



## CHAPTER IV

### MRS. GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF NON-ALIGNMENT

#### I INTRODUCTION.

Un-expected demise of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in Tashkent on 12th January 1966 paved the way for Mrs. Gandhi, who was Information and Broadcasting Minister in Shastri's government. She got the opportunity to be the Prime Minister. She defeated Morarji Desai and assumed the charge in Jan. 1966 as the third prime-minister of India.

The year 1966 proved to be one of the difficult years for India. The country was facing both internal and external problems. Internally economic condition was not good because of famine. India devalued her ruppy, and to solve the economic problems like drought, India was under U.S. Pressure. Externally the hostile attitude of China and Pakistan was great threat to the India's security. The U.S. supply of the most modern arms to Pakistan questioned India's Security, <sup>it</sup> was immediate to India, which forced India to <sup>her</sup>diverse economic recources towards the armaments to seek security from Pakistan. The alliance between China and Pakistan further worsened the situation, during Mrs Gandhi's period. Under such situations Mrs Indira Gandhi assumed the office of

Prime Minister, and tried to solve the problems with the most effective policies and actions.

## II MRS GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF NON-ALIGNMENT

Being the office hostess of Nehru, she had experience of the international diplomacy. She had keen desire to continue the policies of Nehru including the principles of Panchaseela. Soon after assuming office of the prime minister, she declared that India would follow the policy of non-alignment. She made it clear that India would not align with any bloc and pursue her own independent policy of peace, friendship, co-operation and peaceful co-existence and her government would fight against imperialism, colonialism and racism. At the same time, she said " Her government will try for democratisation of international system and fight for the cause of disarmament. Though we have no desire to seek the leadership of the third world, nor are we interested to create the third bloc." (1)

Mrs. Gandhi was not an original thinker ~~as~~ a philosopher like her father but she was a great practical statesman and a politician, with the sense of history. (2) She had the <sup>broad</sup> based her objectives such as protection of independence and sovereignty of the country by maintaining the most modern armed forces, and secondly, furtherance of policy of non-alignment. To Mrs Gandhi

"The non-alignment was an expression of innate desire of human beings to stand on their own and assert their identity and independence, irrespective of the fact whatever, they were high or low, big or small. It was the most powerful and articulate expression of something man has always known but, could seldom practice in the form of state craft, that the human spirit cannot be bonded and the popular desire to decide their own destinies must be respected. The era of patronisation had finally come to an end with the dawn of non-alignment". (3) Mrs Gandhi, while explaining the objectives of the India's non-alignment said "our first concern has been to prevent any erosion of our independence, therefore, we would not be the camp followers of any power, however high or strong it may be. We had equal interest in the maintenance and safeguarding of national peace as an essential condition of India's economic, social or political development." (4) She further argued "Our foreign policy rejected any hegemony and sought to promote equality of friendship and peaceful co-existence among nations. This policy has been categorised as non-alignment. The negative prefix describes abstention from the military blocs. But non-alignment has positive connotation. In asserting to shape our own policies, we naturally accept the right of others to do so and thus build a base of tolerance and friendship". (5)

SECRET

Basically India's policy was opposed to military blocs as they were against the world peace, security and progress. The policy was based on equality and freedom of every nation and co-operate with nations who had got similar objectives like us. In the sense of Mrs Gandhi the non-alignment would totally oppose imperialism, both old and new and supported the people to gain freedom from the clutches of imperialism. She said "Non-alignment was born as an assertion of our will to be sovereign and not to be mere objects of imperial history." (6). Mrs Gandhi believed that peaceful co-existence and co-operation between the countries would strengthen the world peace, she said "India is always ready to co-operate with others. India stands irrevocably committed to peaceful co-existence, non-alignment and international co-operation, and such co-operation amongst the countries can strengthen international foundations of peace." (7) Mrs Gandhi was of the opinion that for a country like India with its big size and huge potentials of natural resources was not good to align with others and forgot her identity, Hence India had preferred the policy of non-alignment as a better alternative to the military blocs. "We have been scrupulously trying to keep out of power rivalries and I feel country of our size and background cannot be in anybody's orbit. I should

say that we have no illusion of grandeur or hankering for big power status. We feel that our industrial base and the scientific progress which we have made and we are working for, it is essential for us to maintain ~~our~~ independence, not only mere political independence but independence of judgement and action". (8)

