequently, the participating countries adopted the “Belgrade Action Program”, an important document that outlined the guidelines for the future actions of the Non-Aligned countries, encompassing themes related to peace and international security, nuclear disarmament, respect of human rights, economic and social development and international cooperation. One example of an action contained in the Belgrade Action Program is “*Promoting Economic Cooperation and Development among Non-Aligned countries*”<sup>27</sup>, meaning that Non-Aligned countries would work towards enhancing economic development and cooperation among themselves, involving actions like investment, trade promotion and technology transfer.

Finally, the participating countries adopted the “Bandung principles”, previously established during the 1955 Bandung conference but reaffirmed and confirmed during the Belgrade meetings.

As well as the Bandung one, the Belgrade conference had a massive impact in shaping international relations in the 1960s.

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<sup>26</sup> Melchionni, Maria Grazia, *La conferenza dei Paesi non allineati a Belgrado*, Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Ottobre-Dicembre 1961), pp. 595, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42735098>, accessed: 2nd August 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Ancic, Ivana, . "Belgrade, The 1961 Non-Aligned Conference." Global South Studies: A Collective Publication with The Global South, August 2017.

First of all, it enforced the so-called *South-South cooperation*<sup>28</sup>, by stimulating the exchange of experiences, technologies and resources and fostering economic and social development among the Third World countries.

Secondly, it strengthened the advocacy for peace and disarmament, creating a new option characterized by the rejection of war and armed conflicts, the seek of peaceful solutions to disputes and the strive to avoid military and nuclear competition.

Last but not least, the Belgrade conference brought to a fortification of the national and cultural diversity of the participating countries, leading to a greater awareness of autonomy and cultural diversity among the involved countries, encouraging mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member states.

Consequently, the Belgrade conference had a significant impact in shaping global politics. However, it also faced criticism from various quarters, including complaints about lack of cohesion and internal divergences, caused by the presence of a diverse array of nations with differing political and economic stances, facilitating the presence of internal disagreements.

Just like the Bandung conference, the Belgrade conference contended a lack of actual neutrality and effectiveness of actions, many critics argued that the self-proclaimed "Non-Alignment" of the participating countries was more symbolic than genuine, considering that some countries, despite claiming neutrality, were effectively aligned with one superpower. That may be caused by the presence of internal issues in individual countries, some critics claimed that certain Non-Aligned countries' governments were too authoritarian or violated human rights, leading to questions about the consistency between their declared positions and actual actions.

Despite these criticisms, the Non-Aligned Movement continued to exist, playing a significant role in providing a platform for developing or underdeveloped countries to unite and cooperate on common issues while promoting peace, cooperation, and self-determination.

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<sup>28</sup> Cabana, Silvia Lopez, Chronology and History of South-South cooperation, 2014, p. 5.

In conclusion, the Belgrade conference left a lasting impact on the international relations' context, marking the official foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement. The choice of the word "movement" instead of "organization" was due to the severe bureaucratic implications associated with a normal international organization.

The conference aimed to emphasize and spread the principles of sovereignty, equality among nations and territorial integrity while promoting peace, global security and nuclear disarmament. As a result, it provided a united voice for countries fighting for autonomy and cultural identity while challenging the traditional power dynamics of the Cold War.

The Belgrade conference's legacy served as a poignant reminder of the significance in forming alliances, pursuing peaceful resolutions and safeguarding the interests of nations aspiring to chart their own course, independent from the influence of major world powers.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> For more information about the Belgrade conference, please refer to Melchionni, Maria Grazia, *La Conferenza Dei Paesi Non Allineati a Belgrado*.

## **2. The Non-Aligned Movement and its relationship with the Europe**

### **2.1 At the beginning of the European Community and the Non-Aligned Movement**

During the Cold War, two important international initiatives emerged as a result of two different views and goals.

On one hand, there was the already mentioned Non-Aligned Movement, a group of countries that tried to maintain a neutral position in the conflict. On the other hand, there was the newly born European Community, an organization that aimed to promote economic and political cooperation among the European nations.

Even though they faced the Cold War situation in different ways, both the initiatives had an important impact on the geopolitical global dynamics in the second half of the 20th century.

In the first part of the 1950s, the young European Community started to take its initial steps and began forming its official organization. People around the world tried to understand how France and Germany, enemies for a long time, were getting closer.

While countries in Central and Eastern Europe were still under the Communist control, six Western European nations, namely West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, decided to shape together their own future and expectations. They started to explore new ways of working together in specific areas that could lead to bigger collaborations in the near future. The main interest areas were at first transportation, raw materials, public health and farming. In order to better understand the first goals of the newly born European Community, I will mention the 9th May 1950's declaration of Robert Schuman, the French foreign minister who drew up the European integration project. It explained how Europe was formed and what were its initial goals and steps:

*«World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.*



*The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. In taking upon herself for more than 20 years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace. A united Europe was not achieved and we had war.*

*Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity. The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. Any action taken must in the first place concern these two countries.*

*With this aim in view, the French Government proposes that action be taken immediately on one limited but decisive point :*

*It proposes that Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe.*

*The pooling of coal and steel production should immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims.*

*The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible. The setting up of this powerful productive unit, open to all countries willing to take part and bound ultimately to provide all the member countries with the basic elements of industrial production on the same terms, will lay a true foundation for their economic unification.*

*This production will be offered to the world as a whole without distinction or exception, with the aim of contributing to raising living standards and to promoting peaceful achievements. With increased resources Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent.*

*In this way, there will be realized simply and speedily that fusion of interest which is indispensable to the establishment of a common economic system; it may be the leaven from which may grow a wider and deeper community between countries long opposed to one another by sanguinary divisions.*

*By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.*

*To promote the realization of the objectives defined, the French Government is ready to open negotiations on the following bases :*

*The task with which this common High Authority will be charged will be that of securing in the shortest possible time the modernization of production and the improvement of its quality; the supply of coal and steel on identical terms to the French en German markets, as well as to the markets of other member countries; the development in common of exports to other countries; the equalization and improvement of the living conditions of workers in these industries.*

*To achieve these objectives, starting from the very different conditions in which the production of member countries is at present situated, it is proposed that certain transitional measures should be instituted, such as the application of a production and investment plan, the establishment of compensating machinery for equating prices, and the creation of a restructuring fund to facilitate the rationalization of production. The movement of coal and steel between member countries will immediately be freed from all customs duty, and will not be affected by differential transport rates. Conditions will gradually be created which will spontaneously provide for the more rational distribution of production at the highest level of productivity.*

*In contrast to international cartels, which tend to impose restrictive practices on distribution and the exploitation of national markets, and to maintain high profits, the organization will ensure the fusion of markets and the expansion of production.*

*The essential principles and undertakings defined above will be the subject of a treaty signed between the States and submitted for the ratification of their parliaments. The negotiations required to settle details of applications will be undertaken with the help of an arbitrator appointed by common agreement. He will be entrusted with the task of seeing that the agreements reached conform with the principles laid down, and, in the event of a deadlock, he will decide what solution is to be adopted. The common High Authority entrusted with the management of the scheme will be composed of independent persons appointed by the governments, giving equal representation. A chairman will be chosen by common agreement between the governments. The authority's decisions will be enforceable in France, Germany and other member countries. Appropriate measures will be provided for means of appeal against the decisions of the authority.*

*A representative of the United Nations will be accredited to the authority, and will be instructed to make a public report to the United Nations twice yearly, giving an account of the working of the new organization, particularly as concerns the safeguarding of its objectives.*

*The institution of the High Authority will in no way prejudice the methods of ownership of enterprises. In the exercise of its functions, the common High Authority will take into account the powers conferred upon the International Ruhr*

*Authority and the obligations of all kinds imposed upon Germany, so long these remain in force.»<sup>30</sup>*

To sum up, this declaration highlighted the importance of joint and creative efforts proportional to the threats that endangered world peace. Robert Schuman said that an unified and organized Europe could contribute to the maintenance of peaceful relations. While the declaration focused on the integration between France and Germany, this drew attention to the concept of solidarity among nations, which was a key element for the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War too.

The key idea of the declaration was that the economic cooperation, in this case through the share of coal and steel production, could make it impossible to think about a possible war between these nations. This concept reminds me of the Non-Aligned Movement's efforts in order to promote neutrality and cooperation among nations as a way to avoid global conflicts.

Even though this declaration focused mainly on Europe, the goal of promoting peace through economic cooperation and elimination of deep divisions firmly recalled the Non-Aligned Movement ideals.

