The four purposes of the Asian-African Conference

1. to promote goodwill and cooperation among the nations of Asia and Africa, to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interests and to establish and further friendliness and neighbourly relations;

2. to consider social, economic and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented;

3. to consider problems of special interest to Asian and African peoples, e.g. problems affecting national sovereignty and of racialism and colonialism;

4. to view the position of Asia and Africa and their peoples in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and cooperation.
EDITORIAL NOTE.

This bulletin and a similar one in the Indonesian language are published at the suggestion of the Indonesian premier and with the agreement of the Joint Secretariat of the Asian-African Conference. They are designed to advance public understanding of the aims, activities and the achievements of the Asian-African Conference which is in the cause of world peace and universal well-being.

We hope that they will be a useful source of information to both the Indonesian as well as foreign readers who are interested in the Conference.

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No. 1
Asian-African Conference

Towards its Realisation

Premier U Nu of Burma
Premier Sir John Kotelawala of Ceylon
Premier Nehru of India
Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo of Indonesia
Premier M. Ali of Pakistan

I t is fitting that a bulletin devoted to the Asian-African Conference should begin with a resume of events leading up to the holding of that conference.

For centuries countries in South-East Asia have been subjected to the colonial policies of the Western Nations. Colonialism separated these once-colonised countries from each other and prevented their closer co-operation. As colonies they were always pushed in the background and they never participated in the solution of world-problems, not even problems affecting their own fates.

Their positions of subjugation to Western nations never allowed them to develop natural resources to the benefit of their own national economy and remained therefore economically underdeveloped. Colonialism left them with a multitude of problems, to which solutions had to be sought as soon as they gained their national independence after World War II. These problems are common to the newly-born countries in South- and South-East Asia. To solve these common problems, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Sir John Kotelawala, invited the Prime Ministers of Burma, India, Indonesia and Pakistan to meet him in Ceylon for friendly discussions. The need for these friendly discussions was then felt all the more, when the situation in Indo-China grew worse and could therefore easily affect their countries. All these five countries depend for their future and the wellbeing of their peoples upon peace as a prerequisite to their plans of development and reconstruction.

All five countries have economic problems which can only be solved through a degree of industrial development, and, in general, are still strangers to the industrial revolution. Indeed they had many common problems to discuss.

Therefore, the Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan met in Ceylon between 28th April and 2nd May, 1954. This meeting was referred to variously as the Conference of Asian Prime Ministers, or as the Colombo Conference from the name of the city where the five Prime Ministers met.

The meeting took place concurrently with the Geneva Conference which aimed at a solution of the Indo-China question. The five Asian Premiers proposed at Colombo that France should declare at the Geneva Conference that she is irrevocably committed to the complete independence of Indo-China. They suggested direct negotiations between the parties principally concerned; they looked for utilisation of the good offices and machinery of the United
Nations, and they hoped that the Geneva Conference would bring about a speedy termination of the conflict.

It was evident that so clear a stand on this issue, taken by five countries who are close neighbours of Indo-China, could not but influence other international discussions, such as the Geneva Conference. It was also plain that this degree of agreement on the Indo-China question would extend to other fields. It did.

Besides detailing the views about the Indo-China question, the final communiqué of the Conference of South-East Asian Prime Ministers (issued at Kandy on 2nd May, 1954) referred also to many other matters. Colonialism was regretted as a violation of fundamental human rights: the claims to independence of Tunisia and Morocco were considered due for recognition; grave concern was expressed for the fate of the Arab refugees in Palestine, and a desire for a just and early settlement of the Palestine problem was expressed. The Prime Ministers affirmed their faith in democracy, exchanged views on the national and international aspects of communism, and determined that, whilst they would respect each other's sovereignty and would not interfere in each other's internal problems, they would resist interference in their internal affairs by Communist or other agencies. They deplored the production of the hydrogen bomb and other implements of mass destruction. They considered representation of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations Organisation. They considered proposals for economic co-operation and mutual aid and referred these to their respective governments. Apart from expressing satisfaction with the Colombo Conference as paving the way for similar meetings in the future, they finally discussed the desirability of holding a Conference of Asian-African nations and favoured the proposal that the Prime Minister of Indonesia, who had brought forward this suggestion, should explore the possibility of such a conference.

Addressing the Indian Council of World Affairs, during his visit to India, on 24th September, 1954, Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo of Indonesia, stated the following:

"At the Colombo Conference it was decided that the possibilities had to be explored of convening a larger Conference of more Asian countries than the original set of five, together with African Nations. ... This conference ... will enable us to strengthen our co-operation, to expand our efforts for peace whilst it will also convince the world that this enormous area does not want in its affairs any interference from outside in the realisation of its peaceful policies."

