

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT: AN INDIAN PERCEPTION

The Second World War saw a decisive defeat for fascism. It was a great historic event which changed the course of the world and ushered in a new era. But it was a grim struggle in which millions gave their lives and millions more lost their homes and their families in order that the forces of fascism did not triumph. The victory over fascism was accompanied by a weakening of imperialism, the rise of socialism in many countries of the world and the emergence of independent countries in large parts of Asia and Africa. Thus new forces arose in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, which set in global changes the full unfolding of which is still being witnessed.

World War II also brought about epochal changes in weapons, communications, the old world order. It revolutionised warfare. It shortened distances. It brought the international community closer, but generated new tensions and problems. It liberated old nations but brought war and conflict to the new countries, gave a new sanctity to international opinion, yet allowed the powerful to wilfully violate public opinion, brought some order into the chaotic old world and at the same time introduced new uncertainties and dangers. It divided the world and then mocked at the division; it threw up ideology and then virtually threw it away. The world continues to spin and change rapidly and dizzily.

The rise of science and technology as direct and important factors in international relations was a distinct feature of the new world. Science and technology effectively altered the world structure of power. Military technology particularly buried many of the old nations, requiring completely new responses. The rickety 10-mile-an-hour bomber in World War I became by the end of the World War II the B-29 that devastated the Japanese cities with the range of 4,000 miles and was subsequently substituted by the B-52s which have rained death and destruction in Vietnam. During the terrifying blitz of London, Nazis dropped 12,000 tons of bombs killing 30,000 people and injuring more than 1,20,000. In 1945 the United States

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dropped a single 5-ton atom bomb over Hiroshima that released an explosive power of 2 million tons of TNT, killing 78,000 people and injuring 45,000 more. The Atom Bomb led to the Hydrogen bomb whose explosive power could be measured in millions of tons of TNT. Atomic-powered submarines now carouse under water for weeks without refuelling. The intercontinental ballistic missiles remain in combat readiness, requiring only minutes to destroy the world. These and other developments have not only revolutionised warfare but prompted a revolution in man's thinking also.

The second world war brought about a general realization that if the world were to be saved from death and destruction, it had to reorder its house and evolve new forms of organization through negotiations and the acceptance of the rights of all countries of the world. Thus was born the United Nations with its commitment to maintenance of peace and freedom. But the United Nations soon became a victim of the cold war, of ideological polarisation, of division of large parts of the world into hostile blocs of countries led by two states.

The world system after World War II soon came to be characterised by the dominance of two powers. There arose what came to be known as Super Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The term super power was in a way both meaningless and novel. It was devoid of any economic content. Previously one talked of capitalist countries, imperialist countries, socialist countries, feudalist monarchies and so on and so forth. But the term super power went beyond the economic categories and said nothing about the character of the state except that it possessed plenitude of power — perhaps that was what was in any case intended to be conveyed.

The creeping advance of the cold war left every country either badly shaken or pulled into its vortex. On the one hand came the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the SEATO and the Cento, and on the other hand came the Warsaw Treaty and the Sino Soviet alliance. Whoever was not with us was against us — was the motto. For Mr. Dulles, neutralism was immoral and there could be no question of any choice between good and evil. The two alliances conformed each other everywhere and the world teetered on the brink of another war.

Obviously, however, the reality of the world situation was much more complex and the cold war had simplified the issue arbitrarily and artificially. The Korean war which was supposed to have brought about the unification of the Western alliance and given it teeth also contained the germs of disintegration of the alliance system and the dominance of the leadership of the United States. The immediate effect of the Korean War, no doubt was West European consent to the tightening up of the military structure of the Western countries but a more lasting effect of it was the erosion of the will to police the world.

Another significant development which altered the shape of things in the post-war world was the dissolution of the colonial empires and the rise of a whole world of new countries. The resurgence of Asia and Africa, and subsequently Latin America, the revolt against European rule and the accelerated collapse of imperialism, all served to change the world beyond recognition and to mitigate the rigours of the cold war. These newly independent countries of Asia and Africa were not exclusively concerned with the problems of Europe and were unwilling to let other people decide their fate. To Jawaharlal Nehru and to many other leaders of emergent Asian and African countries the cold war was a manifestation of European problems and quarrels.