Furthermore, the declaration promoted the sharing of resources in order to improve life standards and to promote peaceful results, coinciding with the desire of the Non-Aligned countries to develop economically in an independent way and to fight against poverty. Also the reference to the United Nations' representative in charge of supervising the organization's functioning recalled the importance of accountability and transparency, values shared also by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. Both initiatives aimed to promote peace through international cooperation and the elimination of historical divisions among nations, focusing on key elements like transparency and accountability.

In essence, Schuman's declaration shared key conceptual similarities with the Non-Aligned Movement's ideals, particularly in their shared commitment to advancing peace through international cooperation and the dissolution of historical divisions among nations. These parallel ideals illuminated a path towards a more

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<sup>30</sup> Schuman, Robert, *Declaration of 9 May 1950*, 1950, retrieved from <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/declaration-of-9-may-1950>.

peaceful and interconnected world during a tumultuous period in the history of international relations.

## **2.2 Europe after the Belgrade conference and the Helsinki process**

At the end of the Belgrade conference, tensions stemming from the Cold War remained remarkably high. Nevertheless, the 1960s marked the early stages of a shift in Europe's role within the context of the Cold War, a portion of this change was brought by the indirect influence of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the 1960s, Europe and the Non-Aligned Movement started somehow to follow the same path, both circling around the concept of human rights based on the 1946 United Nations' charter.

In that period Europe, overwhelmed by the tensions caused by the rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union, started to feel the need to act in order to improve international relations and to exit from the Cold War circle. The countries of the European Economic Community (EEC), France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg, agreed to create a new distinct entity in the international affairs field, just as the Non-Aligned Movement did a few years before.

At the beginning of and during all the 1960s, Europe, as the European Economic Community, started to embrace new goals and a new vision based on the reduction of tensions, the promotion of a dialogue in order to solve common challenges, the respect of human rights, the economic and cultural openness and the evolution of international relations.

This new vision brought, in 1975, to the adoption of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference and its "Helsinki Principles".

The Helsinki Final Act, adopted on 1st August 1975, was divided into the so-called "Three Baskets". The first one, which is the one we will pay attention to, included ten principles regarding *«political and military issues, territorial integrity, the*

*definition of borders, peaceful settlement of disputes and the implementation of confidence building measures between opposing militaries»<sup>31</sup>.*

The ten Helsinki principles regarding security in Europe were:

1. *«Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty;*
2. *refraining from the threat or use of force;*
3. *inviolability of frontiers;*
4. *territorial integrity of States;*
5. *peaceful settlement of disputes;*
6. *non-intervention in internal affairs;*
7. *respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief;*
8. *equal rights and self-determination of peoples;*
9. *cooperation among States;*
10. *fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law».*<sup>32</sup>

By carefully analyzing the content of the above-mentioned Helsinki Principles and of the Declaration on Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation of the Bandung conference mentioned in the first chapter, I can observe that there are some similarities.

First of all, both the documents highlighted the importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity, including indirectly the right to neutrality, which we already know being fundamental for the Non-Aligned countries but at the same time gaining importance towards Europe between the 1960s and the 1970s.

Second of all, both documents prioritized the principle of “Non-Intervention in Internal Affairs” meaning that every State has the right to conduct its own affairs without interference coming from outside.

Third of all, both documents underscored the importance of respecting human rights, based on the UN charter model, placing them at the very heart of their international relations policy.

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<sup>31</sup> Helsinki Final Act, 1975, Office of The Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/helsinki#:~:text=The%20Helsinki%20Final%20Act%20dealt,confidence%20building%20measures%20between%20opposing>, accessed 25th August 2023.

<sup>32</sup> *Helsinki Decalogue (1 August 1975)*, OSCE. Documents 1973-1997, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Vienna, [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/helsinki\\_decologue\\_1\\_august\\_1975-en-1bccd494-0f57-4816-ad18-6aaba4d73d56.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/helsinki_decologue_1_august_1975-en-1bccd494-0f57-4816-ad18-6aaba4d73d56.html) accessed 25th August 2023.

As a result, it can be said that the 1955 Declaration on Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation served as a kind of influence for the 1970s' Europe and laid the foundation for what would later be adopted as the Helsinki Principles.

Therefore, Europe with its Helsinki Principle and the Non-Aligned Movement were both linked to the efforts to promote peace and international cooperation and to overcome global divisions during the Cold War. However, it must be clarified that the two actors had separate roots and slightly different goals.

The connection between the Helsinki Principles and the Non-Aligned Movement lied on the fact that both organizations tried to create spaces for dialogue, cooperation and reduction of tensions during the Cold War, with different perspectives and approaches. While the Helsinki Principles primarily involved European and North American countries, the Non-Aligned Movement engaged with developing countries. Both movements reflected the desider to overcome ideological divisions and promote greater international stability and peace.

During the Helsinki process and the elaboration of the Final Act, European countries and the Non-Aligned countries were involved in many discussions regarding security, economic cooperation and human rights. Even though the Helsinki process was focused mainly on the East-West Europe division, the participation of the Non-Aligned countries influenced the international dynamics.

### **2.3 Introduction to the European Community and the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War**

As I already mentioned, the European Community was founded in order to promote economic and political cooperation among European nations. During the Cold War, many member states of the European Community were located in the Western part, a lot of them officially allied with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Despite this, the European Community tried to maintain a certain independence from the superpowers and to balance its economic commitment with relatively independent foreign affairs.

On the other hand, the Non-Aligned Movement emerged as a result of global polarization during the Cold War. These nations did not want to take sides neither to the United States nor the Soviet Union and tried to maintain a neutral position. The Non-Aligned group sustained the need of preservation of national independence, of promotion of nuclear disarmament and of facing the colonialism issue. These countries worked together in order to promote dialogue, diplomacy and cooperation among nations as a way of avoiding more conflicts.

While the European Community tried to develop economic and political relationships among Western Europe countries, trying to maintain a relatively independent position to the Cold War's blocs, the Non-Aligned Movement tried to avoid taking side to the superpowers and to promote a neutral perspective and cooperation among developing countries. The European Community mostly wanted to cooperate economically and politically in Western Europe, but the Non-Aligned Movement had a bigger vision in mind: the movement aimed to bring together countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America and focus on issues like ending colonialism, reducing nuclear weapons and making the world more fair for everyone.

Both organizations tried to surf between the challenges and the pressure coming from the Cold War in a different way, but with the common objective of avoiding big conflict and promoting peace.<sup>33</sup>

## **2.4 European neutrality**

Neutrality, which characterizes some European states, is the legal status of those states that want to remain outsiders in a war between other entities. This status is made of its international rights and duties, for instance the right of inviolability of its own territory or the duty of not providing any military assistance to belligerents. This concept was first developed in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries.

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<sup>33</sup> For more information about the European Community, please refer to Blavoukos S., Bourantonis D., Portela C., *The EU and the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons: strategies, policies, actions*, 2015.

The European states that adopted neutrality were and still today are Finland, Sweden, Austria, Ireland, Malta and Switzerland.

As discussed in the previous chapter, neutrality was a big part of the Cold War international system. It was a strategic choice for many nations to navigate the complexities and dangers of the Cold War international system while pursuing their own national interests and values. As a consequence, it became very clear that the way each neutral country understood and practiced neutrality was different. This depended on factors like history, geographical location, politics, economy and culture. However, in practice, the actions of each country were often limited by the restrictions set by the superpower-led blocs.

As I already mentioned, the positive neutrality of the Non-Aligned Movement's countries was way different than the European classic neutrality. First of all, Non-Aligned neutrality was not a legal or tied to neutral rights and duties.

Moreover, unlike the Non-Aligned nations, European neutral states could in fact join alliances and collective defense organizations, like the European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). That means that, even if they can not join direct military conflicts, they are free to commit to collective defense within the framework of alliances or international agreements. For instance, Austria and Sweden declared neutrality and they are still part of the European Union.

To understand the concept from a different point of view, I mention the words of the Swedish prime minister: «*Sweden is neutral but not neutralist in the sense that we would have the ambition to reorient other states to a policy like that of ours*».<sup>34</sup>

During the Cold War era, this difference between Non-Aligned countries and European neutral states was really clear and caused specific effects, studied and analyzed by the Finnish Political Science professor Harto Hakovirta in his article "Effects of Non-Alignment on Neutrality in Europe: An Analysis and Appraisal", in 1983.

In his point of view, the idea of the Non-Aligned of not taking sides in conflicts disrupted and changed the long-standing traditions of European countries staying neutral. There was a constant risk: if European neutral countries got closer to the

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<sup>34</sup> Hakovirta, Harto, "Effects of Non-Alignment on Neutrality in Europe: An Analysis and Appraisal." *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1983, p. 66 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45083856>. Accessed 1 September 2023.



