The Voice of Asia and Africa (April 19, 1955)

Abstract

Zhou Enlai (also spelled Chou En-lai) was instrumental in establishing the People's Republic of China on the world stage. In the early 1950s, China's international influence was at a low point; Enlai, in his position as Minister of Foreign Affairs, took point on raising China's international profile. The Bandung conference was instrumental in raising the profile of both China and Enlai himself. At the conference, states that were aligned with the United States made divisive remarks about both the USSR and China; in response, Enlai gave a speech that stressed that China sought unity and neutrality and expressed a desire to seek common ground. The skillful speech ensured that the conference remained focused on neutrality, and made the United States look like a serious threat to the peace and stability of the region (an idea that was supported by the United States' general opposition to the conference). Enlai also downplayed revolutionary communism and stressed that all nations should have the right to pick the economic and political systems that suited them best (including capitalism). Enlai, and China in general, came out big winners at the end of the conference, and Bandung is widely credited with raising the stature of the man and the country.

Source

President Sukarno Opens the Bandung Conference – 29 Countries Represented

Bandung (NZ/ADN). On Monday morning, the Asian-African Conference in Bandung on Java opened with a speech by Indonesian President Sukarno. Some 340 delegates from 23 Asian and six African countries are participating in the conference, representing more than half of humanity. President Sukarno expressed the hope that the conference would show humanity the way to security and peace and make the world aware that a new Asia and Africa have been born.

Sukarno spoke decisively against the formation of military power blocs and threats to use the hydrogen bomb. The moral force of the nations devoted to peace needs to be mobilized now. The Colombo Powers played a very prominent role during the Geneva Conference, and the world heard the voice of Asia. In the same spirit of peaceful action, the Asian-African Conference, whose delegates do not represent a bloc that seeks to oppose another bloc, will lead to success.

The delegates elected Indonesian Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo president of the conference. The following points are central topics on the conference agenda: cultural and economic cooperation, the problems of dependent peoples, colonialism and racial discrimination, human rights and self-determination, the peaceful applications of atomic energy, weapons of mass destruction, peaceful coexistence and the promotion of world peace and international cooperation.

When the prime minister and foreign minister of the People's Republic of China Chou En-lai, arrived in Bandung, many of the city's inhabitants lined the streets and cheered. According to Reuters, it was the most impressive greeting that any of the arriving delegates had received thus far.

The GDR Government to the Conference

Berlin (ADN). The government of the German Democratic Republic sent a telegram to the conference of Asian and African states which includes the following words: "The GDR government regards the Bandung Conference as a significant contribution to lessening tensions and strengthening peace in Asia and Africa.

In the light of the fact that any reduction in tensions in international relations has a positive effect on efforts to peacefully settle all manner of unresolved international problems and contributes to guaranteeing the security of all peoples, the government of the GDR and all peace-loving Germans are following the conference of Asian and African countries with great interest and wish it every success."

Voroshilov Sends Greetings Via Telegram

Moscow (NZ/ADN). The chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, K. Voroshilov, has sent a telegram greeting the participants in the Bandung Conference, expressing "a sincere wish for fruitful work and success in accomplishing the lofty tasks facing the conference."

The deputy of Soviet Foreign Minister W. W. Kuznetsov stressed in a declaration that the peoples of the Soviet Union are in complete sympathy with the struggle of the Asian and African countries against all forms of colonial rule and for political and economic independence. He, too, wishes a fruitful outcome for the conference in Bandung.

Two Continents Have Awakened

G.F. Yesterday, in the Javanese city of Bandung, a conference began that will go down in the history of national liberation movements and the struggle for world peace as a momentous event. For the first time in history, 29 Asian and African countries, which together represent more than half of the world's population, have come together without, and indeed against, the colonial powers. Indian Prime Minister Nehru characterized the significance of this conference by saying that it would express the awakening of Asia and Africa after two centuries of rule by the Western powers, and the chairman of India's Congress Party expanded upon this statement, suggesting that the conference will show the world a new direction in the resolution of international problems through the spirit of cooperation and good will. The host, Indonesian President Sukarno, outlined the objective of this meeting, stating that the Asian-African Conference aimed to mobilize the power of 1.4 billion people to enforce peace. Finally, let us listen to the chairman of the National Party, the party in power in Indonesia: "Whoever attempts to unleash a war will in future always have to take into account the peaceful efforts of the Asian and African peoples."

The countries that have met in Bandung are at different stages of political and economic development, but the peoples of these countries share the will to preserve peace and solidify their national independence. Together, they have personally experienced the dubious "blessings" of colonial rule over the past decades and centuries, and together they have reached the conclusion that it is necessary today to join forces in the fight against the exploiters and warmongers. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence—mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-intervention in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit with the aim of peaceful coexistence—proclaimed jointly last year by the prime ministers of the People's Republic of China and India, will put their stamp on the conference agenda. Their negotiations will therefore aim to preserve the peace, fight against colonialism and racial hatred and promote economic and cultural cooperation in the spirit of friendship as well as the peaceful resolution of all pending international problems, especially in the Asian-African region.

Following the model of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China has provided the peoples of Asia and Africa with the great example of liberation from the centuries-old shackles of colonial enslavement, the example of the great opportunities for a peaceful and industrious rise on their own power. This example has been widely noted in Asia and Africa. It is therefore not surprising that it is not the China of Chiang Kai-shek, but that of the People's Republic, that represents the interests of the Chinese people in Bandung. Indonesia's Prime Minister Sastroamidjojo stated unequivocally: "As far as we are concerned there is only one China, the People's Republic."

A conference of Asian nations that did essential preparatory work for Bandung ended in New Delhi a few days ago. Moscow's *Pravda* noted that the New Delhi meeting "had shown very persuasively that the peoples of Asia seek peace, unity, national independence and mutual cooperation on the basis of equality with all countries. They have taken the lessons of the past to heart, and today they fight for unity and solidarity. The resolutions of the conference in New Delhi ... will awaken new hopes and faith in a peaceful resolution to all international problems in the hearts of millions of people." This faith and these hopes will—of that there can be no doubt—be effectively confirmed by the resolutions of Bandung.

Understandably, W a s h i n g t o n awaits the developments of this conference with palpable unease. The commentator of the *New York World Telegram and Sun*, Dennen, astutely comments that it was feared the conference might undermine US prestige in Asia and Africa still further and brand the US as an imperialist state. Washington was thus trying to play down the conference's significance, without success. It tried to force some of the invited countries to refuse, without success. It tried to lure other Asian states with promises of economic and military "aid," with no notable effect. It will try through its vassals to blow up the conference from within, doubtless also with no notable effect. India's Prime Minister Nehru has correctly stated that when a thing is consonant with the times and the historical process, it must triumph in spite of all difficulties, and success is therefore certain.

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