Thus, Mrs Gandhi shared the basic tenets of Non-alignment like peace, friendship, peaceful co-existence and abstaining from military bloc. But afterwards she sought to give a new meaning to it as she was a consistent and uncompromising enemy of colonialism and imperialism. Her radicalism in foreign policy began after 1969.

#### A INDO-PAK RELATIONS AFTER TASHKENT AGREEMENT

From India's point of view, Tashkent agreement was not completely desirable, as Shastri had given up strategic areas like Haji pir and other to Pakistan, which were very important from defence point of view to India. Moreover the Kashmir problem remained unsolved. Secondly Indo-Pak relations were internationalised when the third power, however, friendly was mediating between two. Therefore, when Mrs Gandhi assumed the office the Indo-Pak relations were strained as the Kashmir problem remained unsolved and tension between two countries increased as both countries were arming themselves to teeth. The challenges which Mrs Gandhi faced



in the sub-continent were to maintain a secularism at home and non-alignment abroad, and to normalise the relations with Pakistan and China.

Pakistan factor in Indian foreign policy troubled Mrs Gandhi a lot, as she realised that the Kashmir issue was an excuse, and what Pakistan sought to achieve was competition with India. During her initial years, she tried to normalise the relations with Pakistan but she failed. Mean time she didnot allow any laxity in India's military programme as she knew that the Pakistan with Nixon as a American president could create the problem for India. In 1968 even Soviet Union was ready to supply arms to Pakistan.

In 1969 the Indian National Congress got divided and Mrs Gandhi's government was reduced to minority in the parliament. During this period, she had to rely on the support of the C.P.I., and after 1969 slowly she became more Pro-Soviet.

(B) INDO-PAK WAR OF 1971 AND LIBERATION OF BANGLADESH

Soon after Mrs Gandhi's tremendous victory in the mid-term election of 1971, she was forced to accept the challenge, ever before she faced. The problem was " the threat to India's security came from its neighbour and old adversay, Pakistan, but because of the way

situation developed in the sub-continent, the Soviet Union and the United States, particularly the latter got deeply involved, politically and diplomatically in the conflict. (10)

The fundamental cause of the crisis was that, there developed a rift between West Pakistan and East Pakistan (Bangladesh). In 1969 Yahya Khan assumed power, during that period East Pakistan opposed military dictatorship in the country, and called to establish democratic form of government and an autonomy to the East Pakistan. In the East Pakistan a dominant political party the Awami League, headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, opposed Yahya's <sup>full</sup> later <sup>claimed</sup> complete independence for 75 million people of East Pakistan.

The elections to the Pakistan's National Assembly on the basis of 1956 Constitution were held in the month of December 1970. In the election, the Awami League, in <sup>East</sup> Pakistan and the Pakistan People's Party of S.A. Bhutto won the majority in the election on its own. The Awami League secured majority in the national assembly. Yahya Khan could not hand over the power to Mujib because of the threat of civil war given by Bhutto. They could not arrive at some sort of agreement, hence Yahya sent several divisions of Punjabi troops to Dacca, the capital city of the East Pakistan. There ensued a barbaric attempt to put down the Bengali uprisings of people, both



Hindues and Muslims. Mujib and some other Bangali leaders were arrested.

The Pakistan charged India that she was encouraging Mujib. But Mrs Gandhi said that India had no part in the internal developments of Pakistan East<sup>or</sup> West, she had nothing to do with. She said " a battle that Pakistan was waging was against her own citizes." West Pakistan troupes committed worst type of atrocities on the people.