Non-Aligned Movement, Western countries could not trust or support them as much as in the past. At the same time, working closely with the Non-Aligned Movement gave these countries a chance to have a say on important global issues.

According to the article, there were three ways in which the Non-Aligned countries influenced changes in European neutrality:

- As influencers, the Non-Aligned, either individually or together, influenced the foreign policies of European states by actively supporting or discouraging their alignment with the ideas and proposals of the movement, mainly during official discussions, bilateral or multilateral interactions, between the countries;
- as a source of innovations and references, through the spread of ideas, the Non-Aligned countries introduced new ideas, norms and practices that European states found appealing and chose later to adopt;
- as partners and opponents, when they cooperated or competed with European states, the Non-Aligned countries increased and decreased their influence in global affairs.

In order to better explain the Non-Aligned Movement's effect on the European neutral states, the author introduced the so-called "Theory of Diffusion", that explained all the elements that contributed to the phenomenon above-mentioned:

- a) *«frequent and durable contacts between the non-aligned and European nations;*
- b) *a well integrated system of communication;*
- c) *the absence of 'buffer' groups interested in eliminating or minimizing the effects;*
- d) *the existence of 'linkage groups' interested in transmitting the effects;*
- e) *some degree of similarity between the parties.»*<sup>35</sup>

All the changes in neutrality and neutral foreign policy can be studied along numerous dimensions: *«stability, scope, crystallization, external credibility, acceptability and international utility»*.<sup>36</sup> For example, when a neutral state's policy gained more credibility, acceptability and international utility in international affairs, it became more stable and fit better into the existing international system.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ivi*, p. 59.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

At the same time, in order to understand how these two actors influenced each other, we have to also consider the technical differences between them.

The Non-Aligned group consisted of mostly newer and economically underdeveloped nations that, at the time, were still working on their internal stability and did not have a clear role in the traditional European-centered global system. On the other hand, the European neutral states were older, wealthier and more politically stable countries. They were well established in the traditional global system, which was dominated by Anglo-American and Western European values and practices.

Another difference is political: the Non-Aligned group, as a whole, indirectly aligned itself more with Socialist countries in dealing with global issues. In contrast, the European neutral states tended to lean towards the Western world because their economic, social and political systems were more aligned with Western values.

Despite these important differences, the European neutral states were more likely to exhibit a bit more solidarity and openness to the requests of the Third World countries compared to the other wealthy nations.

The European neutral countries did not have a role in the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, as early as 1962, Sweden, Finland, Austria and Switzerland were included as guests in the Special Conference on Economic Development Issues held in Cairo.

Most Non-Aligned countries and European neutral states interactions have taken place in the United Nations sessions or in the official meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement. On these occasions, the parties exchanged information about their respective policies, resolved any disputes and identified areas where they agreed. It is worth noting that European neutrals had more interactions with the leading Non-Aligned countries more than with the other members, for example with Yugoslavia, and that was because these countries were the most motivated and influential advocates of the movement.

As an example I mention the words said by President Tito (Yugoslavia) to President Kekkonen (Finland) in 1967:

*«As small peace-loving nations, Finland and Yugoslavia are deeply interested in the maintenance of peace in the world, the solving of problems by peaceful means and the promotion of international intercourse and cooperation based on equality».*<sup>37</sup>

It is clear that the Non-Alignment did not significantly disrupt the stability of European neutrality but its model and choice remained a valuable addition to the traditional international landscape. Before the era of Non-Alignment, countries such as Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Austria had indeed only two options: direct involvement in bloc politics or relative isolation through neutrality. The Non-Aligned represented an alternative way also for the European neutralist states.

Moreover, the participation of European neutral states in the movement, even just as guests with limited influence and responsibilities, was gradually altering their international positions.

## **2.5 Yugoslavia's role in the relations between the Non-Aligned Movement and Europe**

After the Second World War, Yugoslavia became a Socialist Federal Republic composed of six republics: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. The key thing about Yugoslavia changing from a kingdom that actively supported the Allies, during the Second World War, to a Socialist Federal Republic after the War was that, unlike other countries like Poland and Hungary, Yugoslavian partisans freed the country with very little help from the Soviet Red Army. For this reason, they felt like they earned the right to pursue their own different path as a socialist nation without being heavily influenced by the Soviets.

As a consequence, during the Cold War, the Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito adopted a "Non-Aligned" approach, in order to keep Yugoslavia outside the spheres of influence led by not only the Soviet Union (following the Warsaw Pact)

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<sup>37</sup> Tito, Josip Broz, president of Yugoslavia, during the visit of Finnish President Urho Kekkonen to Belgrade, Yugoslavia, October 1964.

but also the United States (following the North Atlantic Treaty). This Non-Aligned policy gave Yugoslavia a lot of independence and autonomy in its foreign policy.

As I already mentioned in the first chapter, Yugoslavia, with its charismatic leader Josip Broz Tito, was one of the most influential members of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as one of its founding members. Moreover, it was the only European country that was also an active member of the movement.

This policy of the “third way” or “active Non-Alignment” made Yugoslavia a unique case in international politics at the time. However, its policy of Non-Alignment also extended to economic cooperation, by actively engaging in economic relations with both Western and Eastern countries and also Third World countries, pursuing a strategy called “market socialism”, which was an economic system characterized by all enterprises with the economy being structured as worker cooperatives with collective ownership and some form of internal democracy. The Yugoslav economic model involved firms’ assets being owned by local municipalities, but there existed an elected workers council responsible for appointing managers and exercising formal authority over the enterprise. Within this model, the state played a significant economic role through public banks, which governed investment flows based on different market criteria. This market model influenced the economic dynamics in the Balkan region and opened trade relations with Europe and the Third World countries.

Yugoslavia was strategically positioned between the Non-Aligned Movement and Europe: on one hand, it was a significant and influential member of the movement itself, the country actively helped shape the movement’s identity and goals, particularly in advocating for global peace and independence.

Right after the Second World War, Yugoslavia’s need to stay safe and protect itself led it to choose neutrality, but it was its unique ideology, shaped by its extensive involvement in global matters, that made it turn to Non-Alignment. Non-interference in internal affairs of Yugoslavia was extremely important for the leader Josip Broz Tito. Consequently, by entering the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslavia found a place where it could hold an important position without having to worry about other powerful countries interfering in its internal affairs. The other countries in the Third World, whether they were equally powerful or not, did not

want to get involved in Yugoslav politics. Another reason why Yugoslavia moved closer to the Third World was of an economic nature: in the early 1960s, the process of “destalinisation” led by the leader Tito, in order to become independent from Kremlin, brought to a desperate situation in which a lot of companies were trying to sell their products in markets that were not big enough to support all of them. From that moment on, Tito started to consider trading with the Third World’s markets. From the Yugoslavian point of view, establishing economic connections with the Non-Aligned countries had the potential to help the country address its challenges in ensuring a high standard of living for its citizens. Nevertheless, there were more benefits to be had from this new foreign policy approach (the Non-Aligned one) than just trade. These agreements were not only about economics but also, and perhaps mainly, about politics. For instance, offering loans on favorable terms to Third World countries competed with Western and Eastern bloc countries and also generated a lot of “political goodwill” in return for Yugoslavia. Tito believed that the economy could shape politics and his entire leadership provided this. As a consequence, he urged leaders from the Third World not only to use Yugoslav products but also to see Titoism as a valid ideology worth following. This concept was the fundament for the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement and also the first reason why the Belgrade Conference of 1961 took place right in Yugoslavia. Just as the Prime Minister of Indonesia, Ali Sastroamidjojo, worked to bring together the most powerful leaders of the Third World, the “Colombo powers”, for the Bandung conference in 1955, Tito sought to engage with the most influential figures of the Third World, including as well Nehru and Nasser, to organize the Belgrade conference six years later. The Non-Aligned Movement was founded on the idea of countries having their own independent foreign policies that focused on peaceful coexistence. It also involved supporting movements for national liberation and avoiding getting involved in big military alliances with powerful nations.

On the other hand, by the mid-1970s Yugoslavia had firmly integrated itself also into European economic systems through regional trade agreements (mainly with Italy, Austria and West Germany), growing debts and an increasing number of Yugoslav guest-workers moving to Western Europe.