In a radio-broadcast in New Delhi on 25th September 1954, the Indonesian Premier again explained his idea of the Asian-African Conference as follows:

"... Asians will have to make decisions on their own future, without interference by the Western World. There has been a slogan which ran 'Let Asians fight Asians'. That is precisely what we do not want. What we want is to cooperate with our Asian and African neighbours, to live together in friendship and in peaceful co-existence, to strive hard, united in aim, for the common benefit of us all."

On the same day, 25th September 1954, Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo and Prime Minister Nehru issued a Joint Statement, declaring that:

"They discussed also the proposal to have a Conference of representatives of Asian and African countries and were agreed that a Conference of this kind was desirable and would be helpful in promoting the cause of peace and common approach to these problems ... It was also considered by them that, prior to the meeting of such a Conference, it would be advisable for the Prime Ministers of the Colombo Conference countries to meet together, preferably at Djakarta."

Before returning from his visit to India, and at the invitation of Prime Minister U Nu of the Union of Burma, the Indonesian Premier spent three days in Rangoon for informal talks upon matters of common concern. At the conclusion of this visit a further Joint Statement was issued, which reiterated that the Burmese Premier considered that an Asian-African Conference was desirable and that it would further the cause of world peace.

After these visits, therefore, invitations were again sent to the four other Prime Ministers of the Colombo Conference, this time to a meeting in Indonesia which was to consider and to prepare for the proposed Asian-African Conference.

This meeting was eventually held in the mountain town of Bogor, and there the Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan met for three days from 28th to 31st December, 1954. During this Bogor Conference, it was decided that an Asian-African Conference should be held in the month of April, 1955, at Bandung in Indonesia. Four purposes were outlined for this Conference:

1. to promote goodwill and cooperation among the nations of Asia and Africa, to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interests and to establish and further friendliness and neighbourly relations;
2. to consider social, economic and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented;
3. to consider problems of special interest to Asian and African peoples, e.g. problems affecting national sovereignty and of racialism and colonialism;
4. to view the position of Asia and Africa and their peoples in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and cooperation."
It was decided that twenty-five Asian and African countries should be jointly asked by the five Premiers to attend. The twenty-five countries are:

1. Afghanistan
2. Cambodia
3. Central African Federation
4. China
5. Egypt
6. Ethiopia
7. Gold Coast
8. Iran
9. Iraq
10. Japan
11. Jordan
12. Laos
13. Lebanon
14. Liberia
15. Libya
16. Nepal
17. Philippines
18. Saudi Arabia
19. Sudan
20. Syria
21. Thailand
22. Turkey
23. Viet-Nam (North)
24. Viet-Nam (South)
25. Yemen

What do the Asian-African nations hope to achieve through this meeting? In this connection Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo, before the Indian Parliament, when he visited India last September, said:

"In our way of thinking, and keeping in mind the Principles of Pambja Sila, peace in our part of the world cannot be assured by military pacts such as was recently concluded in Manila.

There is a better way to the preservation of peace, I mean cooperation and co-existence. In this respect the Colombo Conference has opened a new alley. This Conference had a direct and immediate effect on the Geneva Conference. The nations of Asia intervened, and intervened successfully. This showed the world that Asian Problems cannot be solved without Asian Nations.

Much has already been achieved; much remains to be done. The views of Asian nations have already become an important factor not only in Asian affairs but in world affairs as well. The advantage we have gained must be followed up. The principles of Colombo must be followed up and they must be expanded. We, the nations of Asia, have friends amongst the nations of the African Continent. To a large extent their position is the same as ours; to a large extent they face the same problems. A close Afro-Asian co-operation can be realised, and, I submit, will lead to an immense strengthening of the forces marching to peace. We must bear in mind that the strength, the moral and the spiritual strength of the whole will be greater than the strength of the individual parts. To this aim a conference of Afro-Asian countries could lay down the pattern.

We are not seeking peace for ourselves alone. Humanity the world over is crying out for peace.

Humanity is standing at the cross-roads of history, and much of the responsibility for the future of humanity rests upon us, the peoples of Asia and Africa. We must not shirk that responsibility; we must not mortgage the future and we must not endanger that independence, that freedom from foreign domination against which both our nations fought so long and which cost us so many of our dearest and best sons and daughters."

Now, Indonesia, in close cooperation with Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan, as co-sponsoring countries, is working hard for the preparation of the Asian-African Conference. The opening of the Conference is fixed for 18th April and it will last for about a week.