Thus, due to brutal suppression of the people East Pakistanies started entering into Indian territory, by thousands before the Pakistani armies campaign was a month old. Since then a large number of refugees started entering India . Deeply moved by the tragedy, Mrs Gandhi said " We would normally have welcomed the attainment of freedom by any victim of colonial oppression but usually it would have little direct impact on us, Bangladesh, however is a part of our sub-continent. How can we ignore a conflict which takes place on our very border and overflow into our own territory" (12) Further she said " What was claimed to be an internal problem of Pakistan has also become an internal problem of India" (13). Mrs Gandhi viewed that majority of refugees were Hindues and they must return home. In the beginning of October 1971 by

which millions of refugees had entered India, she told the B.B.C. " We have no intention of absorbing these people here, no matter. I am absolutely determined about it." (14)

President Yahay Khan protested and said that what army was doing in the East Pakistan was the country's internal matter, and many abroad appeared to agree with him. But Mrs Gandhi said " This was not the problem of India's making and she had never interfered in the internal affairs of Pakistan".

She said "It has become an internal problem for us . . . . . major problem of humanity, an question of conscience and protection of people's lives and rights." (15) Mrs Gandhi while answering to the Italian Journalist said "only solution could be, that conditions must be created in East Pakistan by normal democratic functioning to enable the refugees to return their homes and their safety was guaranteed. The rulers of Pakistan must be made to see that there was no other way. It is duty of every country to which has influence with Pakistan to impress the truth upon them." (16)

During this period, Pakistan lost the world wide sympathy but she was firmly supported by countries like China and U.S. One of the significant events of the year was that the relations between China and U.S. got improved and China became the permanent member of U.N. security council as

Taiwan was voted out. The improvement in the Sino-American relations was the most significant event that limited the scope of Mrs Gandhi, and U.S. tilted towards Pakistan So India moved closer towards Soviet Union.

Mrs Gandhi undertook foreign tour in the month of October, November 1971 and received sympathetic response from the European countries like U.K. France and West Germany. During the tour no false hopes of outright support were given to her as she said on her return "We cannot depend on international community which I have visited to solve our problems"

(17) Due to Sino-American friendship Mrs Gandhi decided to sign the Treaty of friendship with Soviet Union on 9th August 1971 at New Delhi. "the treaty which many Europeans and Americans tended to see as a virtual abandonment of India's policy of non-alignment has originally been proposed by Moscow and discussed by two countries in considerable detail in 1969"

(18) But due to smug attitude of U.S.A. India decided to go ahead with treaty. During the Nixon Era, India's relation with U.S.A. touched to the bottom level as he failed to see India's problem through proper perspective.

Finally no diplomatic solution was found on the refugees problem, and nearly three weeks after Mrs Gandhi's tour. Pakistani air force attacked Indian air fields at Srinagar,

Amritasar, Ambala and several other places. Later on, Indian army was <sup>assigned</sup> well defined tasks which they performed with distinction during the December war. Indian Air Force played an important role and established superiority over Pakistan, and within 20 days Indian army liberated Bangladesh. More than 91,000 Pakistani soldiers had to surrender, On the Western front. The Indian army made significant gains, and it was feared in some circles that India might try to destroy Pakistani war machine by delivering crushing blow to her. Fearing this Nixon sent seventh Fleet of U.S. Navy to deter India from doing this. As soon as India's army succeeded in liberating Bangala Desh, Mrs Gandhi declared unilateral cease-fire on 22nd December 1971. This was the most glorious event in the history of independent India.

After the war Yahya Khann's government was overthrown and opposite leader Z.A. Bhutto became the new president of 'truncated moth eaten' Pakistan.