Beyond economic cooperation, Yugoslavia often acted as a mediator in diplomatic disputes between Eastern and Western European nations, not only the neutral ones. It was often seen as a neutral party that could facilitate dialogue and negotiations. One notable example is the Belgrade Summit of 1977, where leaders from both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact met to discuss European security issues in Yugoslavia.

Moreover, the country encouraged cultural exchanges with both Eastern and Western European countries. This included hosting cultural events, festivals (for instance, the Belgrade Documentary and the Short Film festival, founded in 1953) and academic exchanges, fostering a sense of openness and cooperation. All of these interactions facilitated the sharing of knowledge and ideas across ideological boundaries among not only European states but also Non-Aligned countries.

Last but not least, Yugoslavia was a popular tourist destination for citizens from both Eastern and Western Europe, it was mainly remembered for its Winter, Cultural, Health and Youth Tourism, for example the World Festival of Youth and Students in 1957. By doing all of this, Yugoslavia provided a platform for people-to-people interactions and cultural exchanges.

Yugoslavia, as an European country and also a leader in the Non-Aligned Movement, played a vital role in promoting worldwide the idea of Non-Alignment and trying to get European countries to join the movement.

Yugoslavia boosted the importance of Non-Alignment globally and it was especially interested in keeping its strong position within the movement. It also wanted to emphasize its role as a bridge between the Third World and Europe.

As a consequence, it seems well-grounded to say that without Yugoslavia's important role in Non-Alignment, the movement would have been less appealing to European states. Additionally, without Yugoslavia's connections to European countries, the concept of Non-Alignment would have been less known in Europe.

The Yugoslavian politician Edvard Kardelj defined this Yugoslavian policy as follows: «*This "imaginative geography" was vividly expressed in Yugoslavia's policy of "active and peaceful coexistence" that was meant to serve as "a bridge*

*between East and West, North and South, rich and poor*<sup>38</sup>», explaining that the Yugoslavian policy connected the fights for freedom and against fascism during the Second World War to the ongoing global movement against racial discrimination and inequality in the mid-20th century.

Furthermore, the more influential Yugoslavia became within the Non-Aligned Movement, the more likely it was to engage in political discussion and cooperation with Europe, especially with European neutral states. Similarly, the more Europe had an impact within the Non-Aligned Movement, the better it was for Yugoslavia to maintain and strengthen its position within the movement. In simple terms, European neutral countries were primarily attracted to Yugoslavia's version of Non-Alignment. In order to promote this interpretation, Yugoslavia was very interested in keeping European issues on the agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement and getting European countries, especially the neutral ones, closer to or even involved in the movement.

However, it should be noted that Yugoslavia was not a completely neutral country, as it had diplomatic and trade relations with countries from both blocs during the Cold War era.

Furthermore, despite being one of the leading members of the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslavia faced, in the second half of the twentieth century, a series of geopolitical challenges related to imperialism in the Balkan region. That would appear to be a contradiction, given its membership in a movement that specifically opposes imperialism.

In fact, Josip Broz Tito was not among the Non-Aligned Movement leaders that knew each other since the Conference Against Imperialism in 1927 in Brussels. That means that Tito did not have close relations with the Non-Aligned leaders from the beginning. The Yugoslav leaders, especially Tito, did not have a background in international activism or connections with anticolonial and antiracist movements immediately after the end of the Second World War. This suggests that their leadership and policies with Yugoslavia were less influenced by international activist networks and more independent compared to some other Non-Aligned leaders.

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<sup>38</sup> Kardelj, Edvard, *Non-Aligned Geographies in the Balkans*, 1979.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that the role of Yugoslavia within the movement was primarily to facilitate dialogue with Europe rather than play an active role in activism and promoting the movement's values.

In addition, I can not fail to mention that, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Yugoslavia became embroiled in an internal conflict that led to its total disintegration, resulting in wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.<sup>39</sup>

## **2.6 European foreign policy towards the Non-Aligned countries**

European foreign policy towards the Non-Aligned Movement countries evolved and is still evolving over the years and it is influenced by several different factors, including geopolitical dynamics, economic interests and shared values.

During the Cold War, many Non-Aligned countries pursued a policy of neutrality to avoid being drawn into the East-West conflict. The European countries, particularly those in Western Europe, were aligned with the Western bloc (following the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and, as a consequence, had closer relations with the United States. However, one European country, Yugoslavia, sought to maintain a more independent foreign policy and actively engaged with Non-Aligned nations.

According to different studies and researches, the emergence of Non-Alignment did not have a direct impact on the foreign relations of European countries in the Cold War era.

However, after the end of the Second World War, European countries and the European Community engaged with Non-Aligned countries in order to strengthen economic ties and support development efforts. Between the 1950s and 1960s, numerous Bilateral Aid Programs were established in order to assist the newly independent countries, especially between former colonizing countries and former colonies. One example could be French De Gaulle's Constantine Plan, introduced in 1958 and aimed to boost Algeria's economy by investing money on it. The main

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<sup>39</sup> For more information about Yugoslavia's role between Europe and the Non-Aligned movement, please refer to Cacic Ana, *Yugoslavia Revisited: Contested Histories through Public Memories of President Tito*, Uppsala Universitet, 2020.



idea was to keep Algeria connected to both Europe and Africa, trying to create a close relationship or economic partnership between the two regions. One more example could be the Colonial Education in the Belgian Congo, a public education project that aimed to increase Congolese school population, to develop a public education network and to open university instruction.

Another important initiative was the European Investment Bank (EIB), established in 1958 by the Treaty of Rome, aiming to finance developing and emerging countries outside the European Union. The EIB focused on being connected with others, outside Europe and this concept remains important in its work still today.

This included and still includes funding for infrastructure projects, healthcare, education and poverty reduction programs.

All of these initiatives contributed to foster economic growth, poverty reduction and promote indirect mutual cooperation between Europe and Non-Aligned countries.

After the end of the Cold War, in the early 1990s, European countries, including those members of the European Union, began to firmly reevaluate their foreign policy towards the Non-Aligned countries. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the changing global dynamics led to a more multipolar world, which encouraged and increased engagement with countries from various regions of the planet.<sup>40</sup>

## **2.7 The Non Aligned Movement in Europe and in the world**

The Non-Aligned Movement had a significant, albeit indirect, impact in international relations by broadening the topics discussed in international negotiations at the United Nations and elsewhere. Its efforts were particularly important in order to raise awareness about colonialism and issues related to underdevelopment.

However, its endeavors found resonance and credibility primarily in the neutral countries of Europe, rather than in other Western countries, mainly because in

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<sup>40</sup> For more information about European foreign policy towards the Non-Aligned Movement, please refer to Hakovirta, Harto, *Effects of Non-Alignment on Neutrality in Europe: An Analysis and Appraisal*, 1983.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/45083856>

colonial matters, given their less conservative approach, the European neutral states had a lot more freedom to act and faced minimal risks of getting directly involved in Cold War politics. When the Non-Aligned group started to focus more on mediation, peaceful coexistence and weapons reduction, the European neutral countries became more likely to want to interact with it.

By going to Non-Aligned conferences and building one-on-one relationships with the Third World nations, European neutral countries kept a close eye on how Non-Alignment was growing as a new actor in global politics. These connections also let European neutral countries get up-to-date information directly from Non-Aligned countries about what they were doing in different parts of the world, especially at the UN General Assembly.

However, all of that was not enough: as the European neutral countries only attended meetings of the movement as guests, Non-Alignment has not had much direct influence on how credible or acceptable its positions and policies were perceived.

As I already mentioned in the previous paragraph, the emergence of Non-Alignment did not directly affect the foreign relations of European countries during the Cold War. It mainly opened up new international discussions and problems that went beyond the usual Cold War issue. The neutral states did not have many chances to show how useful they were on the global stage.

However, if these neutral European countries had joined the Non-Aligned group, it could have given them a bigger role in dealing with important global issues and international crises. This could have made them more valuable internationally. But, it is important to note that, in my opinion, if they had taken on this new role, they would have been not able to play their international role as intermediaries in East-West politics as effectively as before, mainly due to their neutralist policy.

As the Non-Aligned Movement emerged on the international stage, it attracted attention and elicited various reactions from major global powers. While Europe responded with a series of contrasting opinions, the two superpowers of the era, the United States and the Soviet Union, closely monitored developments of this movement, especially in its relations with European neutral countries. Their

perceptions and interpretations of the Non-Aligned Movement had indeed a significant impact on the geopolitical dynamics during the Cold War period.

From the United States' point of view, because the Non-Aligned group often expressed anti-Western and anti-American feelings in its statements and implicit actions, the United States and its allies were likely to be wary of any closer ties between European neutral countries and the Non-Aligned Movement. If a European neutral country had become a full member of the movement, it would likely have had an immediate negative impact on how its policies were viewed and trusted by Western countries.

