



Mains Practice Question

Q. Do you see a shift in India's international ethics in light of its non-alignment policy? Give reasons in support of your answer. (150 words)

10 Oct, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Briefly explain the idea of Non-Alignment.
- Mention the foundational principles guiding India's international ethics.
- Give reasons showing shift in India's international ethics with examples.

Introduction

India's non-alignment policy was based on the idea that a country should be free to have its own foreign policy, which should not be based on the dictates of any other country. Hence, it focused on self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-adherence to multilateral military pacts.

It was based on the 'Panchsheel' principles:

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
- Mutual non-aggression
- Mutual non-interference in domestic affairs
- Equality and mutual benefit
- Peaceful co-existence

Body

'Moral idealism' in Indian foreign policy:

- India's idealism in foreign policy is guided by its civilizational values of peace, tolerance and cosmopolitanism. Hence, India mainly relied on its soft power based on its culture, democratic governance, etc.
- India's active participation in drafting of the Universal Charter for Human Rights, India's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations, offering of Indian diplomatic services for mediation during the Korean war, were all intended to project India's civilizational responsibility to the international community.

Following factors indicate a shift in India's international ethics:

- **Priority to short term national interest:** National interest may come in conflict with ethics in international relations.
 - For ex: India going for nuclear weapons for its national interest even though it explicitly promotes nuclear disarmament and peaceful coexistence.
 - India did not raise 'Rohingya issue' with Myanmar due to its national interest even though

India has philosophy of '*Vasudev Kutumbakam*' and '*Atithi Devo Bhava*'.

- Elements of '**moral realism**' are emerging in an era of NAM 2.0 where due consideration is being given to power view of international politics.
 - India's shift to **realpolitik** can be observed during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, 1988 Operation Cactus in Maldives, and the recent foreign policy stance towards Pakistan.
- **Geo-political changes:** From non-alignment, India's ambition of being a 'net security provider' in the Indo-Pacific region pushes India to go for alliances and engage in military exercises.
 - For ex: the Malabar exercise with the USA and Japan, emergence of QUAD grouping with USA, Japan and Australia.

Conclusion

Even after a shift in its foreign policy, India's core values still remain intact. This can be seen in its support to peaceful transition in Afghanistan and its focus on people-to-people connect instead of the reliance on military dominance.

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