

Notes from the Editors of Monthly Review on U.S./NATO Imperium and the Resurgence of the Non-Aligned Movement

The Editors of Monthly Review

In September 2022, the journal Foreign Policy, one of the most influential establishment outlets for the articulation of the U.S. imperial grand strategy, published a column by C. Raja Mohan entitled “Why Non-Alignment Is Dead and Won’t Return.” Mohan’s argument was that the

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Non-Aligned Movement in the Global South died with the end of the Cold War some thirty years ago.

Today, the Non-Aligned Movement, he argued, can be characterised as a mere ghost or spectre, “the Cold War’s shadow,” haunting the U.S./NATO imperium, but ultimately posing “little threat to the West.... Third Worldism—with its offspring ideologies of pan-Asianism, pan-Arabism, and pan-Islamism [Mohan leaves out pan-Africanism, no doubt due to its continuing salience for Black radicals in the United States]—was a big failure” (C. Raja Mohan, “Why Non-Alignment Is Dead and Won’t Return,” Foreign Policy, September 10, 2022).

Yet, contradicting his own argument that the Non-Aligned Movement is dead, Mohan was chiefly concerned in his article with decrying its sudden resurrection and the growing threat that this represents to the U.S. dominated rules-based international order. The positions adopted by countries throughout the Global South with respect to the Ukraine War point to the deep divisions that exist today between the Global North and the Global South. Not only has most of



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Not only has most of the rest of the world outside of the imperialist triad of the United States/Canada, Europe, and Japan, comprising more than 80 percent of the global population, refused to join Washington's sanctions against Moscow, but countries representing a majority of the world's population have refused, in a series of UN votes, either to support NATO's proxy war in Ukraine or to condemn Russia for its military intervention there. Likewise, the Global South as a whole is strongly opposed to U.S. military provocations aimed at generating a crisis with respect to Taiwan's position as part of China.

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brought the Non-Aligned Movement, with its 120 members worldwide, back into the center of geopolitical discussions (Paweł Wargan, "[NATO and the Long War on the Third World](#)," Monthly Review, January 2023, 28; Mark Green, "The Countries that Have Sanctioned Russia," Wilson Center, May 10, 2022).

The Non-Aligned Movement had its origin in the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955, when the newly liberated governments and peoples of Africa and Asia came together to express their opposition to imperialism and desire for a multipolar world. It was, from the first, an attempt to create a broad anticolonial and anti-imperialist alliance, crossing class and political lines and giving rise to the notion of the third world. Yet, in the dominant Western ideology, the Non-Aligned Movement was simply a product of the Cold War, creating a third bloc unaligned with either superpower. It was said to have been subsequently corrupted by an ideology of anticapitalism and pro-Sovietism, led by nations such as Cuba, the first Latin American state to join the movement. With the demise of the Soviet Union, nonalignment had supposedly lost all meaning.

In a refutation of this hegemonic view, Samir Amin, wrote:

*To believe the repetitive chatter from the Washington media, the idea of reviving non-alignment would be a pipe dream. In this narrative, everything that happened in the world between 1945 and 1990 can only be explained by the Cold War, and nothing else. The USSR has disappeared, and the Cold War along with it, so any position similar to those known at that time makes no sense. Consider the absurdity of this attitude and the incredibly contemptuous—even racist—prejudice that underlies it. The true history of the Bandung Conference and the non-alignment that emerged from it demonstrated that the Asian and African peoples undertook an initiative at the time by themselves and for themselves.... Non-alignment was already "non-alignment on globalisation," on the model of globalisation that the imperialist powers wanted to impose on newly independent countries by means of neocolonialism as a replacement for a defunct colonialism. Non-alignment proceeded from a refusal to submit to the requirements of this reasserted imperialist globalisation.... Today, the countries of the South are again confronted with an imperialist globalisation project of which they would be the victims. Their willingness not to submit to its requirements places a "rebirth" of non-alignment on globalisation back on the agenda. We can call that "Bandung 2," if we want. (*The Long Revolution of the Global South* [Monthly Review Press, 2019], 406).*

The more than thirty years since the demise of the USSR in 1991 have witnessed constant attempts of the United States to consolidate a unipolar world with the backing of what, in 2006, Foreign Affairs was to dub "Global NATO." During

this period, Washington has unleashed more military interventions, including its invasion of Iraq, than in all of its previous history. Meanwhile, Global NATO itself emerged as an aggressive force engaging in major wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, followed by its current proxy war in Ukraine. Ironically, although resistance to imperialist

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globalisation—rather than the conflicts generated by the Cold War—can be seen to be the main source of the Non-Aligned Movement throughout its history, it is the New Cold War unleashed by the West against the Eurasian powers, China and Russia, that is now generating a renewed thrust toward nonalignment. According to Marcos Carnelos in Middle East Eye, there is no denying that “Russian and Chinese views are shared by the Global Rest, to say the least”—defining the Global Rest here as those numerous countries of the Global South opposed to the imperialist globalisation imposed by the Global West

(Ben Norton, [“U.S. Launched 251 Military Interventions Since 1991, and 469 Since 1798,”](#) Multipolarista, September 16, 2022; Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier, “Global NATO,” Foreign Affairs, September–October 2006; Marco Cornelos, [“Russian Resilience, US Overconfidence, and Chinese Calm: The West Versus the Rest,”](#) Middle East Eye, December 9, 2022).

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- ❖ **About this paper:** This paper was originally published in English by Monthly Review in March 2023.
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