The concept of non-alignment contributed to the destruction of bi-polarity in the world. It assuaged rising passions and tensions and at the same time strengthened the independence of Asian-African countries and gave them a personality of their own. The change that took place in the United Nations can be seen from the fact that the world community which had started from 52 members in 1945 had swelled up to 132 by 1971. The questions of colonialism, of independence of all countries, of racialism, of economic development, of trade and aid — all these now became important issues at the United Nations and elsewhere.

The world was rapidly changing. Even otherwise, it was too simplistic to believe that the foreign policies of all countries of the world could be tailored to meet the needs of requirements of one or two countries. The evolution of the foreign policy of a country depends upon a whole host of factors. First of all there are the internal pulls and pressures, groups and parties, interests and beliefs. There is the power of the ruling ideas of the ruling group in any country. There is also the geography, the physical location, the history, the traditions the past experience, the present requirements and the conception of the kind of role that a particular country wishes to play in the international areas which determine the foreign policy of a country. Things do not look the same from Delhi, let us say, as they do from Washington or Paris.

Then there is the regional power structure which influences and often shapes and determines the foreign policy of a country. The foreign policy reacts first to the internal balance of forces in a country and then to the balance of forces within the region and finally to the balance of forces within the world. To believe that the balance of forces at the world level could ignore the balance of forces within the country or at the regional level was a delusion of the cold war.

For some countries, foreign policy was fashioned by the concept of »high politics«, a view held by the leaders that there was a historic role that their country had to play, moved by the visions of glory and power. Some other countries thought it fit to adopt a

policy of »low politics«, concerning themselves more with the welfare of the people of the country than with any other aspect. Some had historical conflicts with their neighbour and their foreign policy would be determined by this conflict. Some had recent conflicts with their neighbour and tailored their foreign policy to the needs of this quarrel. Some were large countries and some were small countries. This too influences the pattern of relationship. Thus, the complexity of the situation could not long be kept within the straight jacket of a simplistic two-bloc world.

Some emergent countries fell a prey to the expanding tentacles of the cold war, but a great many resisted the pressures and refused to become involved. Thus a whole third world had come into existence, replacing the world of yesterday. Moreover, even within the two alliance system there were substructures which soon asserted their presence and eroded the cohesion of the alliance systems. The West European countries did not exactly relish the dominance of the United States. They had even less taste for involvement in Asian wars. For them the limits of the cold war were reached with the defence of Europe and they had no intention of getting drawn into any exhausting conflicts in Asia, even if for the sake of their chief ally, the United States. Korea started the process of disenchantment and Vietnam completed it. In the Communist bloc too, the East European sub-structure was certainly different from the Sino-Soviet sub-structure. China's role could not be the same as that of the East European countries and some similar difficulties plagued the Communist bloc as well.

The contradictions in the alliance systems, the difficulties, the reluctance of the junior allies, their inhibitions, all these became more and more visible and marked. Simultaneously, some of the leaders of the alliance systems tried to secure their objectives through the creation of regional organizations. Very often they thought that what could not be achieved through the alliance systems might be obtained through the regional organizations. Regional systems and blocs were thought of as a panacea for several kinds of political difficulties, economic and development weakness and power and prestige in a world dominated by super powers. These regional organizations as long as they remained military in purpose and virtually aligned to a superior alliance system came to grief. They could succeed only if they were to be established on a new basis.

It is well-known that the international system is continuously influenced by the under currents of the sub-systems comprising it, while at the same time that it impinges upon the sub-system. Two kinds of sub-structures arose in the post-war world. One was the regional sub-structure, determined by geographical location and the other based on ideology and shared beliefs.

Most regional organizations came to grief because of the negative basis on which they were organized, and often because of their

external sponsorship. But there is no doubt that the world naturally falls into various regions and that the pattern of a country's foreign policy relationship is often determined by the regional relationship. For most countries the region is much more important than the world. In no case can a country run away from its geography.