(C) SIMLA AGREEMENT

Having secured the victory in the war, Mrs Gandhi wanted to restore durable peace in the sub-continent. On 14th February 1972 India communicated to secretary General of U.N. an offer to hold direct talks with Pakistan at any time, and also without any preconditions. Mr Bhutto reinforced his

position as the president of Pakistan, Mrs Gandhi, also wrote to him suggesting bilateral talks, and a summitt meeting. Finally, Mrs Gandhi and Mr Bhutto decided to meet at Simla and after protracted negotiations reached on a final agreement on 2nd July 1972. The agreement was hailed by the world as India showed in agnanimity. It is rightly said "The Simla agreement remained the basis of official relations between India and Pakistan. It is frequently referred to by both governments. It pledges both countries to work for establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent. Both agreed to settle their differences through bilateral negotiations as any other mutually agreed means without recourse to force." (19)

The government of India's stance was a result of several factors " as it was the dictum of classical diplomacy that allow an adversay to retain his honour when pressing your terms. Another was firmly held the theory that the main cause of conflict on the sub-continent was external interference compounded by the military rule in Pakistan. The popular governments in both countries should be able to co-exist peacefully and promote mutual prosperity and insulate their relations from great powers conflicts. Thirdly, there was a belief that the emergence of Bangala Dashi

had disproved and discredited the two nation theory, therefore, the Kashmir dispute should be amenable to pragmatic and final settlement on the basis of status-quo, fourthly, there was a hope that the new realities of power in South Asia would be universally recognised, raising India's international status." (20)

Both countries agreed that the basic issues and causes of conflict should be resolved by peaceful means. They promised that in accordance with U.N. Charter they would refrain from the threat, or use of force, against territorial integrity and political independence of others. Both agreed to solve their problems by bilateral negotiations. The Simla pact was based on the principles of bilateralism and it was resolved that both countries would solve their problems by mutual discussion. Following are the important aspect of the treaty.

- 1) India agreed to release more than 91000 Pows immediately.
- 2) India agreed to vacate all the Pakistani territory captured approximately 5000 sq. miles during the war.
- 3) Pakistan allowed India to retain 450 sq. miles territory captured in Jammu and Kashmir.

- 4) Both countries agreed to solve their problems through bilateral discussions and without allowing outside intervention.

It was hoped that the agreement would be lasting one and it would herald change in the Indo-Pakistan relations.

### III INDO-U.S. RELATIONS DURING MRS GANDHI'S PERIOD

When Mrs Gandhi came to power in 1966 had a desire to develop friendly relations with U.S.A., like her father, she was of the view that, there could not be friendship at the cost of national interests of India. She was interested to develop friendly relations with U.S.A. though with Nixons victory, prospects were dim.

One can discuss three distinct strands in Mrs Gandhi's approach towards U.S.A. First was to take support for India's most vital interests in the field of security, international independence and economic development. Secondly resist the policies that were opposed to the India's foreign policy and, Thirdly, preservation of cordial relations in the areas of mutual interests and attempt to insulate them from other disagreements." (21)

During Gandhi's visit to U.S. in 1966, President Johnson assured a full co-operation, and helped India in different fields. But apart from the economic co-operation, the American's co-operation in the political field was considerably low, this was due to difference on the various international matters which were as follows.

- 1) Mrs Gandhi's visit to U.S. in 1966 achieved considerable intimacy, in the following months the good will did not remain due, to Johnson's preoccupation with Vietnam war and India's opposition to the Vietnam policy of U.S.A.
- 2) Mrs Gandhi's deep commitment to Socialism and to establish Socialistic pattern of Society in India kept ( U.S ) western camp away from India. After 1969 Mrs Gandhi clearly moved closer to socialistic camp which brought difference between India and Pakistan.
- 3) U.S. supplied sophisticated and modern military weapons to Pakistan, which disturbed the regional balance of power, and the Indo-U.S. relations became more hostile during Gandhi era.
- 4) Fourthly Nixon administration openly sided with Pakistan, during 1971 Bangladesh war, though she was not directly engaged in the military hostilities. The U.S.



did send seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal to coerce India. The Gunboat diplomacy of Nixon did not help the cause of Indo-U.S. friendship.

