

December 15, 1954

Report from the Asia Section, Chinese Foreign Ministry, 'On the Asian-African Conference'

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Summary:

The Chinese Foreign Ministry reported that Indonesia's intention to hold the Asian-African Conference was to establish a neutral, third group to counter the US and the Soviet Union. It also reported the attitudes of the invited countries and the reactions of the Western countries toward the Conference. It concluded that it would be beneficial for China to participate in the Conference and to influence the political situation in the Conference.

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About the Asian-African Conference
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Top secret

This document is also sent to all the comrades of the General Office of CPC Central Committee instructed by Zhou Enlai.

Compiled by Asia Department

1.

It has been a long time since Indonesia intended to convene the Asian-African Conference. In March this year, Indonesia convened its envoys meeting in Asia and Africa, deciding to try its best to establish an "Asian-African Group" headed by Indonesia, India and Egypt. After the Colombo Conference approved "Indonesia to study the possibility of convening the Asian-African Conference" in April, Indonesia immediately proceeded to prepare the Asian-African Conference. In September, Ali Sastroamijoyo successively visited India and Burma, Nehru and U Nu clearly expressed their support to Indonesia's plan for convening the Asian-African Conference, and the prime ministers of the three countries agreed to hold a Colombo States Conference (It has been decided to hold this conference in Bogor on December 28) before the Asian-African Conference to discuss the various issues of the Asian-African Conference. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia announced on November 5 that Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Abyssinia, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand and Yemen, 16 countries in all, had accepted the invitation to participate in the Asian-African Conference. Indonesia's plan for convening the Asian-African Conference has won wide support from the Communist Party of Indonesia and domestic public opinion, and the Masiyoumei Party and the Socialist Party didn't openly oppose it.

It is estimated that the reason for Indonesia organizing the Asian-African Conference aims at establishing a "Peace and Neutral" Third Force Group to raise its international status, consolidate the existing government and win political capital for the Nationalist Party of Indonesia in next year's general election, and it also intends to make use of the Asian-African countries' strength to support it in recovering the West Irian.

2.

At the beginning, Nehru and U Nu took a cautious and wait-and-see attitude towards the Asian-African Conference. The reason is probably that they were watching the development of the international situation before and after "the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty" and the attitude of the UK. Besides, Nehru might worry about whether India could obtain a leading position in Asian-African countries, etc. Nehru and U Nu clearly expressed their support to convening the Asian-African Conference only after the signature of "the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty", especially after the Indonesian prime minister's visit to India and Burma.

Ceylon also expressed interest in participating in the Asian-African Conference. In view of its prime minister's recent visit to the USA and the UK and his consistent pro-American attitude, Ceylon might take certain measures to cater to the American and British aim in the Asian-African Conference. AP disclosed on December 11 that "the Ceylonese prime minister will make an all-round investigation in the Bogor Conference on the matter concerning the Americans under examination and detention in China".

Pakistan didn't want to be "isolated" and expressed interest in participating in the Asian-African Conference on the one hand, but it might take a passive and perfunctory or even sabotaging attitude towards the conference on the other. The India Express once predicted that Pakistan thinks that if the Asian-African Conference aims at political cooperation and coordinating efforts, the conference "might be a strong contender with UN; if the conference aims at common defense and assistance, then "the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty" organization has already existed, and the Middle Eastern countries "are busy in signing the common defense Treaty".

The Philippines and Thailand are included in the 16 countries that have accepted the invitation announced by the Foreign Ministry of Indonesia. But according to the news from UPI, Manila on November 6, the Philippine Vice President and Foreign Minister Garcia denied that the Philippines had accepted the invitation. The UPI news from Bangkok on November 24 claimed that "the Thai cabinet has refused to immediately accept Indonesia's invitation to attend the Asian-African Conference convened in Bandung in next February", but it added that "the cabinet has not decided to refuse the invitation". It is predicted that the Philippines and Thailand have not yet made the final decision and are probably waiting to see the American attitude.

The 8 Arab League member states decided to participate in the Asian-African Conference at the Arab Political Committee's meeting on December 8.

