

**April 19, 1955**

**Main Speech by Premier Zhou Enlai, Head of the  
Delegation of the People's Republic of China,  
Distributed at the Plenary Session of the  
Asian-African Conference**

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**Summary:**

Zhou Enlai calls for increased cooperation between the countries of Asia and Africa at the Bandung Conference.

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主席、各位代表先生：

举世瞩目的亚非会议已经开始。中华人民共和国代表团能同与会的各国代表团一起在这个会议上讨论我们亚非国家的共同问题，感到非常高兴。我们能够在这里会晤，首先要感谢缅甸、锡兰、印度、印度尼西亚和巴基斯坦五个发起国家的倡议和努力，我们还应当感谢这次会议的主人印度尼西亚共和国政府为会议作了很好的安排。

亚非两洲有这么多的国家在一起举行会议，这在历史上还是第一次。在我们亚非两洲的土地上生活着的全世界半数以上的人民。亚非人民曾经创造过光辉灿烂的古代文化，对人类作出了巨大的贡献。近代以来，亚非两洲的大多数国家在不同的程度上遭受了殖民主义的掠夺和压迫。以致被迫处于贫困和落后的停滞状态。我们的呼声受到抑制，我们的愿望受到摧残，我们的命运被旁人摆布，因此我们不得不起来反对殖民主义。由于同样的原因而受到的灾难和为了同样的目的而进行的斗争，使我们亚非各国人民容易互相了解，并在长期以来就深切地互相同情和关怀。

现在亚非地区的面貌已经发生了巨大的变化。越来越多的亚非国家摆脱了或正在摆脱着殖民主义的束缚。殖民国家已经不能用过去那样的方式来进行掠夺和压迫。今天的亚洲和非洲已经不是昨天的亚洲和非洲。亚非两洲的许多国家，经过长期的努力，已经把他们的命运掌握在自己手中。我们的会议反映了这一深刻的历史变化。

虽然如此，殖民主义在这个地区的统治并没有结束，而且新的殖民主义者正在谋取旧的殖民主义者的地位而代之。不少亚非人民还在过着殖民地的奴隶生活，不少亚非人民还在受着种族歧视，他们的人权遭受着摧残。

我们亚非各国人民争取自由和独立的过程是不同的；但是，我们争取和巩固各自的自由和独立的意志是一致的。不管我们每一个国家的具体情况如何不同，我们大多数国家都需要克服殖民主义统治所造成的落后状态，我们都应该在不受外来干涉的情况下按照我们各国人民的意志，使我们各自的国家获得独立的发展。

亚非人民曾经长期遭受侵略和战争的苦难。许多亚非地区的人民曾经被殖民主义者强迫充当进行侵略战争的炮灰。亚非人民不能不痛恨侵略战争。他们知道，新的战争威胁不仅危害到他们国家的独立发展，而且还要加强殖民主义的奴役。因此，我们亚非人民更加深切地感觉到世界和平和民族独立的可贵。

基于这些情况，保障世界和平、争取和维护民族独立并为此目的而促进各国间的友好合作就不能不是亚非各国人民的共同愿望。

接着朝鲜停战之后，日内瓦会议曾经在尊重民族独立的基础上，得到科伦坡五国会谈的支持，达成了印度支那的停战。当时，国际的紧张局势确曾得到一定程度的缓和，给全世界人民特别是亚洲人民带来了新的希望。但是，跟着而来的国际形势的发展却和人民的希望相反。无论在东方和西方，战争危机都在增加。朝鲜人民的德国人民要求和平统一的愿望受到阻挠。日内瓦会议关于恢复印度支那和平问题的协议有的被破坏的危险。美国在台湾地区继续制造紧张局势。亚非以外国家在亚非地区建立的军事基地越来越多。他们公开鼓吹原子武器是常规武器，准备原子战争。亚洲人民不能忘记第一颗原子弹是落在亚洲的土地上，第一个死在氢弹试验下的是亚洲人。亚非各国人民和世界其他地区的人民一样，不能不关切日益增长的战争威胁。

