

# **International Relations**

## **Current Affairs 2023**

## Making Best Use of This Book

There will be two types of students who will be using these notes 1) Those who're giving Mains this year & 2) Those who're preparing for next year.

If you're giving Mains this year, you don't have to read every article given in these booklets. We've already classified the articles according the official UPSC syllabus. Have a look at index, and for the topics where you have not yet prepared so far, read from this book. The names of articles also talk about its content. Thus, see for yourself that if you've read about this particular dimension of the topic. We recommend that at least do 2-3 iterations of these notes.

The last article in IR section i.e. Important Data & Statistics will do good amount of value addition in your PSIR answers. This will also give you something to talk about in essay as well. Please make an attempt to remember the figures which are going to help you in exam. If you don't think you can use them, don't waste your time.

For those who're preparing for next year, you've some luxury of time. Read these articles nicely and add points /quotes/data etc. to your static notes. This will complement your static notes and make your preparation comprehensive.

We heartily wish all the best for all candidates writing Mains this year.

Regards,  
Abhijeet Pimparkar,  
Director, Politics for India

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Published by, Politics for India

24<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<https://politicsforindia.com>

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# 1] Paradiplomacy: New Dimension of Indian Foreign Policy

Para-diplomacy refers to the diplomacy that non-central governments undertake. In simple words, when sub-national governments such as states, provinces, or even cities conduct international affairs to further their interests, it is known as para-diplomacy. Para-diplomacy is deemed to be the future of diplomacy. The increasing usage of terms like ‘town twinning’ or ‘sister cities’, etc. displays its growing trend.

Para-diplomacy is gradually gaining ground in India. The process has accelerated, especially since 2014 when NDA assumed power. With many countries adopting it and reaping its benefits, several questions too have come to the fore. This article explores the various dimensions of this diplomacy while also tracing its trajectory and achievements in India so far.

From a scholarly perspective, para-diplomacy is a recent phenomenon. The terms substate diplomacy, decentralized cooperation, people-to-people diplomacy, and intermestic affairs are also used synonymously. Its study began as a subset of the study of federalism in countries like Australia and Canada.

Conventionally, diplomacy and international relations have been the sole prerogative of nation-states across the world. But, with the wave shifting towards increased federalism, diplomacy too is being redefined. Thus, diplomacy, too, was an indivisible and non-transferable function of the sovereign state.

Since paradiplomacy involves greater autonomy of the substate governments, federal countries naturally take a lead in it. For example, Canada and Australia have taken huge strides in this direction. However, this is not to suggest that it is alien to quasi-federal or even non-democratic countries. The impressive FDI performance of China owes its success to paradiplomacy, which combines central coordination with municipal diplomacy.

However, beginning in the 1970s, scholars began studying federalism, especially that of Canada or Australia. This gave a new impetus to the study of diplomatic role of the substate governments.

Canadian scholar, Panayotis Soldatos, while describing the essence of paradiplomacy, says that it “is a result of a crisis at the level of the nation-states’ systemic process and foreign-policy performance.” Thus, according to him, paradiplomacy is an attempt to remedy the crisis. He holds that “decentralization could enhance unity and efficiency in external relations” because “actor segregation does not become policy segregation and a subnational paradiplomacy helps to rationalize the whole foreign policy process.”

Thus, the discussion around paradiplomacy revolves around the ideal of federalism. According to Stefan Wolff, limited external relations powers is a precondition for an

autonomous substate unit. However, paradiplomacy cannot be said to be an essential attribute of federalism, although federalism is undoubtedly a key contributor to the growth of paradiplomacy.

Paradiplomacy serves various purposes on the ground that make it desirable. Usually, regional governments depend on the Union's resources for their functions. But, any government has limited resources. Thus, through substate diplomacy, a regional government can attract FDI. Also, for a diverse country like India, paradiplomacy offers regional governments alternatives to develop a growth model that caters to its local needs. Thus, scholars often say that paradiplomacy leads to the 'globalisation of local issues.'

The major forces behind the rising trend of paradiplomacy are the twin phenomena of globalisation and liberalization. With the growth of an integrated world economy, even state governments are impacted by global phenomena. Thus, to further their interests, they too engage in foreign diplomacy.

Paradiplomacy is strongly supported both among academic circles as well as among the practitioners in the world of diplomacy.

If we look around the world, several countries are adopting and benefitting from economic paradiplomacy. It allows States to promote and attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). For example, the city of Sao Paulo in Brazil is the richest city in Latin America. Municipal paradiplomacy helped it witness a meteoric rise. China, although an autocratic state has been able to attract impressive FDI with the help of similar approach.

In India, there is an increasing involvement of state governments in the realm of diplomacy, especially economic diplomacy. India is a federal state with a unitary bias. Thus, the Indian Constitution puts foreign relations and defence in the Union list mentioned in the Seventh Schedule. Nonetheless, states are increasingly participating in foreign diplomacy.