Some of these core sub-structures can be easily located or noted. There is Latin-America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, West Asia, West and East Africa, North Africa and South-East Asia. On the periphery of South-East Asia is East Asia (Mangolia, China, Japan and Korea) on the one hand and South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal and Ceylon) on the other. On the periphery of West and East Europe are the big powers, the United States and the Soviet Union who, by virtue of being global powers, play a role in all regions of the world.

One world have thought that the regional sub-systems would show considerable political and economic cohesion or social cohesion and that wherever this cohesion was the strongest, there the element and quality of stability would also be fairly strong. In fact, students of international politics have observed the strange phenomenon that »stability is no longer a function of regional cohesion«. To take one instance, social cohesion is indicated by such elements as ethnicity, language, culture, history and consciousness of common heritage. By this yardstick the Middle East (West Asia) has the greatest social cohesion while South-East Asia and West Africa have the least, with others falling in between. Yet West Asia is also the least politically »tranquill« (to use the words of a writer on international systems). There is obviously little correlation at present between social cohesion and international political stability, but this is essentially because of foreign interference and the attempt at foreign dominance. West Asia is a classic example of justice being denied and the rights of the Palestinian people being thwarted by artificial external pressures.

Social cohesion had also not necessarily established economic complementarity in the present context. Only in Western Europe do we find export or important percentages of trade within the region of 40 or more per cent; in most of the remaining regions (with the exception of East Europe) intra-regional trade constitutes less than 15 per cent. The production of primary products such as oil in the Middle East, tin and rubber in South-East Asia and coffee and cocoa in West Africa have so far resulted in trade patterns oriented towards countries outside the regional systems.

In fact, many of the distortions in regional substructures have taken place because of the intrusion of foreign powers. Many of them were born under the shadow and impulse of the cold war, and the big powers were often instrumental in getting them established in the first place. Frequently the regional organization had a purpose and objective not relevant to the natural politics of the region or sub-structure. The intrusive presence of foreign powers vitiated the

natural functioning of the regional sub-structures in the international system.

In the case of South-East Asia, noticeable changes have taken place as regards the impingement of foreign powers in this region. In the first phase, the United States was active all over the region and took it upon itself to become the champion of the conservative and often decadent forces. The cold war and the U.S.—USSR confrontation affected all developments in South-East Asia. But gradually the failure in Vietnam produced a wave of reaction in the United States and compelled the U.S. administration to move away from excessive involvement in South-East Asia. The old phase is over and with it have virtually gone some of the military organizations established in that region like the South-East Asia Treaty Organization.

The United States remains an important factor in South—East Asia and the USSR also plays an important role in various parts. Now the presence of two other powers also impinges on developments in South-East Asia; China and Japan. China has become a major political factor in South-East Asia and Japan is economically significant. »Both the countries have the capacity to act throughout the region; both give special priority to relations with this area, even in the face of pressures from the global bipolar order«.

In absolute terms Japan is 15 times as powerful as Indonesia and over 50 times the average of other South-East Asian States. Japan's share of the region's total trade was 28.9 per cent in 1967, that of the United States 20 per cent, while West Germany, the third largest, claimed only 4.9 per cent. China had only 1.7 per cent of the region's trade but China's military and political importance cannot be measured only in terms of trade. »China not only possesses nuclear weapons but also has given every indication of willingness and ability to control its own allocation of resources in order to maximise its military, political and economic efforts and has left no doubt about its general commitment to ensure for itself a prominent place in the international politics of the region,« a Western scholar has observed.

However, this is only one side of the picture. The intrusion of foreign powers is not the only and not even the decisive factor in determining the fate and future of South-East Asia. South-East Asian countries have shown a capacity for survival and for preserving their independence which has belied many a prophet of gloom. The balance of forces in South-East Asia is such and will be increasingly such that the South-East Asian countries should be able to function more and more independently. There is no monopoly or duopoly of foreign powers in Asia. Now there are at least four outside powers which have a direct or indirect presence in the South—East Asian region. In addition, a country like India can make its contribution towards the stabilishment of a healthier balance of

forces. Besides, there are important countries within the region, like Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, etc., who are not going to accept external subordination. The people of Vietnam through their successful resistance of American intervention have demonstrated the limits of the capacity of big powers to dominate other countries through the use of their power. South—East Asian countries themselves have shown their determination not to succumb to outside pressures, and conditions will now be more advantageous for them to strengthen their independence.