但是进行侵略、准备战争的人究竟是极少数。世界上不论是生活在哪一种社会制度中的绝大多数人民都要求和平，反对战争。世界各国人民的和平运动有了更加广泛和深入的发展。他们要求终止扩军备战的竞赛，首先各大国应该就裁减军备达成协议。他们要求禁止原子武器和一切大规模毁灭性武器。他们要求将原子能用于和平用途，为人类创造幸福。他们的呼声已经不能被忽视，侵略和战争的政策已经日益不得人心。战争策划者日益频繁地诉之于战争威胁，作为推行侵略政策的工具。但不是，战争威胁是吓不倒任何具有抵抗决心的人的，它只能使威胁者自己陷于更加孤立和更加混乱的地位。我们相信，只要我们同世界上一切愿意和平的国家 and 人民一道，决心维护和平，和平是有可能维护得住的。

我们大多数亚非国家，包括中国在内，由于殖民主义的长期统治，经济上还很落后。因此，我们不仅要要求政治上的独立，同时还要求经济上的独立。当然，我们要求政治独立并不是要对亚非地区以外的国家采取排斥的政策。但是，西方国家控制我们命运的时代的已经过去，亚非国家的命运应该由亚非各国人民自己掌握。我们要努力实现各国的经济独立，这也不是要排斥同亚非地区以外的国家的经济合作。但是，我们要求改变西方殖民国家对东方落后国家的剥削状态，我们要求发展亚非各国独立自主的经济。争取完全独立是我们大多数亚非国家和人民长期奋斗的目标。

在中国，自从人民做了自己国家的主人以后，我们的一切努力就是要消除长期的半



进我们亚非各国间的相互了解和合作，我们建议亚非各国的政府、国会和民间团体实行互相的友好访问。

主席、各位先生，任意摆布亚非人民命运的时代已经一去不复返了。我们相信，如果我们决心维护世界和平，就没有人能够把我们拖入战争；如果我们决心争取和维护民族独立，就没有人能够继续奴役我们；如果我们决心友好合作，就没有人能够分裂我们。

我们亚非国家所需要的是和平和独立，我们并无意于使亚非国家同其他地区的国家对立，我们同样需要同其他地区的国家建立和平合作的关系。

我们的会晤是难得的。尽管我们中间存在着许多不同意见，但是这不应该影响我们所具有的共同愿望。我们的会议应该对于我们的共同愿望有所表示，使它成为亚非历史值得珍贵的一页。同时，我们在这次会议中建立起来的接触应该继续保持，以便我们对于世界和平能够作出更大的贡献。

印度尼西亚共和国总统苏加诺阁下说得对，我们亚非人民必须团结起来。

让我们预祝会议成功。

MAIN SPEECH BY PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI [Zhou Enlai], HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, DISTRIBUTED AT THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE ASIAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE

Mr. Chairman and Fellow Delegates:

The Asian-African Conference on which the whole world is focusing its attention has begun its session. The Delegation of the People's Republic of China deems it a great pleasure to be able to discuss the common problems of our Asian and African countries at this Conference with the delegations of the other participating countries. We must first of all thank the five sponsoring countries, Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan, whose initiative and efforts have made it possible for us to meet here. We should also thank the host of this Conference, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, for the excellent arrangements it has made for the Conference.

It is the first time in history that so many countries of Asia and Africa have gathered together to hold a conference. On these two continents live more than half of the world population. The peoples of Asia and Africa created brilliant ancient civilizations and made tremendous contributions to mankind. But, ever since modern times most of the countries of Asia and Africa in varying degrees have been subjected to colonial plunder and oppression, and have thus been forced to remain in a stagnant state of poverty and backwardness. Our voices have been suppressed, our aspirations shattered, and our destiny placed in the hands of others. Thus, we have no choice but to rise against colonialism. Suffering from the same cause and struggling for the same aim, we the Asian and African peoples have found it easier to understand each other and have long had deep sympathy and concern for one another. Now the face of the Asian-African region has undergone a radical change. More and more countries have cast off or are casting off the shackles of colonialism. The colonial powers can no longer use the methods of the past to continue their plunder and oppression. The Asia and Africa of today are no longer the Asia and Africa of yesterday. Many countries of this region have taken their destiny into their own hands after long years of endeavours. Our Conference itself reflects this profound historical change.