In India, paradiplomacy came into play post-1967, when regional coalition governments led to an increase in states' autonomy. However, it remained lacklustre for next few years. It gained impetus post-liberalisation in the 1990s. For example, in 1992, when the power sector was first opened to private foreign investors, the government of Maharashtra entered into an agreement with Texas electric giant, Enron, and General Electric to finance its Dabhol Project. The project operationalized only after the then Central government actively supported it.

At present, several states are increasingly willing to utilise this opportunity to pursue economic reforms and outreach. Vibrant Gujrat, Magnetic Maharashtra, Invest Odisha and similar efforts by UP, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Haryana, North-East etc. are indicative of this. Border states are incidental in promoting trade with neighbouring countries. Punjab, for example, has built additional trade routes at the Wagah border. Tripura has excelled in organising border haats.

The foreign diplomacy of substates, however, is not limited to economy. They are also important in subjects such as security, environment and resource management.

Paradiplomacy also brings with it some difficulties. We have seen incidents when the Union and state governments differ on a policy, jeopardising the nation's interests. For instance, the West Bengal govt., stopped then PM Dr. Manmohan Singh from signing the Teesta Water Agreement with Bangladesh. Similarly, Tamil Nadu had insisted that India should not support the US resolution against Sri Lanka in the UNHRC. Also, Kerala had insisted on punishing the Italian marines who killed two fishermen, souring relations between India and the EU.

Such incidents, however, do not negate the benefits offered by paradiplomacy and can be resolved by establishing formal institutions and framing clear guidelines. Currently, paradiplomacy is still in a nascent phase in India. For it to harness the full potential of the opportunity, an ample institutional setup needs to be established. The centre should act as an observer and a monitor to ensure that the foreign policy goals of the states and the Union are in sync, especially in non-economic matters.

Paradiplomacy holds immense potential, especially for a diverse country like India. With clear policies and institutions, it has the potential to accelerate India's growth.

## 2] India's Non-alignment with Non-Alignment Movement

### Introduction

In 2016, instead of Prime Minister, the seventeenth NAM Summit was attended by the Vice-President of India. Since then NAM has been the centre of debate in India, with important scholars and leaders scrutinizing its relevance in the hastily changing global norms. Dr. S. Jaishankar recently said that NAM was an idea born in a particular temporality, and believes that India, taking the concept of independence of action from NAM, should move beyond it to respond efficiently to contemporary developments.

One need not introduce the NAM, a movement born out of the cold war and represented one of the most important factors of the changing international scene. The main objective of the NAM was to keep the newly independent third-world countries out of the non-necessary issues that might suck them in if they chose either of the blocs. Maintaining this line of thought many scholars argue that since the cold war has ended the purpose of NAM no more exists, so even the NAM should cease to exist. Yet, another set of scholars believe that the NAM is more necessary today as the gulf between the rich and the poor widens on a global scale.

### The case for a redundant NAM

Prof. Hans Koechler, a leading expert on NAM says, "NAM is not relevant today, it was relevant only during the cold war era Bi-polar world. Now there is only one dominant global power (the U.S.) and in this unipolar world, NAM has lost its relevance. NAM has emerged more of a moral influence" adds Koechler. "It is not about the specific measures. It is about the principles of Sovereignty, Independence, non-interference, peaceful settlement of disputes and North-South relations and economic relations between member states". Koechler also adds that most of the NAM countries are heavily dependent on the US which does not really leave them non-aligned.

The most significant case against NAM is that the cold war has ended and so has NAM's raison d'être. There is no more fear of two military blocs possibly destroying the world in the heat of the moment. The military blocs like Seato and Cento and Warsaw have become redundant and tumbled down. moreover, Military bases have become a thing of the past owing to advances in science and technology and its use for military purposes. The most crucial part of NAM's agenda was that of pushing for the decolonization of all the colonized countries. As this task has been achieved there seems no reason to continue with the NAM.

Today the NAM is not in a position to act even as a forum for displaying solidarity. The NAM has no charter and there are no strict rules on whether the member countries have to defend each other's actions. Today, the NAM competes with similar international organisations like



the G-7, ASEAN, and the Commonwealth. However, due to the fact that they focus on business and trade, other organisations are more productive. This is not something the NAM does, nor does it engage in any diplomatic activity.

NAM has no actual issues either. Along with other social and economic challenges, it may have shown some leadership in the areas of nuclear nonproliferation, child labour, poverty, and terrorism. To be able to continue to have an impact on global politics, NAM urgently needs fresh topics and themes to concentrate on. If not, it will be yet another pointless conference. NAM has failed to make any progress even on issues where there is general agreement, like the drug trade, international terrorism, and non-proliferation.

According to Jagat S. Mehta, a former Indian Foreign Secretary; NAM was started to advocate for the independent rights of nations and that has been achieved, hence, the mission should be declared accomplished and NAM should be discontinued.

### Is NAM really redundant?

Even with all these loopholes, NAM has maintained its regular schedule of summit meetings since its formation. Moreover, the steadily growing memberships of NAM eliminate all doubts as to the relevance of the NAM.

