

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q6(a)

"Non-alignment was little more than a rational strategy on the part of a materially weak India to maximise its interests with a bipolar distribution of global power." Comment

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 2 · 20 marks · India and the Global Centres of Power

India and the Global Centres of Power: USA, EU, Japan, China and Russia.

Core demand of the question

- "Non-alignment was a rational strategy of a weak India in a bipolar world." Comment
- Write at 20-mark length

Revision summary

A poor, partitioned India could not set bipolar structure.

Non-alignment was hedging and voice, not a third superpower.

Nehru and **Appadorai** fused ethics with autonomy.

- **Waltzian logic:** weak units avoid becoming someone else's front.

1971 showed the rational limit when a war for survival arrived.

Introduction

Bipolarity after 1945 forced most States toward one camp. A newly independent, militarily modest India refused both pacts. Non-alignment was a moral language. It was also a rational use of weakness, as **Nehru** argued and as a Waltzian map of poles would expect of a State that could not determine the system.

Body**Why "weak" is the right starting word**

- 1947 India had a partitioned army, a food problem, and no nuclear deterrent.
- It could not be a third pole. It could refuse to be a front-line ally that imported other people's wars.
- A. **Appadorai** presented the choice as independence of judgment. Rationality is that independence when capability is low.

Rationality in bipolarity

- Kenneth **Waltz**'s structure says great powers balance each other. Lesser States hide, hedge, or bandwagon.
- **Non-alignment was hedging:** aid and diplomacy from both sides without a NATO or Warsaw treaty.
- The UN and Afro-Asian platforms multiplied voice cheaply, a weak State's substitute for force.
- Moral anti-colonial leadership created status that tanks could not yet buy.

Evidence that it was strategy, not sermon only

- Food and capital came from several sources. Soviet industry and Western aid both appeared.
- When weakness met a sharp threat in 1971, India signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR. That is the exception that proves the bipolar constraint.
- 1962 showed the cost of military thinness. Non-alignment did not replace defence. It tried to buy time and friends.

Critiques of the formula

- Critics said it was a luxury of distance from Europe's front. China did not treat India as a peer of peace.
- Dependency writers would say "weak" also meant a place in Wallerstein's order, not only a missing alliance.
- **After 1991 bipolarity ended. The same autonomy needed new tools:** 1998 tests, the United States, and later the Quad.

Judgment

- The statement is largely true for 1947-71. It understates **Nehru's** belief that India would not stay weak. It understates NAM's claim to reshape order, not only to hide.

Flow diagram

Weak India -> Non-alignment
Bipolar US-USSR -> Non-alignment
Non-alignment -> Hedge both camps
Non-alignment -> UN NAM voice NAM voice
1971 USSR treaty -.exception under threat. -> Non-alignment

Conclusion

- **Non-alignment was a rational strategy for a weak India under bipolarity:** avoid camp war, harvest both sides, and speak at the UN. **Nehru** and **Appadorai** gave it philosophy. The **1971 treaty** shows what India did when weakness met a system shock. The phrase is right as a starting claim, not as the whole of Indian ambition.

Facts & figures

Nehru

Non-alignment as keeping freedom of action in a world of two military blocs.

Appadorai

Stated independent judgment and peace as the doctrinal core of the policy.

Waltz

Bipolar structure as the environment in which a weak State's alliance choice is fateful.

1971 treaty

India-USSR Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation: a wartime tilt that qualifies pure equidistance.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-2/2021/non-align-ment-was-little-more-than-a-rational-strategy-on-the-part-of-a-materially-weak-india-to-maximise-its-interests-with-a-bi-polar-distribution-of-global-power-comment/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com

WRAP Exams