The American Government seems to be avoiding making any direct comment on the Asian-African Conference as long as possible. On September 26, an editorial from the New York Times said that "some part of the base of the Asian-African Conference is antagonistic to the Southeast Asian Treaty". On October 21, the Economist Magazine of the UK also said that "in Washington this conference is regarded as an anti-West action". These sayings possibly reflect to a certain extent the view of the American war clique. On August 8, the Second Vice Speaker of the Indonesian Parliament Aruchi openly denounced that the USA "attempted to split the Colombo states by contemptible methods and obstruct the Asian-African Conference". US is now: (1) putting pressure on some Asian "neutral" states and luring them to join the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty" organization; (2) planning to expand its economic "aid" to the Asian states and dispatch Stason to visit various Asian countries in order to persuade them to hold "the Asian Economic Conference" in early next year; (3) planning to "convene a member states meeting of the Southeast Asian Treaty to discuss the danger of the Communist subversion in some Southeast Asian countries"; (4) intensifying efforts to knock together the Middle Near East aggressive clique and the Northeast aggressive clique. In addition to the above conspiratorial activities, the US may instigate the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, etc to attend the Asian-African Conference in order to exercise pressure from inside and outside the conference so as to reduce the possible effect of the Asian-African Conference on peace and let it bow to the aggressive force.

UK joined "the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty" placed together by US on the one hand, but may take some kind of supporting attitude towards the Asian-African Conference with a purpose of controlling, using and restricting the Asian-African Conference on the other hand. It is estimated that UK may attempt to muster the Arab Group and the Colombo Group through the Asian-African Conference to establish an Asian-African Group controlled by UK and headed by India so as to consolidate its force in Asia and Africa.

3.

Regarding the membership of the Asian-African Conference, the Ganlu Market Daily of India published on August 28 said that there are two different proposals: one is to invite all the Asian-African states "according to geographical concept"; another is to

"limit to only inviting those states which consist of the present Asian-African Group in the UN". The first proposal will confront the issue of whether to invite the People's Republic of China; the second proposal will "undoubtedly confront the hostile mood between Israel and the Arab states". According to the information disclosed from various sides, India, Indonesia and Burma support inviting our country to take part and Pakistan and Ceylon may oppose us.

Regarding the agenda, the Indonesian newspaper (reflects the views of the Indonesian Government) said that the conference will discuss: (1) how to establish a "peace and neutral zone between the two big camps; (2) opposition to colonialism and maintenance of national independence; (3) promotion of the economic and cultural cooperation among Asian-African countries; (4) how to support the Asian-African non-UN member states to join the UN; (5) opposition to racial discrimination and protection of human rights. It is estimated that the Bogor Conference will have fierce arguments on the membership and agenda of the Asian-African Conference.

4.

According to the above information, the forecast is made as follows:

(1) The proposed Asian-African Conference is basically a conference headed by India, Indonesia, Burma and Egypt in an attempt to establish and expand the "peace and Neutral" third world group.

(2) In view of the invited countries, although their background is very complicated, they are all colonial or semi-colonial states. Among them, some of the major states refused "the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty" and some others refused to join the Middle East aggressive organization. They have, in varying ways, the common desire of developing their own economy, demanding peace and opposing colonialism. If the Asian-African Conference can play a positive role on these issues, it will be in favor of peace, but not in favor of the US imperialist war policy.

(3) Just because the participating countries are colonial or semi-colonial countries, the imperialists can make use of the anti-Communist and anti-people's psychology of some countries' ruling cliques and the weak point of their serious economic dependence on imperialists, and sow dissension among the participating countries in order to realize its evil purpose of sabotaging, controlling and making use of the Asian-African Conference.

There are some contradictions on the Asian-African Conference between the US and UK. But after the signature of the London-Paris Agreement and the US-Jiang [Jieshi; Chiang Kai-shek] Treaty, they will surely intensify the pressure on the Asian-African "neutralist countries", maybe making temporary conciliation as far as possible on the issue of the Asian-African Conference and adopt a relatively concerted method to force the Asian-African Conference to yield to the imperialist interest in some issues.

(4) In brief, it will be a fierce and complicated struggle whether the Asian-African Conference can be convened in time and how it will develop. If we can participate in the conference, play an active role and exercise our influence from inside and outside the conference, and strive to make the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence as the political basis of the Asian-African Conference, then the Asian-African Conference shall be pushed forward towards the direction of peace.

This document has been sent to Foreign Minister, Vice Foreign Ministers Wang, Zhang, Wu and Assistant Foreign Minister, and the comrades in charge in relevant departments of the Foreign Ministry.