5) Fifthly Mrs Gandhi felt that after 1973 the U.S. was backing forces which were hostile to her , in the country. At the time of declaration of the emergency in 1975, she hinted at the foreign land in disturbances.

6) Sixthly, American attempt to establish a military base at Digo Garlia was not appreciated by India. Mrs Gandhi made it clear "that our objection to military bloc is that military presance of any one nation or a group of nations automatically invites a counter-presence, and therefore, adds to the tension, we stand for withdrawal of all outside military forces and we reiterate this not only in regard to the two conflicts which are so obvious today, i.e. that is in South East Asia and Middle East but all the parts of the world. In the longrun, the security to which every state in this area is entitled, can be firmly based on the foundations of mutual understanding and good neighbourliness. This is our position in regard to our neighbour Pakistan. ( 22 )

(1966 - TO 1976)

During Mrs Gandhi's regime the Soviet influence increased as due to hostile U.S. attitudes, she had to depend on the Soviet support. Both governments appreciated each others, policies and mutually interacted on the international politics. The Soviet Union appreciated India's policy of non-alignment. Soviets appreciated the leftist trend in the policies of Mrs Gandhi especially after 1969. The relations were further deepened when U.S. decided to have a friendship with China in 1971. Soviet Union played a very important role in the foreign policy of India hence all sorts of help was extended India during this period. In 1971 India was facing the problem of Bangala refugees and there was a thaw in the Sino-U.S. relationship. Thus there was a danger of forging of alliances between U.S. Pakistan and China. India sought to obviate the treaty by signing defence treaty with Soviet Union on 9th Aug, 1971. The treaty provided much needed protection to India, though the treaty was interpreted as the abandonment of the policy of non-alignment of India.

There was growing co-operation between India and Soviet Union in economic, space military and cultural fields. U.S.S.R. provided all sort of economic assistance to India

and offered to help her in crucial industrial fields. The U.S.S.R. was the main supplier of arms and equipments like the sophisticated tanks aircrafts, submarines and missiles were supplied to Indian defence forces.

Both India and Soviet Union moved closer, and relations became more intimate after the Indo-Pak war of 1971. The relations between two in the military and economic fields increased considerably after the war clearly India was basic in the Soviet foreign policy strategy as after 1971 China and Pakistan moved closer to U.S.A. In the year 1973-74, Soviet president Mr Breznev sought to include India in Asian security alliance, but Mrs Gandhi clearly understood its true nature and refused to join such alliance by any kind of treaty. Even though India tilted towards U.S.S.R. Mrs Gandhi maintained the balance and did not abandon the policy of non-alignment. Though she extracted a lot of help from the U.S.S.R. she did not blindly follow the Soviet policies. It is during Mrs Gandhi's period, that the non-aligned countries came together and held conference to exercise pressure on the super powers. Through these conventions Mrs Gandhi sought to provide ideological and practical context to the non-alignment.

V      MRS GANDHI AND NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT CONFERENCE'S

Mrs Gandhi participated in three non-aligned conferences held, from 1966 to 1977. Mrs Gandhi attended the first non-aligned conference held at Lusaka on April 1970, second held at Algiers on Sept. 1973 and the third at Colombo in Aug. 1971. The study of speeches made during these conferences shows that Mrs Gandhi wanted to develop some sort of non-aligned movement in order to get economic rights from rich countries.

The third non-aligned summit was held at Lusaka in 1970 and India was represented by Mrs Gandhi which was attended by 53 full members. The summit adopted two declarations.

- (1) Declaration on peace, independence and development co-operation and democratisation of international relations
- (2) Guidelines for economic co-operation. (23)

At the summit Mrs Gandhi condemned the war and exhorted all the nations to avoid the war so that world peace could be maintained. She condemned Israeli aggression in West Asia and U.S. aggression in Viet-nam and Cambodia, she suggested that the immediate action should be taken to end these wars.