From the Soviet Union's point of view, it would have been better if European neutral countries developed closer ties with the Non-Aligned Movement, as long as it did not make European security too unstable. As detente progressed in Europe and the Non-Aligned Movement gained importance in global politics, the Soviet Union started to emphasize that neutrality in peacetime meant not only staying out of military alliances or other military and political commitments but also pursuing a peaceful foreign policy. As a consequence, the Soviet Union saw it as a good thing if European neutral countries got closer to the Non-Aligned Movement because it would have brought these neutral countries into a group that was mainly against Western world and it could have made them more open to the Soviet's peace initiatives.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement played an important role in shaping international relations by mainly expanding the scope of discussions at international forums, especially at the United Nations. Its primary focus on issues like colonialism and underdevelopment gained more support and credibility from European neutral countries than in the other Western nations. European neutral countries actively engaged with the Non-Aligned Movement, attending conferences and establishing relationships with Third World nations, allowing them to stay constantly informed about global developments. However, their guest status limited the movement's direct influence on their policies and positions. Finally, the movement's interactions with European neutrals drew different reactions from the major powers, with the United States being cautious and the

Soviet Union seeing potential benefits, adding complexity to the Cold War dynamics.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For more information about the Non-Aligned Movement and the world, please refer to Dinkel J., *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927-1992)*, 2018.

### 3. The new Non-Aligned Movement

#### 3.1 The three worlds theory

In the 1950s, the terms “First World”, “Second World”, “Third World” began to spread in the international relations dictionary. These words were used in order to categorize all countries in the world by following different criterias. This was called “The Three World Theory” and there were two versions of it: one introduced by the French economist and demographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952 and one set by Mao Zedong, president of the People’s Republic of China of that time, in 1974, as a strategic thinking.

In his article “Three worlds, one planet”, based on the three estates of French society before the French revolution, Alfred Sauvy imagined a world built entirely around the concepts of capitalism and socialism, adding a gray area that represented the Third World.<sup>42</sup>

Sauvy stated that the First World was composed of wealthy and industrialized countries, most of them located in the West, including Western Europe, the United States of America, Japan, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. These countries were characterized by having high living standards and strong infrastructures, they had typically democratic governments. On the other hand, the term Second World referred to most of communist industrialized countries, for example the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe countries, characterized by less high living standards compared to the First World countries. Lastly, all the countries that were either not part of the First World or of the Second World were considered as part of the Third World, most of them members of the Non-Aligned Movement, explaining why the concept of Third World was mainly associated with the alternative way, the so-called “Non-Aligned way”. Economically, the Third World countries were underdeveloped and not fully industrialized, making them often economically and

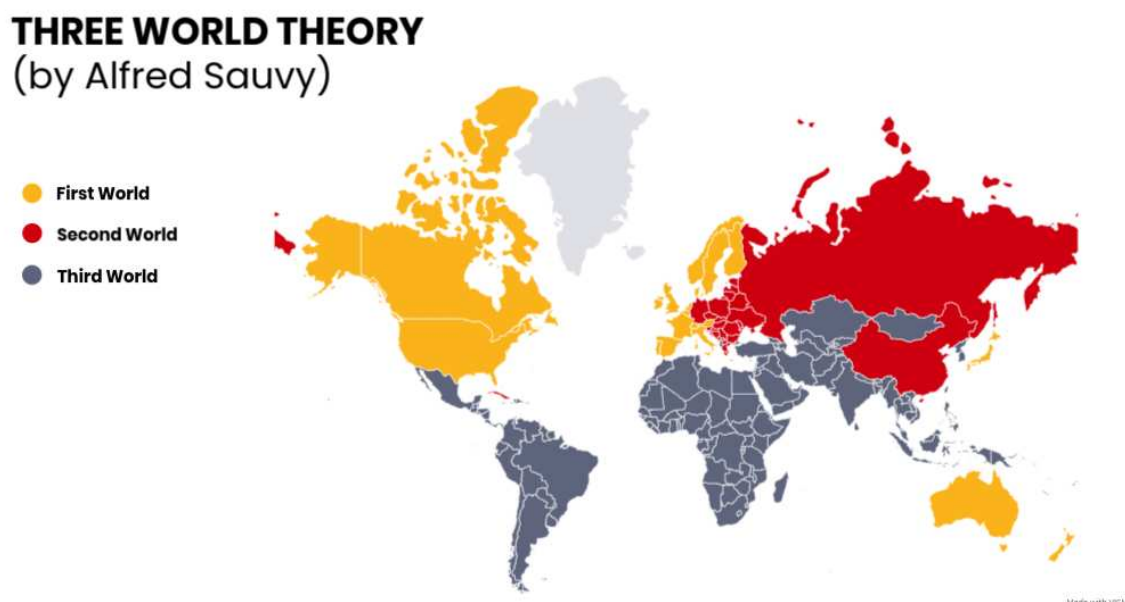
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<sup>42</sup> Sauvy, Alfred, “*Three worlds, one planet*”, 1985.

financially dependent on the First World countries. Many times, those countries had to face problems with corrupt governments, human rights violations, inequality, and health, education and security issues. Automatically, these countries held much less political power. (See Figure 2).

Sauvy's goals was to raise awareness among the public about the economic gap between developed countries and those still in development and to promote policies and efforts to reduce inequalities.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure 2: The world map according to Alfred Sauvy's Three World Theory.**



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Slightly different was the model introduced by the Chinese president Mao Zedong, which was based on the basic Marxist-Leninist principles. Actually, the theory was first articulated by the vice-premier Deng Xiaoping three and a half years earlier than Zedong.

<sup>43</sup> For more information about Alfred Sauvy's Three World Theory, please refer to Pletsch, Carl E., *The Three Worlds, or the Division of Social Scientific Labor, Circa 1950-1975*. 1981. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178394>.

<sup>44</sup> The world map according to Alfred Sauvy's Three World Theory, made by Giulia Oana Dediu via VISME.

In his theory the First World was made up of the two main superpowers, main characters of the Cold War dispute: the United States and the Soviet Union. Subsequently, the Second World was composed of Japan, Canada and Europe. The Third World instead was made by all Asia (except for Japan), Africa and Latin America. (See Figure 3).

To better enhance the understanding of the theory, I quote Mao Zedong's speech:

*«In my view, the United States and the Soviet Union form the first world. Japan, Europe and Canada, the middle section, belong to the second world. We are the third world. The third world has a huge population. With the exception of Japan, Asia belongs to the third world. The whole of Africa belongs to the third world, and Latin America too.»<sup>45</sup>*

Central to this Three Worlds concept was a united front strategy, in which Mao Zedong emphasized that the Chinese communists should stick to a strategy of supporting the groups moving forward, while convincing the neutral groups to join and separating the stubborn group. His strategy was “not to strike out in all directions and provoke too many oppositions”.<sup>46</sup>

By focusing on supporting advancing groups, persuading neutral groups to align and isolating resistant factions, Mao Zedong sought to navigate a balanced approach. This approach, designed to avoid unnecessary conflicts and opposition, reflects his emphasis on measured and calculated actions, explaining why this theory was so widespread and accepted among Non-Aligned countries.

**Figure 3. The world map according to Mao Zedong's Three World Theory.**

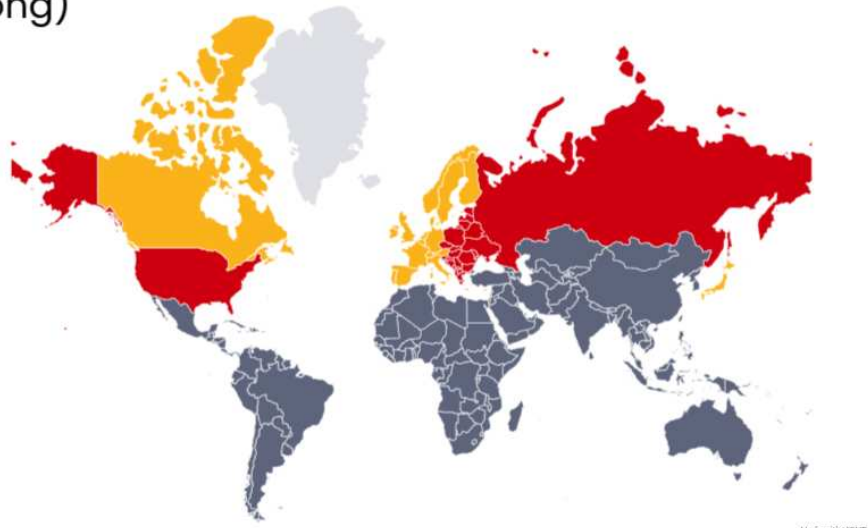
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<sup>45</sup> Zedong, Mao, *Mao Zedong's Classification of the World*, 1974.