All in all the trend is fairly evident. Regional organizations can be effective if they are reestablished on a new basis, on the basis of cooperation and not on the basis of conflict. The world is gradually moving towards this kind of a new reorganization. In future nation-states will be required more and more to meet their international problems by turning to bigger units or organization. Already Europe has set the pace. From a negative kind of grouping it has gone forward towards more positive forms of cooperation and is laying the ground work for breaking the barriers between West and East Europe. The eclipse of Europe in the fifties has been followed by the revival of Europe in the seventies. It is this new road that regional organizations would follow increasingly.

The world was not only divided East and West in the cold war but many people have noticed a North—South division also which they think would be more crucial, more fateful, and possibly, more disastrous. This is the division between the rich North and the Poor South in the world, the haves and the have-nots, the developed and the developing nations. That the developing countries have common demands, common requirements, common needs and often common interests is undoubted. That they have also often linked their forces on issues like colonialism, racialism, utilization of resources in the sea-bed, the UNCTAD and issues of economic development, trade and aid, is patent. Their common interests have brought them together and Asian, African and Latin American countries present a community of outlook and concerted action on a wide variety of issues at the United Nations and elsewhere.

However, this North—South division can also be exaggerated. The world is too complicated for such divisions and within the developing countries there are various stages of development, various pulls and pressures and various special needs and special conflicts. But the common destiny of the third world is undeniable.

Actually, the »Third World«, both the concept and the practice, owes its origin and development to non-alignment and the struggle put up by the non-aligned countries. Josip Tito, Gamal Abdul Nasser and Jawaharlal Nehru were among those who led the pioneering battle against the persistent and powerful effort to impose the two-bloc, and what often appeared to be one-bloc, supremacy. The non-aligned countries stood up against the rigours of the cold

war and more and more countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America began to follow the course of non-alignment. The emergence of the non-aligned community of nations, the consolidation of the concept of non-alignment and the united stand they often took after mutual consultations and deliberations made a substantial contribution to the promotion of world peace, to the easing of international tensions, the disintegration of monolithism in world affairs, and the strengthening of the independence of the newly emergent countries. The »Third World« was a natural extension of the precept and practice of non-alignment. These countries are fighting a common battle against under-development, neocolonialism, big-power control, racial bigotry, discriminatory aid and trade practices, unfair terms in international monetary relationships and so on.

Each country has its own natural habitat and sphere of functioning. India naturally belongs to the third world and it is clear that she must give her primary attention to this. India in naturally and inevitably a part of the world of struggling countries and therefore in the struggle against colonialism, racialism, for world peace, for equality of nations and for economic development of the struggling countries, India has to play a vital role in unison with the other struggling countries of the world.

The world is in a flux. The pulls of nationalism have often proved to be stronger than the bonds of ideology. Ideology continues to assert and reassert itself but the marriage of ideology with national needs has not often been a happy one. France chaffed at U.S. authority in the Western bloc and China at Soviet leadership of the Socialist camp. Starting out from a gnawing suspicion of Khrushchev's efforts at a detente with the United States, Peking has ended up with its own dialogue with Washington. Similarly starting out from a position of acute hostility against communist China and suspicion of all those who were friendly to Peking, Washington has ended up by itself wooing Peking.

The failure of the American war in Indo-China and the consequent repercussion on American public opinion and international relations have had a powerful impact on the policies of both Washington and Peking. The successful defiance by the people of Vietnam of the military might of the United States is the starting point in understanding some of the dramatic changes in the present day world. The Americans became increasingly sick of the war in Asia and there was a new insistence in the United States on the Government to make peace with existing revolutionary government and to shun new involvements.

