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Q8(c)

"India has of late, chosen to debunk non-alignment in its pursuit of multi-alignment." Comment.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · PSIR GS 2 · 15 marks · India's Contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement

India's Contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement: Different phases; current role.

Core demand of the question

- State classical non-alignment and contemporary multi-alignment
- **Show practice:** Quad, BRICS, SCO, Russia, U.S., Global South
- **Comment:** 'debunk' is too strong; the pursuit of multi-alignment is real

Revision summary

Non-alignment was no-camp autonomy in a bipolar world; multi-alignment is many partnerships at once in a multipolar one.

India's Quad and U.S. pacts would have broken NAM orthodoxy; BRICS, SCO and Russia keep the other side of the ledger.

The aim remains strategic autonomy, as in **NonAlignment 2.0**.

'Debunk' overstates: the method has been updated, the aim has not been ridiculed.

Agree on the pursuit of multi-alignment; reject a cartoon of India mocking **Nehru**.

Introduction

Non-alignment was India's Cold War doctrine: no military camp, voice for the South, room to deal with both blocs. Multi-alignment is the present practice: many partnerships at once, including security minilaterals with the United States. The statement that India has debunked non-alignment in pursuit of multi-alignment captures a real shift. The verb **debunk** is too theatrical. India has **re-tooled** autonomy, not mocked its own past in a seminar.

Body**What has changed**

India sits in the **Quad** with three U.S. allies, holds 2+2s with Washington, and uses **Indo-Pacific** language (5(d)). That would have been unintelligible as NAM orthodoxy. At the same time it sits in **BRICS** and the **SCO** with China and Russia, buys discounted oil, and refuses a Ukraine condemnation camp (the autonomy of 7(c)). It convenes the **Voice of Global South**. This is **issue-based coalitions**, which **S. Jaishankar** has named in public. It matches the partial neoliberal turn of 6(a): markets and U.S. technology without a treaty.

Multi-alignment is not equidistance. It is the right to be **closer to Washington on China** and **closer to Moscow on platforms**, in the same year.

What has not been debunked

India still will not sign a **NATO-like alliance** (7(c)). It still uses NAM membership and South language when useful. The **end** - strategic autonomy in a hierarchical world - is Nehruvian even when the **means** are minilateral. **NonAlignment 2.0** already wrote this in 2012. To say India has 'debunked' non-alignment is to confuse **instrument** with **aim**. The instrument of a 120-member movement as the first tool has been set down. The aim of not being a junior ally has not.

Comment

Agree that **multi-alignment is the pursuit**. Disagree that non-alignment has been thrown out as a false theory. NAM was a method for bipolarity. Bipolarity ended. The successor method is multi-alignment. Continuity is autonomy. Change is the willingness to join the Quad without calling it a camp. An honest comment uses those two sentences, not a culture-war word like debunk.

Flow diagram

Non-alignment bipolar method -> Multi-alignment
Multi-alignment -> Quad US Indo-Pacific
Multi-alignment -> BRICS SCO Russia
Multi-alignment -> Global South voice
Multi-alignment -> Same aim: autonomy

Conclusion

- **India pursues multi-alignment:** Quad and the United States beside BRICS, SCO and Russia, plus a Global South voice. That is not classical NAM theatre. It is still autonomy. Non-alignment has been superseded as method. It has not been exposed as a fraud. Multi-alignment is the update, not the funeral oration.

Facts & figures

NAM Belgrade 1961

Institutional birth of non-alignment as a movement, with India as an intellectual engine.

NonAlignment 2.0

2012 document restating autonomy for a China-first world, already beyond NAM secretariat practice.

Quad plus BRICS

The emblematic pair of India's multi-alignment in the 2020s.