<sup>46</sup> *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Beijing, 1977, Vol. 5, p. 23

## THREE WORLD THEORY (by Mao Zedong)

- First World
- Second World
- Third World



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Both of these theories of the three worlds reflect the complicated geopolitical system and the socioeconomic divisions during the Cold War, offering different perspectives on how to analyze and address global challenges.

Apparently, while Alfred Sauvy's theory was based on economic and demographic criteria, Mao Zedong's theory was instead based on an political international relations' criteria, namely on the relations between countries, pointing out the fact that, in that time, the two superpowers were the main source of instability and threat in the planet.

Therefore, it can be said that Alfred Sauvy's theory can still be used nowadays by economists in order to objectively classify the countries, because the criteria were objective. Clearly, this theory was and still is more widespread and accepted among historians and academics.

Mao Zedong's theory instead can not be used today because it was based only on the political situation featured in those years, which enormously changed until today, and also because it was part of his foreign policy. So, the criteria were clearly subjective. Probably, the theory was set in order to denounce the hard political situation of the time and to point out the fact that China supported the

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<sup>47</sup> The world map according to Mao Zedong's Three World Theory, made by Giulia Oana Dediu via VISME.



Non-Aligned countries in their struggle against imperialism and hegemonism carried out by the First World and Second World countries.<sup>48</sup>

Today, these terms are not used as much as they were used during the 20th century. They are even considered as outdated terms, especially the term “Third World”. The term was indeed created and used as an indicator of a nation’s political ideology during a period of big global turmoil, indicating more precisely the neutralist ideology perpetrated by the Non-Aligned Movement.

It can be considered just as a Cold War-era classification. Once the Eastern and the Western bloc were dissolved, the dynamics shifted. It ceased to be a conflict between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc, or between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The term “Second World” started to fall out of use because, after the Soviet Union dissolution, the new countries slowly became more similar to the first world nations.

Today academics prefer to use terms like “developed” and “developing” countries. According to the Cambridge dictionary, «*a developed country has had modern industry, transport, etc. for some time and now bases much of its economy on services*».<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, the term “developing” refers to all those countries that are trying to become more advanced both economically and socially, it implies a sense of advancement and underscores the idea that these categorizations are not fixed, meaning that a nation could potentially and easily transition from being “developing” to being “developed”.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that the evolution of terminologies used to categorize nations constantly reflects the changing of global geopolitics. The once prominent terms of the “First World”, “Second World” and “Third World” have gradually faded from contemporary discourse, largely due to the shifting of ideological and geopolitical alignments that defined the Cold War era.

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<sup>48</sup> For more information about Mao Zedong’s Three World Theory, please refer to Yee, Herbert S., *The Three World Theory and Post-Mao China’s Global Strategy.*, 1983.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2619937>

<sup>49</sup> Cambridge dictionary, *Meaning of developed in English.*

### 3.2 The Non-Aligned Movement summits

Since its official foundation in 1961, the Non-Aligned Movement held many other summits and meetings in order to pursue its goals and aims, peaceful coexistence and independence from imperialism and colonialism, also after the end of the Cold War in the first part of the 1990s.

Below, I will mention all the summits organized by the Non-Aligned Movement from 1961 to 2019 and a little summary of what happened in each one:

|            | <b>Year</b> | <b>Place</b>         | <b>Summary</b>   |
|------------|-------------|----------------------|--|
| 1st Summit | 1961        | Belgrade, Yugoslavia | First official meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement. It was influenced by the decolonization of African nations and resulted in a division between the conservative Brazzaville Group and the radical Casablanca Group. The event aimed to bring together nations from various parts of the world, but not all regions were equally represented due to political pressures. The conference drew significant international media coverage. |
| 2nd Summit | 1964        | Cairo, Egypt         | It brought together the same 25 countries from the previous conference. Key discussions  |

|            |      |                  |  |
|------------|------|------------------|--|
|            |      |                  | included different views on membership criteria, with Yugoslavia advocating for an universalist approach, while Indonesia leaned towards Afro-Asian regionalism. It expanded to include African and Arab countries.  |
| 3rd Summit | 1970 | Lusaka, Zambia   | It marked a really important moment in the movement's history. It addressed issues related to detente, membership criteria and various other global concerns. The conference's preparation involved real coordination among Non-Aligned countries, with Yugoslavia and Zambia being the hosters and the organizers of the event. |
| 4th Summit | 1973 | Algiers, Algeria | It focused on urging the United States and the Soviet Union to include the perspectives of the Third World in decisions regarding disarmament, trade and the   |

|            |      |                    |  |
|------------|------|--------------------|--|
|            |      |                    | global monetary system. It also addressed issues related to liberation movements, regional conflicts and nationalization.  |
| 5th Summit | 1976 | Colombo, Sri Lanka | It involved 86 countries and it addressed issues related to the movement's organization and economic development, emphasizing values such as self-determination and peace.   |
| 6th Summit | 1979 | Havana, Cuba       | It involved 93 countries. It was marked by political and ideological divisions within the movement, regarding Cuba's proposal for a "natural alliance" with the Eastern bloc. It featured heated debates and criticism among members, some countries even considered leaving the movement. |
| 7th Summit | 1983 | New Delhi, India   | It aimed to resolve divisions within the movement. It admitted new member states and observers.  |
| 8th Summit | 1986 | Harare, Zimbabwe   | It involved 101 countries. The   |

|             |      |                      |   |
|-------------|------|----------------------|---|
|             |      |                      | main topic was the Apartheid issue. It marked the first explicit call for South-South cooperation. It also highlighted issues related to women's rights.  |
| 9th Summit  | 1989 | Belgrade, Yugoslavia | Its final document included provisions on human rights, freedom and women's rights. It aimed to promote peaceful resolution of the early Yugoslav crisis but ultimately preceded the escalation of the Yugoslav Wars in 1991. |
| 10th Summit | 1992 | Jakarta, Indonesia   | It persevered under Indonesia's leadership. It decided to establish a panel of experts to explore debt relief options for members facing financial issues.  |
| 11th Summit | 1995 | Cartagena, Colombia  | It discussed the challenges and opportunities of the post Cold War era, including the need for economic development, democratization and solidarity among Non-Aligned nations.  |

|             |      |                        |  |
|-------------|------|------------------------|--|
| 12th Summit | 1998 | Durban, South Africa   | It focused on topics like the crisis in Central Africa, terrorism and nuclear proliferation. It promoted a “new world order”.  |
| 13th Summit | 2003 | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | It called for unity among its members. It stressed the need for concrete actions and urged parliamentary debates and initiatives to ensure the movement’s relevance. |
| 14th Summit | 2006 | Havana, Cuba           | It involved 116 countries. It focused on the issue related to smaller developing countries seeking to resist the influence of more powerful countries.               |
| 15th Summit | 2009 | Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt | It involved 118 countries. It focused on issues related to climate change, terrorism, technology transfer and finance.   |
| 16th Summit | 2012 | Teheran, Iran          | It involved 120 countries. Its agenda included nuclear disarmament, human rights, regional issues and efforts to   |

|             |      |                     |   |
|-------------|------|---------------------|---|
|             |      |                     | resolve the Syrian civil war.   |
| 17th Summit | 2016 | Porlamar, Venezuela | It mainly focused on issues like changing the global economy and disarmament.                 |
| 18th Summit | 2019 | Baku, Azerbaijan    | It saw participation from over 120 countries. It focused on international peace and security. |

<sup>50</sup>

The next Non-Aligned summit will take place in Kampala, capital city of Uganda in January 2024.

Today, the Non-Aligned summits are still a significant platform for talking to partner countries from all over the continents. Furthermore, they are the second-largest gathering of countries in the world, right after the United Nations. Each summit addressed various global issues and challenges. These summits brought together nations from different regions, discussing important topics such as membership criteria, disarmament, regional conflicts and economic development. Despite occasional divisions and controversies, the Non-Aligned Movement remains an important platform for international dialogue and cooperation.

### **3.3 The Non-Aligned Movement in the 21st century**

Before discussing the Non-Aligned Movement in the 21st century, I need to provide a brief introduction: the term “Non-Aligned” used to describe states belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement of 1961 has fallen into disuse. During the

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<sup>50</sup> For more information about Non-Aligned Movement’s summits, please refer to Dinkel J., *The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927-1992)*, 2018.