The U.S. administration also became alive to the possibilities in the Sino—Soviet conflict. This provided an opportunity for Washington to engage in a delicate game of driving the maximum advantage from this situation. Washington hoped to reap the wind-fall of the Sino—Soviet conflict and to bring its relations with Pe-

king out of the deep freeze in order to obtain a new lever of pressure against Moscow.

In the U.S. view, the USSR had been extending its influence too rapidly in West Asia, South-East Asia, the Indian Ocean and other regions. Partly with an eye to curbing the growing power of the Soviet Union and imposing new pressures on Moscow and partly driven by the compulsions of domestic changes, Washington took the big step towards detente with Peking. The successful opening towards Peking facilitated new agreements with the Soviet Union on curbs on the production of strategic arms and various other fields. The Soviet Union impelled by fears of a Sino—U.S. understanding and compelled by a lag in certain technological fields as well as a poor harvest, showed a new keenness for reaching agreements with the United States. The conclusion of these agreements with Moscow helped the U.S. administration to extend its dialogue with Peking with each of the two communist countries anxious about the relationship of the other with Washington.

For the Chinese the transformation of the U.S. attitude meant that the United States was a »receding threat« and that Chinese policies must be readjusted to a situation of a possible rapid winding down of the war in Vietnam. The dominant Maoist leadership had decided to mitigate China's isolation and to activate China's diplomacy all over the world. While the political capital to be gained from the support of revolutionary and loyal leftist movements and groups was useful, its inadequacy was realized and a decision to adopt subtler forms of state diplomacy was taken. The time had come, in Peking's view, for »constructive« talks with the United States rather than continued confrontation with it.

The Maoist leadership also turned the primary direction of the struggle towards the Soviet Union. It was their belief that the »Principal contradiction« of China was now with the Soviet Union. All their efforts were mobilized to confront the chief enemy. At a minimum, Chinese retreat from isolation has been aimed at preempting any possibility of the USSR and the United States joining hands to the detriment of Chinese interests. You fight with what you regard as the bigger »enemy« and make peace with the lesser one. Peking's ultimate hope is to bring about a shift in the international power structure that will allow it to become one of the super powers.

The game will now be sought to be played by the foursome, with Japan as the new entrant. Outflanked by what appeared to be a sudden and startling swing in American policy towards China, Japan has made quick moves to normalize relations with China and to take advantage of the uncertain US—USSR—China triangle. Again domestic constraints and international pressures have combined to change the direction of Japanese foreign policy. Peking's anxiety about Japan's enormous economic power and the not in-

considerable military power is well-known. For quite some years, Peking had been vociferous in its complaints about the revival of »Japanese militarism« and had given indications that Japan was rated high in the list of potential adversaries.

There were two options before Peking: either to develop hostility towards and tension with Japan or to capitalise upon growing opinion in Japan for improvement of relations with Peking and thus neutralize any possibility of Japan adopting a hostile attitude. Peking has obviously opted for the second course and shortened the range of its adversaries. Settlement of the status of Taiwan and hostility towards the Soviet Union have been the guiding factors in recent Chinese moves. The importance of Taiwan in Chinese foreign policy has been highlighted by the present developments. Both in regard to USA and Japan, Peking has succeeded in securing a favourable decision with regard to the future status of Taiwan by adopting the policy of negotiations, accommodation and sweet reasonableness.

It is difficult to foresee at this time how the Chinese political and economic interests in South-East Asia will be harmonised with the Japanese economic and political stakes in this region, but certainly, although discreetly and somewhat gingerly, Japan hopes to take advantage of the uncertainty and suspicion that characterises the mutual relationship of China, the Soviet Union and the United States. Both the Soviet Union and the United States, wary of the growing relationship between Peking and Tokyo, will be obliged to adopt a softer approach towards Japan so as to prevent Tokyo and Peking from getting too close together.