This is the first time in Indonesia's history that she is called upon to be the host to eminent statesmen and politicians representing more than one half of the world's population. Indonesia is looking forward to welcoming them and is using all means at her disposal towards the holding of a pleasant, cordial and successful Asian-African Conference.

One of the Buildings to be used for the Conference
Joint Communique
of the Bogor Conference

December 29, 1954

1. The Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan met at Bogor on the 28th and 29th December, 1954. The main object of their meeting was to consider matters concerning the proposed Asian-African Conference suggested at the first meeting of the Prime Ministers at Colombo last April.

2. The Prime Ministers took advantage of the opportunity of their present meeting to review briefly, and in general terms, problems and issues of common interest and concern to them all.

3. The Prime Ministers agreed that an Asian-African Conference be held under their joint sponsorship. They also reached agreement on all consequential matters.

4. The purposes of the Asian-African Conference would be:

a. to promote goodwill and cooperation between the nations of Asia and Africa, to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interest and to establish and further friendliness and neighbourly relations;

b. to consider social, economic and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented;

to consider problems of special interest to Asian and African peoples, e.g. problems affecting national sovereignty and of racialism and colonialism;

d. to view the position of Asia and Africa and their peoples in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and cooperation.

5. The Conference will meet in Indonesia in the last week of April 1955. The Government of Indonesia have agreed to make the necessary arrangements for this Conference on behalf of the sponsoring countries. A Conference Secretariat representing the sponsoring countries will be set up in Indonesia.

6. The Prime Ministers agreed that the Conference should have a broad and geographical basis, and that all countries in Asia and Africa, which have independent governments, should be invited. With minor variations and modifications of this basic principle, they decided to invite the following countries:

1. Afghanistan 13. Lebanon
2. Cambodia 14. Liberia
3. Central African Federation 15. Libya
5. Egypt 17. Philippines
7. Gold Coast 19. Sudan
8. Iran 20. Syria
9. Iraq 21. Thailand
10. Japan 22. Turkey
11. Jordan 23. Viet-Nam (North)
12. Laos 24. Viet-Nam (South)
13. Lebanon
14. Liberia
15. Libya
16. Nepal
17. Philippines
18. Saudi Arabia
19. Sudan
20. Syria
21. Thailand
22. Turkey
23. Viet-Nam (North)
24. Viet-Nam (South)
25. Yemen

The above twentyfive countries, together with the five sponsoring countries, namely, Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan, will, it is hoped, participate in the Conference.

7. Representation at the Conference will be at Ministerial level and it is hoped that each country invited will be represented by her Prime Minister and/or Foreign Minister together with such other representatives as each government might wish to include in its delegation.
8. The Conference will determine its procedure and agenda, the general scope of which is set out in the purposes of the Conference.

9. The Prime Ministers wished to point out that acceptance of the invitation by any one country would in no way involve or even imply any change in its view of the status of any other country. It implied only that the country invited was in general agreement with the purposes of the Conference. They had also borne in mind the principle that the form of government and the way of life of any one country should in no way be subject to interference by another. Any view expressed at the Conference by one or more participating country would not be binding on or be regarded as accepted by any other, unless the latter so desired. The basic purpose of the Conference is that the countries concerned should become better acquainted with one another’s point of view. The Prime Ministers hoped that this clarification would enable all the invited countries to accept their invitation.

10. The Prime Ministers wished to state that in seeking to convene an Asian-African Conference, they were not actuated by any desire for exclusiveness in respect of the membership of the Conference. They did not desire either that the participating countries should build themselves into a regional bloc.

11. The Prime Ministers expressed gratification at the results of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China and the cessation of hostilities. They expressed the hope that the Geneva Agreements would be fully respected and implemented by all concerned and that there would be no outside interference which would hinder their successful implementation.

12. The Prime Ministers in the context of their well-known attitude towards colonialism, took note of the case of West Irian. The Prime Ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan supported the position of Indonesia in this matter. They expressed the earnest hope that the Netherlands Government would reopen negotiations to implement their obligations under the solemn agreements concluded by them with Indonesia.

13. The Prime Ministers expressed their continued support of the demand of the peoples of Tunisia and Morocco for their national independence and their legitimate right to self-determination.

14. The Prime Ministers reiterated their grave concern in respect of the destructive potential of nuclear and thermonuclear explosions for experimental purposes which threaten not only their countries, but the world, and their far-reaching and yet unascertained effects which may do permanent damage to human life and civilization. They earnestly requested all concerned to bring about a cessation of such experiments. They also requested the Disarmament Commission to take this matter into immediate consideration.

15. The economic development of Asian countries, which is so urgently necessary for the happiness and well-being of their peoples, requires a planned approach with a view to the utilization, in the most effective manner, of the available resources. An essential pre-requisite of such an approach is full knowledge of these resources.