But this increasing number is also a bane to the organisation as it is turning NAM into a club where one can discuss and debate international issues rather than resolve them. The summit declarations don't include anything particular that suggests the movement is really grappling with the problems caused by a unipolar strategy intended to retain the North's hegemony over the South. Most importantly, the NAM's progress towards its two primary and consistent goals, development and the eradication of poverty, continues to lag behind.

Despite the fact that the bipolar world has ended, Washington should not become the political Mecca for individuals who had shied away from aligning themselves with either of the two blocs. It is clear that the assertion that "NAM is dead" is being actively promoted by some Western commentators is nothing less than a canard (unfounded rumour/story). A severely Euro-Center-centric international political landscape characterises the current unipolar world and is becoming increasingly featureless. The NAM, which saw the transition of the world from bipolar to unipolar and now a multipolar one, is possibly more important now than it has ever been in the history of international relations and development.

Today, more than ever, NAM has a plethora of work to do. It has to set up a new international order through the UN, restructure and democratize the UN; enhance South-South cooperation and coordination with the G-77; foster cooperation in the areas of food cooperation, population, trade and investment; ensure equitable international flow of trade and transfer of technology; and oppose interventionism and imposition of economic conditions on developing countries. Given that more than half of the world still suffers from the issues relevant to NAM, it is pointless to question the relevance of the same. **As diplomat**

**N. Krishnan reminds us, “dynamics of globalization have produced a whole set of new problems which the Non-Alignment Movement must take note of.”**

The repetitive question of the time is non-alignment with whom? The answer is non-alignment with the hegemony of great powers. It may be difficult to practice it in a unipolar world but the policy as such does not cease to be pertinent (relevant).

**India and the NAM**

India is a founding member of the NAM. And since its birth NAM has been playing a very active role in fostering cooperation among nations, particularly among developing countries. India has felt it useful to continue to support and actively engage with the movement because it has provided a high profile and strong voice to India in international fora and affairs.

Especially, after the Covid-19 pandemic, India and most third-world countries have realised the need for solidarity against powerful institutions to avail even the basic necessities like healthcare. India’s Prime Minister, Mr Modi, also participated in the virtual NAM summit in 2020 and called NAM ‘the moral voice’ of the world. Moreover, in the emerging cold war between the US and China, it will be in favour of India to hold the leadership position in the Global South.

If India has the ambition to play a major role in the global economy and it must necessarily think of taking the leadership of the Non-aligned while taking into account the norms of international relations.

**Conclusion**

The time is ripe to evaluate the past and formulate future policies for the Non-aligned countries to change the existing international order. None of the NAM countries or groups of countries, however, big or rich they may be, can face these new realities alone. Hence, the countries of NAM must continue to stay and act together for common thought and action.

This means that the uni-dimensional and uni-polar version of the new international system needs to be contested by the NAM as a whole. Unity and solidarity among the Non-aligned countries are all the more necessary in the present crisis in international relations.

The realities of current politics make non-alignment equally relevant today for the developing countries of the world as it was during the cold war period. In the words of former **Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao**, “**Nonalignment basically consists of the espousal of the right of nations to independence and development, regardless of the bloc phenomenon. Whether there is one bloc or more at a given moment, the urge for a nonaligned country would continue to be to maintain its independence, to take decisions according to its light, not tagging along itself, in advance to others.**”

### 3] What can SAARC learn from ASEAN?

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are prominent regional organisations of South and South-east Asia, established to facilitate cooperation and integration within their respective geographic regions.

SAARC comprises South Asian nations, that include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. On the other hand, ASEAN brings together Southeast Asian countries, i.e. Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Despite being geographically close, these two entities have distinct objectives, challenges, and approaches to regional cooperation, and can be seen in their success/failure over decades.

SAARC, founded in 1985, aims to promote collective growth and development in South Asia. It seeks to foster economic, social, and cultural ties among member nations to tackle common challenges, such as poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. However, the organisation has faced numerous obstacles, mainly due to historical and political tensions between some member states, hindering its progress towards meaningful integration. The Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan has been a longstanding issue that has impeded cooperation and trust within SAARC. Additionally, intra-regional trade remains significantly lower compared to other regional organisations, limiting the potential benefits of economic integration.

In contrast, ASEAN, established in 1967 with similar objectives, has made incredible strides towards regional cooperation and integration. ASEAN has been successful in creating a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution among member states, helping to prevent conflicts and maintain regional stability. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member nations, known as the "ASEAN Way," has facilitated constructive engagement and consensus-building.

#### **Achievements of ASEAN**

ASEAN's achievements in economic integration have been particularly noteworthy. The establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1992 has significantly boosted intra-regional trade and investment flows. ASEAN's economic success is also evident in the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, which aims to create a single market and production base, facilitating the flow of goods, services, and skilled labour within the region. Further, the AEC has enhanced ASEAN's competitiveness globally and attracted substantial foreign investment.

One of the key reasons for ASEAN's success is its ability to adopt a pragmatic and inclusive approach to regional cooperation. Unlike SAARC, ASEAN member states have focused on addressing achievable goals and gradually expanding their initiatives. The organisation has

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