The erosion of ideology has been a marked feature of the sixties and of the early seventies of the century. The pull of ideology has become less insistent and the pull of nationalism more insistent. While there may certainly have been some advantages in toning down the militancy of countries in their international postures and a softening of the self-imposed role of a messiah, equally the contempt with which ideology is now often treated cannot be described as necessarily praiseworthy. There seems to be some need in the world for the revival of ideas and ideals as motivating forces to move millions of human beings and in order to transcend the selfish characteristics of human beings which have been nurtured over the last many thousands of years.

I now come to another development which has profoundly affected the course of events in South and South-East Asia — the emergence of Bangladesh, and the strength shown by India in the crisis. The change in the situation in the Indian subcontinent was generally recognized and needs no special elaboration. A new nation had been born, a nation which is the eighth largest in the world and the second largest in South Asia. It has been demonstrated that the pull of religion is a temporary phenomenon, that negative ideology and

hatreds were not enough to keep a country together and that cultural and socio-economic factors were more enduring than religious fanaticism.

The emergence of independent, democratic, progressive and non-aligned Bangladesh greatly strengthened the forces of democracy and progress in Asia. Gradually the struggle for democracy and socialism will spread elsewhere on the subcontinent also, and when the three countries on the sub-continent come together not in any formal link but in friendship and cooperation, the implications for the world's power structure can be well imagined. The path will no doubt be beset by innumerable road blocks. There would be setbacks and even temporary failure. The forces of reaction and obscurantism would assert and reassert themselves. But the vision of India for friendship and cooperation and independence should be clear and consistently followed.

It was perhaps inevitable that many major powers of the world reacted rather unhappily to the developments in the subcontinent. The struggle in Bangladesh and India's steadfast position and determination posed difficult choices for the major powers. The fast changing scene in the India sub-continent threatened to upset the calculations and evolving policies of some of these major powers.

The Soviet Union made a correct reappraisal of the new forces in the Indian sub-continent and realigned its policy in tune with the new realities, but the United States and China were both unable and unwilling to undertake a similar reappraisal. The reasons were not far to seek. Both the United States and China were in the process of discovering new areas of agreement, a new common language of understanding and a new search for detente. For them startling changes in the Indian sub-continent came at an inappropriate time and could unnecessarily snarl up their strategy. For the United States, the problem in the last decade has been how to evolve a new balance in Asia without scuttling its old alliances. The old balance created through military alliances in Asia, as with Taiwan, South Vietnam, South Korea, Thailand and Pakistan had collapsed. The bankruptcy of the policy was there for all to see. More recently the United States had painfully and agonisingly reappraised its policy and groped its way towards the establishment of new equations in the world, particularly in Asia.

The backbone of the new policy was the establishment of a new relationship with Peking. To evolve a new equation — Washington—Peking—Islamabad equation — was the cornerstone of the new policy. This was the new course that Dr. Henry Kissinger had paved the way for. Peking was equally responsive and keen to develop this relationship. Islamabad seemed to be important to both in this equation and in the establishment of a new relationship. A Washington—Peking—Islamabad balance of forces could be, as all the three sides hoped, a more acceptable and a more popular balance in Asia.

It would not carry any stigma associated with the military alliances of the past. Additionally, for the United States, the alliance with the military rulers of Pakistan provided a useful lever against India and this explains Washington's effort to maintain an artificial balance between West Pakistan and India. For Peking, the West Pakistani military rulers offered a very useful counterweight against India and it was ill-prepared to lose this counterweight. This explains the angry reactions of Peking and Washington to the developments in this sub-continent.

But things cannot always be as one wishes them to be. The emergence of Bangladesh, the assertion of India's strength and stability, the transformation of the Asian situation were all facts of life and could not be wished away. They would have a profound impact on international affairs for many decades to come.

China's preoccupation with big power politics with the improvement of relations with Japan and with her excessive concern for strengthening Pakistan have dimmed the chances of early normalization of Sino—Indian relations. Publicly China blames India's close relations with the Soviet Union for the immobility in Sino—Indian relations, but this is only an apparent reason. Peking can hardly seriously believe that India would attack China in concert with the Soviet Union and Peking knows too well that India is too independent-minded to become anybody's camp follower. Peking also knows India's desire and willingness for early normalization. If the present trend of Chinese foreign policy follows its logical course and if India's internal strength is not eroded, normalization of relation in due course could become a distinct possibility. That would be a gain for world peace.