However, the rule of colonialism in this region has not yet come to an end, and new colonialists are attempting take the place of the old ones. Not a few of the Asian and African peoples are still leading a life of colonial slavery. Not a few of the Asian and African peoples are still subjected to racial discrimination and deprived of human rights. The courses which we peoples of the Asian and African countries have taken in striving for freedom and independence may vary, but our will to win and preserve our freedom and independence is the same. However different the specific conditions in each of our countries may be, it is equally necessary for most of us to eliminate the state of backwardness caused by the rule of colonialism. We need to develop our countries independently with no outside interference and in accordance with the will of the people.

The peoples of Asia and Africa have long suffered from aggression and war. Many of them have been forced by the colonialists to serve as cannon fodder in aggressive wars. Therefore, the peoples of these two continents can have nothing but strong detestation of aggressive war. They know that new threats of war will not only endanger the independent development of their countries, but also intensify the enslavement by colonialism. That is why the Asian and African peoples all the more hold dear world peace and national independence.

In view of the foregoing, the common desire of the peoples of the Asian and African countries cannot be anything other than to safeguard world peace, to win and to preserve national independence and accordingly to promote friendly co-operation among nations.

Following the armistice in Korea, the Geneva Conference brought about a cease-fire in Indo-China on the basis of respect for the right to national independence and with the support of the Conference of the five Colombo powers. As a result, international tension did somewhat relax at that time and fresh hopes were brought to the people of the whole world, and particularly to those of Asia. However, the subsequent development of the international situation runs counter to the hopes of the people. Both in the East and in the West the danger of war is increasing. The desire of the Korean and German peoples for peaceful unification is being frustrated. The agreements on the restoration of peace in Indo-China reached at the Geneva Conference are endangered. The United States continues to create tension in the Taiwan area. Countries outside of Asia and Africa are establishing more and more military bases in the Asian and African countries. They are clamouring openly that atomic weapons are conventional arms and are making preparations for an atomic war. The people of Asia shall never forget that the first atomic bomb exploded on Asian soil and that the first man to die from the experimental explosion of the hydrogen bomb was an Asian. The peoples of Asia and Africa, like those in other parts of the world, cannot be indifferent to the ever-increasing threat of war.

However, those who are committing aggression and making preparations for war are after all extremely few, while the overwhelming majority of the people throughout the world, regardless of what social system they live under, want peace and are opposed to war. The peace movement of the people in different countries has become more extensive and intensive. They demand the end of the armament race and preparations for war. They demand that first of all the big powers should reach agreement on the reduction of armaments. They demand the prohibition of atomic weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. They demand that atomic energy be used for peaceful purposes in order to bring welfare to mankind. Their voices can no longer be ignored. The policy of aggression and war is becoming more and more repugnant to the people. The plotters of war are resorting ever more frequently to threats of war as an instrument of their aggressive policy. However, threats of war can frighten into submission no one who is determined to resist. They can only place the threat-makers in a more isolated and confused position. We believe that if only we are determined to preserve peace together with all the peace-loving nations and peoples of the world, peace can be preserved.

The majority of our Asian and African countries, including China, are still very backward economically owing to the long period of colonial domination. That is why we demand not only political independence but economic independence as well. Of course, our demand for political independence does not mean a policy of exclusion towards countries outside of the Asian-African region. However, the days when the Western powers controlled our destiny are already past. The destiny of Asian and African countries should be taken into the hands of the peoples themselves. We strive to realize our own economic independence; nor does that mean the rejection of economic co-operation with any country outside of the Asian-African region. However, we want to do away with the exploitation of backward countries in the East by the colonial powers in the West and to develop the independent and sovereign economy of our own countries. Complete independence is an objective for which the great majority of Asian and African countries have to struggle for a long time.

In China, ever since the people became masters of their own country, all their efforts have been directed to the elimination of backwardness left behind by the prolonged semi-colonial society and the building of their country into an industrialized one. In the last five years we have rehabilitated the national economy ruined by long years of war, and have since 1953 started the First Five-Year Plan of economic construction. As a result of these efforts, production in all the main fields, such as iron and steel, cotton cloth and grains, have exceeded the level of any period in the history of China. But these achievements are still very small as compared with our actual needs. Our country is still very backward as compared with the highly industrialized ones. Like other countries in Asia and Africa, we are in urgent need of a peaceful international

environment for the development of our independent and sovereign economy.

