

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I want to thank the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) for inviting me to this prominent series of contributions to commemorate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence. This is truly an honour.

Some may wonder whether it is appropriate for a foreigner to participate in this auspicious national commemoration. I dare say it is most appropriate. In fact, I would go even further to assert that the commemoration would not be complete if only by nationals. My logic in reaching this conclusion is quite simple and straightforward. Many of your leaders have inspired others well beyond your borders. And India has had an auspicious role in defining the prevailing world order.

Needless to say, and amongst the reasons my conclusions are self-evident is the independence of India cannot be commemorated without recalling Mahatma Gandhi, the great leader who guided your

country towards independence. Gandhi has been a generational universal role model for nonviolent resistance, unwavering strength and resolute determination for peoples longing for freedom across unruly oceans and vast dry terrains .

Equally true, India has been a geostrategic heavy weight for many generations. Its singular role in regional and global affairs has been instrumental in defining the parameters of regional and global orders. This was particularly evident in the transformational decades subsequent to WWII and the tenuous times of the Cold War between the Eastern and Western blocs.

As the world was being reconstructed in the ashes of destruction, and a greater number of developing countries gained independence, their voice and interests needed to be considered and respected. Propagating this view and defending this inalienable right came naturally to India, given the high moral standard of its leaders, and that it itself had just gotten rid of the shackles of colonialism.

Many of these same concerns were high in the minds of emerging leaders in my own country Egypt. Together India and Egypt, emerged as leaders amongst the developing world in the pursuit of global justice. This was not at all surprising :

- In modern history, both India and Egypt struggled to gain their independence after decades of colonialism in order to rebuild their countries.
- Egypt's Saad Zaghloul and India's Mahatma Gandhi shared similar principles related to their independence movements. They did not only struggle for their own rights but they also backed other nations that sought freedom and independence.
- This continued for decades, in the midst of a polarized world during the Cold War, together, under the leadership of Nasser and Nehru alongside other developing nations, established the

Non-Alignment Movement. The objective was to be a constructive alternative voice unencumbered by Cold War concepts or their unjustified even illegitimate assumptions that between them exclusively they could set the world order and lead it.

- The movement refused to be aligned with either of the two superpowers at that time. Its leaders strived to change the unfair world order that centred around the interests of the United States from one side and the Soviet Union from the other, neglecting the interests of other countries especially the developing ones. Numerous successes can be attributed to the efforts of the Non-alignment Movement and our two countries in particular, symptomatic is the vast increase in the number of states joining the United Nations, the core institution of the contemporary world order.
- Ironically as the Cold War ended, or seemed to end in light of recent Ukraine events, with the transformation of the international order from a bipolar system to a unipolar one, with

the world moving towards a multipolar one, the main purpose and relevance of the Non-Alignment Movement mistakenly seemed to be diminished or less relevant. Various questions were raised about the role and destiny of the movement in a world in the absence of two clear poles between which the movement could find a position consistent with its posture and center of gravity.

- This was in fact true. However I believe that such questions neglect the pivotal contribution of the movement in shaping the international order for more than half a century just because the Cold War ended. The movement had an invaluable role in shaping history in turbulent times, this cannot and should not be diminished. Nor is it a process that comes endlessly dormant. This is particularly true in periods of transformation and turbulence as we see today.

- Some constructive suggestions were raised to change the name of the movement, for example, “the League of Developing Countries” to be more commensurate with interests of the now independent developing world. Ultimately the name was kept as it is in recognition of its historical significance and achievements in the international arena. I also believe it is ever more relevant irrespective what the name is in a global environment with tremendous opportunity and immense challenges.

India’s Achievements:

- Needless to say, in the era of globalization, India has achieved prominent economic development while keeping neutral distance from the two poles by applying harsh self-reliant policy to enhance its internal affairs. In fact, it is amongst the most effective economies in the era of globalization.

- India became amongst the emerging economies ‘the BRICS’ alongside Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa, and also joins the meetings of the G8.
- India was among the top ten growing economies in two years, 2016 (7th out of 203) and 2015 (9th out of 204).
- Despite the pandemic, India was among the countries that witnessed GDP growth in the third quarter of 2021 by 12.7% and among the countries that are leading the bounce back from Covid-19 across the G20 forum of the world’s major economies.
- India did not only serve its own population during the pandemic but also acted for the well-being of the international community. It provided medical supplies to more than 150 countries worldwide especially the COVID-19 vaccines.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am not overly concerned about reviving the Non-Alignment Movement in its past role, I do however believe that the movement or at least its leaders must stand unwavering in assert and revising high the moral code shared by its members to establish a more equitable world order providing security and hopefully prosperity for all. I do believe that once again the world order has been transformed into disorder and wise voices of internationalism are even more imperative.