Ever since the victory over fascism, two trends, two kinds of forces have been locked together in grim struggle. The trend towards peace, disengagement, independence, economic and cultural cooperation on the one hand and the trend towards dominance, supremacy, imposition of neo-colonial controls, heightening of international tension, dogmatism, and furious expansion of armaments on the other hand — these are the two trends struggling against each other, both present in the international situation and competing for victory. The spirit of detente has spread and the trend towards peace has gained in strength: the detente in Europe, the U.S.—Soviet detente, the Sino—U.S. detente, etc.

However, as President Tito said, this detente was still confined to a few areas and new pressures and tensions were also sought to be created. Marshal Tito said in New Delhi in January 1974: »In upholding the substitution of tension and confrontation by co-existence and cooperation, we have been gratified to welcome the tendency towards negotiated settlement of the problems burdening the world of today. The initial results gave us cause for optimism, but not yet for satisfaction with the prevailing situation. For, negotiation

is still confined to a small number of countries and to certain issues, and 'detente' to individual regions or only to relations among a number of countries.« He warned that the forces which still acted for a position of strength in relations, resorted to any means whatsoever to combat positive and inevitable historical trends, to reverse, stop or slow down the course of history, to secure old and gain new positions in various parts of the world.

A genuine concern is felt among the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America that sometimes in the name of detente, new power balances and new instruments of control are sought to be created. Mrs. Indira Gandhi gave voice to these apprehensions in a speech to the One Asia Assembly in New Delhi in February 1973, when she warned that »detente« should not become an occasion to build new balances of power and to redraw spheres of influence or to reinforce the opinion of certain big powers that they alone could be responsible for the shaping of the destinies of small nations. She denounced the theory of a Power vacuum as a continuation of the colonial outlook in another garb. Europe had shed its colonies not out of altruism or caprice but because of the rising power of Asian nationalism, she said.

Mrs. Gandhi said elsewhere that India welcomed detente between big powers but that it should be extended to all regions of the world. India was opposed to a policy which pursued detente in some regions but encouraged the policy of piling up of armaments and establishment of new bases and creation of new tensions in other regions. For the same reason, India, the non-aligned community and almost all the littoral states were opposed to the setting up of bases and the promotion of international naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Such actions and policies did not fit in with the protestation of commitment to detente in the world.

The spread of the spirit of detente can be traced to a variety of factors, but certainly the contribution of the struggle of the non-aligned countries cannot be ignored. The determination shown by the non-aligned countries to maintain their independent approach and their separate identity demonstrated both the validity and the effectiveness of the nonaligned approach. They not only provided bridges of understanding between antagonistic camps but also showed the possibilities opened up by such an approach; both these aspects contributed to the thaw in the cold war and the spread of the spirit of detente. This is not to minimize the other factors which played a role in reducing the tensions among the big powers, but only to assert that the contributions of non-alignment in this regard should not be brushed aside.

A new theory is often propagated these days in certain circles. It is said that detente has made non-alignment irrelevant. As the reasoning goes, no big power in the new international situation is

either seeking or encouraging alignments. Therefore, the stress on non-alignment was no longer relevant in this situation. This is only another way of sniping at non-alignment. The pertinent question is if non-alignment is irrelevant, is alignment more relevant in the new international situation. If alignment is even less relevant, then obviously non-alignment, if anything, is even more relevant today than ever before.

Naturally the function and the thrust of non-alignment have undergone change with the changing world situation. During the phase of acute cold war, the main emphasis of non-alignment inevitably was on building bridges of understanding between the big powers and the two opposing camps. Unfortunately, this gave rise to the general impression that to be an honest broker in international affairs was the only function of non-alignment. In fact, this was not the chief function of non-alignment. The major function of non-alignment was the strengthening of the independence, economic and political, of the emergent countries of the world. This independence could only be strengthened through the joint struggle and cooperation on every level of all the non-aligned countries. The world scene has changed radically in the last ten years. The old international order no longer answers the needs and requirements of the new situation. A new international order has to be evolved. Through their united efforts and through a display of genuine solidarity, the non-aligned countries must enable this community of nations to play their due role in the evolution of the new world order. Non-alignment has thus become even more valid and important today.

