

Editor's Note

Iran and Non-Aligned Politics

The NAM summit held in Tehran in the end of August 2012 attracted the attention of Iran-watchers around the world. A few issues like President Morsi of Egypt's participation and statement, specially on Syria, the mistranslation of some of his words, and Banki Moon, the General Secretary of the United Nations' presence and position and of course Netanyahu's pronouncements against the Summit were more highlighted in the media. However, there is an analytical question to be raised and answered; how the relationship between Iran's foreign policy and non-aligned movement can be understood? "Reality", "Identity" and "Utility" are useful concepts in this context.

The NAM summit reflected the realities of contemporary international politics. It is not a Pax-Americana and a totality western world system. Though the majority of the NAM members enjoy a good relationship with the west, yet the search for alternative narratives of international politics is a reality which cannot be ignored. Iran is of this view that the diversity of international politics narratives is highly needed.

This reality explains some dimension of the identity of Iran's foreign policy. Iran identifies itself with the Global South, embodied in the NAM. Iranian foreign policy is of multiple layers of identities. Iran identifies itself as a Muslim, non-Arab, Asian and developing nation in its foreign policy formulation and implementation. These identities are of a dynamic and constructive nature. NAM summit

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strengthened the connectivity of Iran with the South.

Furthermore, the NAM summit had a remarkable utility for the foreign policy establishment of Iran. NAM is a multilateral diplomatic entity and multilateral diplomacy is not the exclusive game of any players in today world. In fact, with the exception of the Security Council, even in the United Nations, the developing countries benefit from multilateral diplomacy. This highly technical diplomacy has a diversity of utility including producing domestic, regional and international legitimacy, being platform for presenting alternative views and creating space for norm setting and building coalitions. NAM offers Iran and other members these functions significantly.

In short, beyond headlines, the NAM summit in Tehran, reflected the reality in the South for alternative readings of international politics, highlighted the identity of South and utility of multilateral diplomacy for the South: all of high importance for Iran's foreign policy.

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