JOINT EGYPTIAN INDIAN COOPERATION

Considering the changing nature of the global system, I believe it is time for both Egypt and India alongside other member-states to reinvigorate their respective and collective expressions and opinions on how to create a more equitable, stable and secure world order. Bipolar politics are remnants of the past, even in light of the recent tragic events in Ukraine. Archaic balance of power concepts need to be replaced by contemporary universal concepts of collective security and a balance of interests. International institutions need to be

reviewed and reformed. Paramount issues of excessive armaments and poverty reduction must again regain prominence.

First of all, the member-states need to rebuild the trust among themselves and open the door for constructive discussions to formulate a concrete agenda in order to regain the credible and influential role of the movement in the international arena.

- The member-states need to agree on a collective agenda around the substantial international issues in order to restore the collective positions and increase effectiveness.
- India, Egypt and the member-states should adopt a contemporary initiative that is consistent with the changing global politics while maintaining and affirming its fundamental concepts that are concerned with promoting the countries' sovereignty and independence and non-intervention in their internal affairs.

- This initiative should encompass a number of issues and carry a distinguished message that aims at asserting the independence of the member-states and enhancing their ability to participate as effective players in the international arena.
- Of particular concern is neo-colonialism, which has been the new instrument for former colonial powers to interfere in the internal affairs of the former colonies which gained their independence.
- The major powers have been using the conditional aid to interfere in formulating the economic policies of developing countries in order to maintain their dominance over the natural resources that our countries have, besides restraining their ability to develop their economic capacities.
- Therefore, together India and Egypt with their regional and international influential positions should support other countries to

develop their economic sectors in order to have a more independent stance on the global level.

- Such assistance can evolve into a comprehensive collective economic cooperation among the member-states that will eventually enable them to be liberated from the chains of the neo-colonial powers.
- While enhancing their economic capacities, member-states, which have an international weight such as India and Egypt should cooperate in evolving a fairer international order, which no longer depends on the balance of powers but rather on the balance of interests of all the countries.

A number of substantial issues should be included in our common agenda as follows:

1. Reconsidering the Peace and Security International Institutions:

- Needless to say that the United Nations is the most important institution that is responsible for maintaining global peace and security, particularly the Security Council. However, as it is mentioned, its membership is another remnant of post-World War II era. Equally archaic is the absolute right given to its permanent members to veto, which is very dialectic and has hindered many substantive resolutions in unjustifiable way.
- I suggest that we need to adopt an initiative that calls for amending the rules of procedure of the Security Council in order to ensure that using veto will not conflict with the collective interest and security of the international community.
- Needless to say, any suggestions on this matter will be encountered by the veto countries. Nevertheless , I believe that countries like India and Egypt have a moral

responsibility to initiate a proposal robustly. It is not fair to give a group of countries more privileges than the rest.

- In essence, we need to embrace the promotion of democracy and equality not only on the national level but also in international affairs as well. In short, international relations and its institutions need to be democratized.
- It is imperative that our two countries play a leading role in international disarmament efforts, particularly with respect to weapons of mass destruction nuclear, chemical and biological and their means of delivery. Global nuclear disarmament is ever so important.
- Equally important is cooperation between the two countries to ensure that outer space does not become another stratosphere for military and arms completion. It should be invested for peaceful purposes for the benefit of mankind.

- As important as hard security issues are, I cannot overemphasize on the importance of cooperation in combating extremism and terrorism.

2. Regional Military Conflicts:

- States like India and Egypt need to have a more diplomatically robust stance towards the inter and intra-state military conflicts through supporting the states' integrity and sovereignty in accordance with the international law.

3. The Economic Sphere:

- Since a considerable number of states in our global village are among the emerging economies, India and Egypt need to have a leading role in re-shaping not only political but also the financial and economic international system to be more democratic, inclusive and fairer.

- This means that the membership of the different economic groups needs to be expanded to include more countries from the developing nations.
- The current system is only permitting a limited number of countries to have a say in the international economic decisions, which are imposed on the rest of the world without involving everyone in the decision-making process.
- This outdated system embeds neo-colonialism instead of collective interests.
- I believe that the developing countries are deprived of deciding their own destiny.

- Therefore, a fairer voting system for the international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund is wanted.
- I believe that the Movement should start the change from inside through adopting funding mechanisms to the small and medium projects inside the member-states.
- Such projects will promote the independence of the national economies of the developing countries and foster its position against any intervention or exploitation.
- And as Egypt hosts Cop 27 in November, it is most important to emphasize joint efforts in combating and mitigating the consequences of climate change

comprehensively, as a global challenge and responsibility, and to do so with the least possible effect on legitimate efforts to pursue growth and prosperity in developing countries. All countries have to develop more efficiently with fewer ramifications on global climate change, this can only be done by developed country support to developing countries to transform the technologies and diversify energy sources as they transform more aggressively towards green clean energy sources

My concluding remark is actually a call for uniting our cause to revive the influential role of India and Egypt in the international arena to be able to participate as effective players in the decision-making and the renovation of the international agenda.

This revival will benefit the common good of the globalised world that induces us to work together for the well-being of the international community.

My highest and warmest congratulations to India and its people on the auspicious occasion and celebration.