This is illustrated by the fact that more and more countries want to join the community of non-aligned nations. It already embraces the majority of the population of the world. If non-alignment was irrelevant, why should more and more countries want to be associated with this community of nations.

Today there is great disequilibrium in the international economic order also. The monetary system is out of joint. The developing world is at a greater disadvantage than ever before in regard to the currency system, the pricing mechanism, the terms of trade and the modalities and terms of aid from the developed world. A large number of developing countries is not only facing an energy crisis, but also and equally a crisis in the field of raw materials, food stuffs and manufactured goods. All these questions are inter-related. Unless the non-aligned countries join forces and pull together, they will all suffer severally and singly. Another major function of non-alignment, therefore, in the new situation is to unitedly work towards the establishment of an international economic system, which will be just and which will ensure greater opportunities for the less fortunate countries. If the non aligned countries make joint efforts and pool their resources, they can make a decisive impact on the international economic system.

To the extent that one can foresee, the developing international situation will be characterised by new equations, new friendships, new relationships. It will also be characterised by new types of regional organizations, the coming together of countries on a different basis than in the past. Sometimes, the road may lie through economic cooperation and sometimes through political collaboration and sometimes through both; certainly regional cooperation will take a more positive aspect and shed its past prejudices. The developments in Europe, the growing economic cooperation and the principles established at Helsinki for promoting peace and security in the region are pointers to the new pathways of peace and stability.

Economic cooperation cannot be fully maintained without a climate of political understanding. A similar striving for economic and political cooperation is evident in Latin America. I can visualize that in the coming years the demands of economic development and progress will exercise their pull on the Asian, African and Latin American countries and gradually many of these countries will be drawn together, not in hostility to others but in a common effort towards development and progress. The balance of forces will gradually shift in favour of political understanding and economic cooperation; it will also gradually shift in favour of those who stand for economic development with social justice. It will shift in favour of all these who strive for political equality and a just social order.

Many big and relatively big, actual or potential, powers can be readily identified; The Soviet Union and the United States, China and Japan, an emergent Europe including France and Germany, an emergent India, several countries of Latin America and Africa. Yugoslavia has played a dynamic role in world affairs. There are countries which are developing and yet are included in the category of »powers« of the world. Many will be the pulls and pressures on the third world, the developing world. And yet the balance of forces will continue to enable them to strengthen their independence and, given will and determination, to play an independent role. The world is moving towards plurality in a situation in which the preponderance of power still rests in the hands of two countries.

Two of the basic conceptual understandings of Jawaharlal Nehru have proved to be so utterly correct that the entire world seems to be moving in that direction. Non-alignment is no longer a dirty word. In fact, it is becoming the ruling philosophy of the world. More and more countries would turn away from entangling alliances and would find non-alignment offering them better scope for development and progress. Jawaharlal Nehru was also correct in his appraisal of the kind of challenge that the emergent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America faced and the nature of the security needs of these countries. Jawaharlal has said that external aggression by »communism« was not the real danger for these countries and that in the name of defence from external aggression, colonialist

pressures were being exerted from outside on these countries. Economic development and internal cohesion of society in the various countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America offered, in Jawaharlal's understanding, better defence for these countries than military pacts and alliances. This is a truth now dawning widely among the leaders of most of these countries.

The struggle between the two trends, the trend towards tension and armaments and attempts at control and hegemony, and the trend towards peace and independence and equality and social justice would continue for a long time. There would be ups and downs, temporary set-back and the pulls and pressures of big powers. The use of force by those who are powerful and the effort at creation of spheres of influence (witness what is being attempted in the Indian Ocean) would not go for a long time. But the forces of independence and social and economic progress have become stronger and will not allow the other trend to dominate and triumph.