Cold War, the Non-Aligned Movement was often seen just as an alliance in quantitative studies.<sup>51</sup>

Many historians and critics think that the term “Non-Alignment” was not really accurate anymore because the Cold War had come to an end. In the early 1990s, the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact disappeared completely and there is no clear new arrangement of military, political or ideological power instead of them. Critics describe the movement as ineffective, weak and divided in today’s international politics. This pessimism stemmed from the declining significance of neutrality in global politics and the movement’s lack of noticeable role. According to the researcher Muhibbur Rahman in his article “Non-Aligned Movement in the 21st century: Tehran summit and its aftermath”, the post-Cold War criticism of the Non-Aligned Movement focused on two main aspects:

- *contextual irrelevance*, after the Cold War, there was no longer the need for a united Non-Aligned front due to the end of the bipolar world, this reduced the movement’s ability to act effectively in the changing global powers dynamics;
- *functional irrelevance*, while the movement focused on solidarity, it lacked the strength to actually play a meaningful role in achieving its goals.<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, the rise of regional economic groups like the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) or the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) split the developing countries into various smaller regional groups, shifting the focus away from the movement.

Significant new challenges have emerged. Following the end of the Cold War, many of the member countries of the movement, especially the smaller ones, found themselves in situations marked by severe human rights violations, including wars, civil conflicts and persecutions. Perhaps this is the reason why the demands of the Third World countries were and are still side-lined in the United Nations platforms, especially right after the end of the Cold War.

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<sup>51</sup> For more information about the structure of the Non-Aligned Movement, please refer to J.P. Narain, “The Non-Aligned Movement: Genesis, Organization and Politics”.

<sup>52</sup> Md Muhibbur, Rahman, *Non-Aligned Movement in the 21st century: Tehran summit and its aftermath*, ResearchGate, Biss Journal, vol. 33 n. 4 p. 340, October 2012. <https://ris.org.in/sites/default/files/Rahman-2012-Non-alignedMovementinthe21stCentury.pdf> Accessed on 9 September 2023.



According to the Indian historian, expert in Non-Alignment, A. P. Rana, the movement needs to reflect on its core principles. Many developing countries still say they are Non-Aligned, but they are not as committed as they used to be before the end of the Cold War. One example could be Iran and its alleged possession of nuclear weapons: this issue brought to light a concerning stance in international relations; as a consequence, the United States made it clear that it would not hesitate to interfere in internal policies of Non-Aligned countries in Asia, raising significant concerns among the movement. To better understand this complex situation, let's take the example of the Tehran conference, the 15th Non-Aligned Summit, that took place in 2012: on one hand it affirmed that the Non-Aligned Movement still holds value as an alternative platform for international cooperation, it also renewed a commitment to foster a world with multiple centers of influence and to create a fair global system by rebuilding the international order. On the other hand, the summit fell short in addressing the shared concerns of developing nations: instead, it mainly reflected the political tensions in the Middle East, particularly the conflict between Iran and the West concerning the above-mentioned Iran's nuclear program and Iran's support for the Syrian regime.

<sup>53</sup>

According to the historians, the movement should realize that its main focus should be dealing with the complex issues within its member states first instead of trying to solve big global problems. Without addressing these internal matters, the movement is not ready to deal with other significant global changes. <sup>54</sup>

However, it must be noted that in the 21st century, the Non-Aligned Movement continued to play a significant role in the global geopolitical dynamics, by adapting its agenda and its aim in order to face today's challenges. The movement had successful conferences in Indonesia in 1992, in Colombia in 1995 and in South Africa in 1997 right after the end of the Cold War. The goals that guided the Non-Aligned foreign policies in the past are still as important as before. National security, world peace, working together internationally, economic growth, making

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<sup>53</sup> *Ivi* p. 333.

<sup>54</sup> Rana, A. P. "Back to basics: Non-Alignment after the Cold War." *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1997, pp. 49–57. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45063703>. Accessed 11 Sept. 2023.

international society fairer, promoting peace and justice in international relations are still what developing countries aim for in their foreign policies.<sup>55</sup>

During the 18th Non-Aligned Movement summit, India's ex Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu pointed out: «*The need of the hour is to call out for NAM's revitalization for it to be able to cater to the 21st century needs of Third World countries more efficiently*». <sup>56</sup> In saying this, the Indian politician aimed to demonstrate that the movement still exists, despite the end of the war and it is ready to unite its members for the common good of the international community.

Ultimately, in the final document of the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, 2016, it is stated that in the near future:

«*the movement will*

- *continue to uphold the principles of sovereignty and the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity and non-intervention in the internal affairs of any State or Nation;*
- *take effective measures for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace, to defend, promote and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice, are not endangered;*
- *refrain in international relations from the threat or use of force, including aggressive military exercises against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter;*
- *develop friendly relations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples in their struggle against foreign occupation;*
- *achieve international cooperation based on solidarity among peoples and governments in solving international problems of a political, economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character;*
- *promote and encourage the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.*»<sup>57</sup>

While the Non-Aligned Movement has faced criticism and changing global dynamics, it seems to persist and adapt as an international organization. Its core principles remain relevant and it strives to address both internal and external challenges in the pursuit of a fair and just global order. As the movement looks to the future, it seeks to uphold its values and contribute to the common good of the international community in the 21st century.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>56</sup> M. Venkaiah Naidu, 18th Non-Aligned Summit, Baku, Azerbaijan, 25th-26th October 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Final Document 17th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, p. 6, Island of Margarita, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 17-18 September 2016.

### **3.4 The new Non-Aligned concept**

While it is clear that there has not been an official creation of a new Non-Aligned Movement (based on the ongoing international relations dynamics) to replace the one established in 1961, many scholars and critics give it the benefit of doubt: Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine had a big impact on the landscape of today's international relations. It has created a divide between countries that support Ukraine and those that support Russia. Furthermore, most of the governments of the developing countries are no longer adhering to the Western perspective on issues like the conflict in Ukraine or supporting organizations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in their efforts against Russia. Many developing countries acknowledge the evolving global landscape and the need for major powers, especially the United States, to adapt to these changes.

It can be said that there is a growing divide between the Western developed countries, China, Russia and their allies and a reorganizing "Global South" comprising countries like Brazil, India and other smaller ones. Indonesia president Joko Widodo provides us a clear example of the recent developments. Last year, in November 2022, Indonesia hosted the G20 meeting and the president faced a lot of pressure from the White House (United States) to exclude the Russian president Vladimir Putin from the meeting due to the Ukraine invasion. The Indonesian president asserted his independence, explicitly declaring that he chose not to take sides, whether in favor or against the United States, Russia, China or any other country. Another key example could be Brazil, this country has always had a good relationship with the United States, however they both disagree on Russia and the war in Ukraine issue. The United States wants Brazil and the other Latin American countries to provide weapons to Ukraine, while Brazil refuses to do so, wanting instead to mediate in the conflict with Russia.

This behavior can be explained by the concept of "Active Non-Alignment": all Global South countries want to act in their own national interest and not succumb to pressure from dominant nations. "Active" means having a flexible foreign policy that adapts to the changing world and evaluates opportunities independently. As a

consequence, the real divide exposed by the war is not between democracies and autocracies but between the Global North and the Global South.<sup>58</sup>

This revival of sovereign politics in the Global South is driven by a commitment to Non-Aligned internationalism. In the last two decades, the countries of the Global South are increasingly united against the re-dominance of Western and richer powers (Global North). The term “Non-Aligned” is being used to describe this new trend in international politics, reminiscent of the Non-Aligned Movement originated in 1961. Of course, it would be quite different from its predecessor. First of all, it would be characterized by larger Global South countries asserting their independence from the agendas of Western powers, while they continue to develop their own perspectives.<sup>59</sup> Second of all, the developing world has made important economic gains and strategic alliances since the end of the Cold War, making it more powerful and less “bulliable” by the major powers.

The British specialist in international relations Robin Niblett made this interesting observation:

*«The fact is that the largest group of countries in the world today lie outside these two divided groups. They are the neo-non-aligned. America’s and Europe’s global credibility and soft power have been damaged by their past hypocrisy and double standards. The neo-non-aligned can now triangulate between the world’s democratic and authoritarian poles ... [and] can leverage their strategic value to the two sides in order to gain investment and protection from both.»<sup>60</sup>*

In essence, Niblett’s comment highlights the changing dynamics of global politics, where some countries are no longer strictly aligning themselves with traditional power blocs and are instead seeking opportunities to benefit their independent positions. The evolving global politics reflect a commitment to internationalism originated from the principles of Non-Alignment, reshaping the dynamics of diplomacy and cooperation on the global stage.