On 8th September 1973, Non-aligned countries conference was held at Algiers, and Mrs Gandhi participated in the conference on behalf of India. It was attended by 73 full members.

At the summit meeting she requested the nations to maintain their identity and asked them, not to be objects of imperialism. She said that Non-alignment had not lost any of its relevance, even though rigid attitude of the cold war had not softened. At the summit she supported the cause of political liberation of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and establishment of new international economic order based on equality and freedom. Mrs Gandhi said " Social and economic development cannot be just achieved with the help of domestic efforts. It has to be major international concern. We, the non-aligned believe that the fight against poverty, demands co-operation in which resources and technology are shared among the nations. Further, she added that the external interference, coercion and occupation of lands of others, deliberate induction of armaments in the name of promoting regional balance and arming the small nations beyond the limits that can be sustained by their own socio-economic structure all these threaten peace." (24) In the summit she adopted anti west attitude and provided ideological

tool for the third world countries to fight against economic exploitation.

On August 17, 1976 fifth Non-aligned conference was held at Colombo in Cylone. Once again she ~~maintained~~ that the establishment of new economic international order, was necessary and, emphasised the need of regional co-operation and unity among the ~~non~~-aligned states, to achieve the desired goals of economic development and peace at large. Mrs Gandhi said " In the fast changing world, the non-alignment remains. The bull-work of an ever widening area of peace, a shield against external pressures and a catalyst of a New world economic order based on equality and justice. It promotes and hastens change, itself remaining unchanged. We represent nations which, amidst their cultural diversity, and united in their unending search for freedom, equality, peace and stability for their own people and for all the world." (25)

While addressing the summit, she enuniated the primary objectives of the non-alignment and said " The aim of non-alignment is to reinforce the stength of each of our nations to measure up to challenges . At the same time, we stand for responsive co-operation. We are neither a bloc, nor a third world, <sup>but</sup> part of this, conference should be, fortify differences of peace by enhacing friendship with all by reducing divisions

and disparties." 26 She was of the opinion that during the cold war, non-alignment gained much importance and it had been the only moral force in the world. She maintained " The Era of cold war proved the soundness of non-alignment, as perhaps the only practical policy for the preservation of newly won independence, and dependence between progressing through co-operation, or perishing through confrontation. That most states which achieved independence have joined non-aligned family, is the vindication of the conceptual validity of non-alignment" (27)

She was of the view that the unity and co-operation among the non-aligned nations could strengthen the foundations of the world peace. By struggling unitedly it was possible to establish new economic international order based on equality and justice.

## VI MRS GANDHI'S THEORY OF NON-ALIGNMENT

Mrs Gandhi's theory of Non-alignment was a developed version of Nehru's theory of non-alignment, as she forced the N.A. countries to adopt the policy of positive non-alignment, which was opposed to colonialism and imperialism. Mrs Gandhi held a view that peaceful co-existence was essential, but it was not allowed by the super powers. During this period the N.A.M. clearly tilted towards U.S.S.R. as on its platform Mrs Gandhi launched attack on the economic domination of the third world countries by the countries as she wanted to establish a just equation between

global production and consumption that would yield, right share to those who processed this raw material in some part of finished goods. The cold war situation changed as both blocs got deeply divided but the problem of peace remained which was disturbed by the external intervention, therefore she consistently advocated the policy of bilateralism that would allow the concerned countries to sort out their problems through mutual discussion and understanding.

Thus Mrs Gandhi tried to give the new ideological meaning to the theory of Non-Alignment, which could have become out dated with the decline in cold war, but Mrs Gandhi sought to give a new life to the theory by emphasising the importance of opposition to imperialism colonialism and racism, and laying stress on bilateralism just economic world order, and just sharing of natural resources among the developed and developing countries. Due to these policies it was alleged by her opponents that Indira Gandhi's theory of Non-alignment was pro-Soviet and anti-West.



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