Surveys of physical resources, particularly of the mineral and sub-soil wealth of each country, should therefore be conducted, and cooperation in the supply of technical personnel and in other ways should be made available.

16. The Prime Ministers considered that cooperation in the economic sphere for the supply of technical personnel and in all other ways should engage the attention of their Governments. They considered that a committee of experts should be set up to consider economic questions of common interest to their countries.

17. The Prime Ministers, meeting on the eve of the New Year, expressed their earnest hope that the year 1955 would witness a further growth in the friendly cooperation of the countries represented in the Conference as well as other countries and further the cause of world peace.
The following are highlights of Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo's answers to the series of questions from I. H. Gordon, Far Eastern Editor of the I.N.S.:

Q. What, in your opinion is the major objective of the Afro-Asian Conference?

A. In my opinion the major objective of the Asian African Conference is what is said in paragraph 4(d) of the Joint Communiqué of the Bogor Conference, as follows: "to view the position of Asia and Africa and their peoples in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and cooperation". However, the three other points of that paragraph should not be considered as unimportant, as they contain issues which are of vital interest for the peoples of Asia and Africa in their relations between each other and the world at large.

Q. Do you expect the Conference to take action on the issue of co-existence? If so, what?

A. The problem of peaceful co-existence might come up as an item for discussion in the Conference since it not only concerns the peoples of Asia and Africa but also other nations in the world. Whether the Conference will take actions on that issue, I do not yet know.

Q. Is there any fear the Peoples Republic of China will use the Conference simply to strengthen the role of Communism in Asia?

A. There is no such fear from the side of the five sponsoring Colombo countries.

Q. What do you envisage the Conference can do to ease world tensions, particularly those between Moscow and Washington?

A. This question must be viewed in the light of what I have said in answering your first question. What the Conference can do to ease world tensions depends on the outcome of the discussions concerning the position of Asia and Africa and their peoples in the world of today.

Q. What "common denominators" can be expected to unify the invited nations?

A. Some of the "common denominators" might be the social, economic and cultural problems and relations of the countries represented in the conference since most of the invitees are today facing more or less the same economic situation in their respective countries. Another issue of common interest might be the question of colonialism.

Q. Is the Conference fundamentally a search for political and international solidarity by the non-white races of the world?

A. Since most of the invitees are members of the United Nations, it can be said that it will not deviate from the fundamental objective of the United Nations Charter, of which the most important one is international solidarity. I can therefore state here that it is positively not an international solidarity of the "non-white races" against the "white races".

Q. Why were the Arab nations invited, but not Israel?

A. Whether a country is to be invited, was decided by the five Prime Ministers unanimously. The invitation to the Arab nations was agreed upon unanimously, whereas there was no unanimity concerning Israel.

Q. Why was Communist China invited, but not Nationalist China?

A. The five sponsoring countries recognize only one China, that is the People's Republic of China.

Q. Why were Vietnam and Vietminh invited, but not the Republic of Korea?

A. As you know the five Prime Ministers of the sponsoring countries are more or less committed with regard to the issue of Indo-China, since in April 1954 when meeting for the first time in Colombo, they have taken a common stand on the Indo-China problem. The world also knows that the Colombo decision had a considerable influence on the Geneva Conference resulting in the state of affairs prevailing now in Indo-China. Now that our suggestions have been accepted by the Geneva Conference, we felt a special responsibility by inviting all the Indo-China countries including South Vietnam and Vietminh (North Vietnam). That same reasoning did not apply to Korea.
Q. What will prevent the conference from developing into an alignment against the rest of the free world under pro-Communist slogans of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism?

A. Anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism are not slogans monopolized by Communists, but are living realities in the minds of the masses of the peoples of Asia and Africa. Unfortunately these sentiments are generally ignored or minimized by the Western world. The presumption that anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism are merely Communist slogans, indicates an ignorance of the psychological impact on the feelings prevailing today among the Asian and African nations which only recently emerged from colonial status into independence. It is therefore wrong to anticipate that the conference will develop into an alignment against or for any bloc in the world.

Q. Will the conference leaders encourage the formation of a "third force" in world politics?

A. No. In their joint Communiqué after the Bogor Conference the five Prime Ministers stated very clearly that: "They did not desire either that the participating countries should build themselves into a regional bloc".

Q. What is your reply to the recent criticism of Secretary John Foster Dulles that the recent five-power communiqué was a "somewhat ambiguous document"?

A. I have no official communication from the Secretary of State Mr. John Foster Dulles concerning his criticism. In my opinion the recent Five Power Communiqué was a clear document with a clear purpose.