

International Context, Non-Alignment, and Nehru's Foreign Policy Vision

1. India's emergence in a complex international environment

- Independence occurred after a devastating world war, global reconstruction, the formation of international institutions, and rapid decolonisation.
 - Newly independent states faced **twin challenges of welfare and democracy**, shaping India's early external outlook.
 - Partition-related disputes, poverty alleviation, and inherited colonial tensions created **immediate domestic pressures influencing foreign policy**.
 - India sought **security through peace and respect for sovereignty**, echoing Directive Principles on international peace and honourable relations.
 - Developing nations, including India, pursued **modest goals centred on peace, development, and autonomy**, often constrained by dependence on powerful states.
 - The Cold War divided the world into **US-led and USSR-led blocs**, creating the strategic dilemma within which India framed its foreign policy.
- pol science ch 4

2. Origins and meaning of the policy of Non-Alignment

- India's freedom struggle was part of a **worldwide anti-colonial movement**, shaping solidarity with Asia and Africa.
- Foreign policy reflected **ideals of sovereignty, anti-imperialism, and peaceful coexistence**, yet had to operate within Cold War realities.
- Non-alignment meant:
 - Avoiding military alliances with rival blocs.
 - Maintaining **independent judgement in global affairs**.
 - Seeking aid and cooperation from multiple sides without strategic subordination.
- India contributed to **reducing Cold War tensions and UN peacekeeping**, embodying moral-political independence.

- Imperfect balance appeared in crises (e.g., Suez vs Hungary responses), yet the overall stance remained **independent and pragmatic**.
- pol science ch 4

3. Nehru's leadership and foreign policy objectives

- Jawaharlal Nehru exercised **unparalleled influence** as both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (1946–1964).
 - Three core objectives:
 - Preservation of sovereignty.
 - Protection of territorial integrity.
 - Promotion of rapid economic development.
 - Strategy: **non-alignment combined with peaceful world order advocacy**.
 - Domestic debates existed (pro-US preferences among some leaders and parties), yet Nehru retained **policy autonomy**.
- pol science ch 4

4. Afro-Asian unity and India's global role

- India promoted **Asian solidarity, decolonisation, and anti-racism**, including support for Indonesia's freedom and opposition to apartheid.
- The **Bandung Conference (1955)** symbolised Afro-Asian cooperation and later led to the **Non-Aligned Movement (1961)**.
- India emerged as a **moral voice despite limited material power**, emphasising diplomacy over coercion.

Conflict, Wars, and Regional Realities (China and Pakistan)

5. India–China relations: From friendship to conflict

Early cooperation

- India quickly recognised the communist government in China and supported it internationally.
- **Panchsheel (1954)** articulated peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

Tibet and breakdown of trust

- China's control over Tibet removed a **strategic buffer**.
- Dalai Lama's asylum in India (1959) deepened tensions.
- Border disputes over **Aksai Chin and NEFA/Arunachal Pradesh** intensified conflict.

The 1962 war and its consequences

- Chinese invasion during global Cold War crisis exposed **India's military unpreparedness**.
- Produced:
 - National humiliation and intensified nationalism.
 - Political criticism of leadership and resignation of Defence Minister.
 - Long-term security and defence modernisation.
- Diplomatic relations normalised only gradually after 1976, later shifting toward **trade-centred engagement**.

Broader domestic impact

- Communist movement split; **CPI and CPI(M)** divergence.
- Northeast political reorganisation and integration efforts.

6. India–Pakistan relations: Wars, diplomacy, and Bangladesh

Kashmir conflict and early cooperation

- Conflict began immediately after Partition; issue taken to the UN.
- Yet cooperation occurred (abducted persons' return, **Indus Waters Treaty 1960**).

War of 1965

- Initiated by Pakistani offensives; India counter-attacked toward Lahore.
- Ended through **Tashkent Agreement (1966)**.
- Added strain to India's fragile economy.

Bangladesh War of 1971

- Triggered by political repression in East Pakistan and refugee influx into India.

- India supported liberation movement; signed **Treaty of Peace and Friendship with USSR** for security.
- Swift military victory created **Bangladesh** and boosted India's regional stature and domestic political legitimacy.
- **Shimla Agreement (1972)** formalised peace.

Long-term regional tensions

- Continued crises such as **Kargil (1999)** highlight persistent volatility despite peace initiatives.



Nuclear Policy, Shifting Alliances, and Overall Assessment

7. Defence, development, and nuclear trajectory

- Wars diverted scarce resources toward **defence modernisation**, disrupting planning.
- Nuclear programme initiated for **peaceful energy under scientific leadership**, with Nehru advocating global disarmament.
- India rejected **NPT as discriminatory** and conducted a **peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974**.
- Later nuclear tests (1998) demonstrated deterrence capability and led to sanctions, followed by adoption of **credible minimum deterrence and no-first-use doctrine**.

8. Post-1977 shifts and post-Cold War realignment

- Governments after 1977 reaffirmed **genuine non-alignment** while improving ties with both **US and China**.
- After 1990:
 - Russia's reduced global role.
 - Greater emphasis on **economic interests and pro-US orientation**.
 - Continued centrality of **Pakistan relations and Kashmir issue**.
 - Efforts toward peace through travel links, trade, and dialogue despite recurring crises.

9. Consensus, continuity, and concluding evaluation

- Broad domestic agreement on:
 - National integration.
 - Territorial protection.
 - Core national interests.
- Hence, **foreign policy rarely became a major partisan divide**.
- India's external relations reveal:
 - Constant tension between **idealism and security realities**.
 - Gradual shift from **moral leadership to strategic pragmatism**.
 - Persistent quest for **autonomy in a changing global order**