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<sup>58</sup> For more information about Active Non-Alignment, please refer to Sholto Brynes, The new “Non-Aligned Movement” is an improved version of the original concept, N OPINION, 31st August 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/2022/08/31/the-new-non-aligned-Movement-is-an-improved-version-of-the-original-concept/> Accessed on 15th September 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Rahal, Sahej, The Emergence of a New Non-Alignment: the Twenty-Fourth Newsletter, Juggernaut, 2019. <https://thetricontinental.org/newsletterissue/new-non-alignment/?output=pdf> Accessed on 14th September 2023.

<sup>60</sup> Niblett, Robin, “Managing a divided world”, Chatham House Farewell Lecture, p. 9, 13th July 2022.

### **3.5 Relations between the European Union and the Non-Aligned Movement in the 21st century**

The relationship between the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union has never been close. The two organizations have rarely collaborated directly, even in the 21st century.

In the recent decade however there have been various collaborations and contacts between the European Union and developing countries (Global South), not always addressing the Non-Aligned Movement. These contacts primarily concern topics such as sustainable development, the environment, conflicts and migration.

In the final document of the 18th Non-Aligned Movement summit, in the section “North-South Dialogue and Cooperation” the group acknowledges the need for more cooperation between developed and developing countries. As a result, the movement intends to keep organizing meetings between the Non-Aligned Movement’s Troika, which is a group of three countries that lead the movement for a defined period of time, and the European Union. These meetings happen during the regular sessions of the General Assembly and aim to make it easier to discuss and talk about topics of shared interest.

Subsequently, again in the final document of the 18th summit, we can find different references to political matters that involve as well the European Union, namely:

- the movement commits to advance regional cooperation for making Afghanistan and the surrounding areas more safe, stable and prosperous, highlighting the importance of the help of neighboring countries and international groups, including the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe;
- the movement praises the good outcomes of the Kuwait International Conference for Iraq’s Reconstruction, especially the significant financial support provided to Iraq, the European Union is mentioned as one of the key players of the conference;
- the movement commends the leadership of Kuwait and the involvement of the European Union and other organizations for the coordination of

humanitarian assistance in the “Pledging Conference for Rohingya Refugee Crisis” in 2017.<sup>61</sup>

Another important issue for the Non-Aligned Movement is migration. The final document of the 18th summit emphasized the importance for all nations to work together and have fair discussions about international migration. The group strongly urged the European Union and its member states not to take actions that discriminate against specific groups or individuals. It also encourages all countries to take into consideration the approval of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families of 1990. Today the only European countries (that yet are not members of the European Union) that ratified the convention are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

Another point at issue is the “return directive”, a directive approved by the European Parliament in 2008 that sets rules and procedures for sending back people from other countries who are living in Europe illegally. The Non-Aligned group is very worried about this directive, it believes that it goes against important international agreements about human rights, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the above-mentioned final document it is written that the directive is unfair because it makes it seem like migration is a crime and makes issues like racism and discrimination worse. It can also lead to mistreatment of migrants and their families.<sup>62</sup>

Apart from the political matters, the European Union commits to provide assistance to developing countries through the establishment of agreements and trade contracts. For instance, the European Union supports the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Development Agenda. After that, it approved the Trade Facilitation Agreement, which seems to be very important for developing and landlocked countries. During the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference the European Union, along with a few other WTO members, worked on promoting issues that are relevant to developing countries.

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<sup>61</sup> Final Document 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, pp. 142-146.

<sup>62</sup> *Ivi* p. 213.

Even though they are not directly associated with the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union stipulated many Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries that are still mentioned in the final document of the 18th Non-Aligned Movement summit. These agreements are a set of trade agreements that promote trade and economic cooperation while supporting development efforts in the Global South countries.

Furthermore, in 1971 the European Union created the Generalized Scheme of Preferences, which is a trade system that enables goods from specific developing countries to have special access, for example by reducing tariffs, to the European markets.<sup>63</sup>

The relationship between the European Union and the Non-Aligned Movement has historically been distant, with limited direct collaboration. However, in the 21st century there have been increased interactions and cooperation between Europe and developing countries, although not always within the context of the Non-Aligned Movement. These interactions have focused on various topics, including sustainable development, conflicts, trade and migration. The Non-Aligned group recognizes the importance of cooperation between developed and developing countries and focuses on facilitating discussions with the European Union.

In January 2024, the 19th Non-Aligned Movement summit will take place in the capital of Uganda, Kampala, and it is highly likely that issues related to European policies towards warfare and migration will be discussed. This event will provide an opportunity to observe the evolving dynamics between Europe and the Non-Aligned Movement and how the situations will develop in the near future.

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<sup>63</sup>For more information about GSPs, please refer to the European Commission, *Generalised Scheme of Preferences*, Trade, [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/generalised-scheme-preferences\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/generalised-scheme-preferences_en) accessed on 17th September 2023.

## Conclusions

In the course of this thesis, in the first chapter, I explored the evolution and the importance of the Non-Aligned Movement, with a particular focus on its relations with Europe. During the research, I outlined the origins of this movement, dating back to the Bandung and the Belgrade conferences, highlighting the historical context in which it arose, characterized by a continuous struggle between opposite political ideologies, between communism and capitalism. I examined closely the key role played by three prominent subjects: Nehru, Tito and Nasser, in shaping the identity and aspirations of the movement. By tracing the history of the Non-Aligned Movement from the process of decolonization to the Belgrade conference, it becomes evident that, despite their satiated position of neutrality, most member states were closer to one of the two major blocs, either the communist or capitalist camp. As a consequence, it can be argued that the Non-Aligned Movement did not emerge solely to demonstrate strict neutrality (similar to countries like Switzerland in Europe) but rather to showcase the determination not to align with either bloc and instead to pursue complete independence, aiming to become significant players within the international relations system.

In the second chapter, I focused on the analysis of the relationships between the Non-Aligned Movement and Europe, with particular attention given to the mediatic role played by Yugoslavia. The European Union and the Non-Aligned Movement both emerged and developed within the context of the Cold War. It appears that the underlying principles and objectives of these two organizations were similar, with many resemblances between the two movements. However, a stark reality emerged: the relationships between the Non-Aligned Movement and Europe, particularly the European Union, often remained stagnant, with very limited progress over the years. When the two actors collaborated, it was usually Yugoslavia that served as a mediator, given its dual status as a European country and a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement. Yugoslavia benefited from this role as it facilitated dialogue between the two organizations and advanced issues important to the Non-Aligned Movement within the European territory. Surprisingly, there has been a notable collaboration that has consistently persisted between the Non-Aligned Movement and historically neutral European countries. The latter have been much more active in the activities of the movement, often being guests at conferences and advocating for the movement's causes.

Turning the gaze to the 21st century, the third chapter of my thesis unveiled the "new" Non-Aligned Movement, considering the "Three Worlds" theory and the continuously evolving role of the movement in international relations. Furthermore, I explored the enduring relevance of the concept of neutrality, juxtaposed against contemporary events, like the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The Non-Aligned Movement, as it was established in 1961, still exists in the 21st century but its role is now limited solely to being an international organization. It



continues to be an important player in international dynamics, but it no longer holds the same level of influence it had during the Cold War, as the conditions of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle of that era have indeed faded. Many experts, however, anticipate the emergence of a hypothetical new Non-Aligned Movement similar to the one that arose in the second half of the 20th century, to address the complex situation that has arisen due to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. As for the European Union, relations with the movement remain stagnant, but there are new challenges and issues that both organizations must address in the near future: globalization, migration, climate change.

My research underscored the historical importance of the Non-Aligned Movement and highlighted the multifaceted challenges it faced in its interactions with Europe. Even though it has yet not fully reached its potential as a global actor, the movement continues to exert a deep influence on the international relations dynamics. This research emphasizes the importance of a more profound and meaningful dialogue between the Non-Aligned Movement and Europe, with the hope that such efforts will facilitate enhanced mutual comprehension and substantial cooperation on the global stage in the future. This thesis opens new avenues for the investigation and understanding of this crucial aspect of international relations, providing a solid foundation for further studies and a significant contribution to the field's knowledge. In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, understanding the dynamics between the Non-Aligned Movement and Europe becomes ever more relevant for scholars and international actors interested in promoting global stability and cooperation.

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