The Asian and African countries, opposing colonialism and defending national independence, treasure all the more their own national rights. Countries whether big or small, strong or weak, should all enjoy equal rights in international relations. Their territorial integrity and sovereignty should be respected and not violated. The people of all dependent countries should enjoy the right of national self-determination, and should not be subjected to persecution and slaughter. People irrespective of race or colour should all enjoy the fundamental human rights and not be subjected to any maltreatment and discrimination. However, we cannot help being aware that the peoples of Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and other dependent peoples who have been fighting for independence have never ceased to be suppressed with violence. Racial discrimination and persecution under racialism in the Union of South Africa and other places have not yet been curbed. The problem of Arab refugees of Palestine still remains to be solved.

One should say that now the common desire of the awakened countries and peoples of Asia and Africa is to oppose racial discrimination and to demand fundamental human rights, to oppose colonialism and to demand for national independence, to firmly defend their own territorial integrity and sovereignty. The struggle of the Egyptian people for the restoration of their sovereignty over the Suez Canal Zone, the struggle of the Iranian people for the restoration of sovereignty over their petroleum resources, and the demand for the restoration of the territorial rights of India over Goa and of Indonesia over West Irian, have all won sympathy from many countries in Asia and Africa. China's will to liberate her own territory Taiwan has likewise won the support of all righteous people in the Asian-African region. This proves that the peoples of our Asian and African countries understand each other and have sympathy and concern for one another.

Peace can only be safeguarded by mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Encroachment on the sovereignty and territory of any country and the interference in the internal affairs of any country will inevitably endanger peace. If nations give assurances not to commit aggression against each other, conditions will be created in international relations for peaceful coexistence. If nations give assurances not to interfere in each other's internal affairs, it will then be possible for the people of these countries to choose their own political system and way of life in accordance with their own will. The agreements on the restoration of peace in Indo-China were reached at the Geneva Conference precisely on the basis of the assurance of the parties concerned to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Indo-Chinese states and not to interfere in any way in the internal affairs of these states. Accordingly, the Geneva agreements provide that the Indo-Chinese states shall not join any military alliance and that no foreign military bases should be established in these states. That explains why the Geneva Conference was able to create favourable conditions for the establishment of an area of peace. But after the Geneva Conference, we witnessed a development in the opposite direction. This is not in the interest of the Indo-Chinese states, nor is it in the interest of peace. We hold that the Geneva agreements on the restoration of peace in Indo-China should be strictly and faithfully carried out. No interference or obstruction from any quarter should be allowed. The question of peaceful unification of Korea should also be solved in accordance with the same principles.

We Asian and African countries need to co-operate in the economic and cultural fields in order to facilitate the elimination of the economic and cultural backwardness caused by the long period of colonial exploitation and oppression. This co-operation should be based on equality and mutual benefit, with no conditions for privilege attached. The trade relations and economic cooperation between us should have for its purpose the promotion of the independent economic development in each country, and not to convert any country into a sole producer of raw materials and a market for consumer goods. Our cultural exchange should have respect for the development of

the national culture of each country, and not to ignore the characteristics and special merits of the culture of any country so that we may learn and benefit from each other.

Today when the peoples of Asia and Africa are increasingly taking their destiny into their own hands, even though the present economic and cultural co-operation among ourselves cannot yet be of a very large scale, it can be definitely said that this co-operation based on equality and mutual benefit will have a great future. We are convinced that with the advancement of industrialization of our countries and the raising of our peoples' standards of living, and with the elimination of artificial trade barriers placed between us from without, trade intercourse and economic co-operation among the Asian and African countries will become ever closer, and cultural interflow will be ever more frequent.

By following the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems can be realized. When these principles are ensured of implementation, there is no reason why international disputes cannot be settled through negotiation.

In the interest of defending world peace, we Asian and African countries, which are more or less under similar circumstances, should be the first to co-operate with one another in a friendly manner and put peaceful coexistence into practice. The discord and estrangement created among the Asian and African countries by colonial rule in the past should no longer be there. We Asian and African countries should respect one another, and eliminate any suspicion and fear which may exist between us.

The Government of the People's Republic of China fully agrees to the aims of the Asian-African Conference as defined by the prime ministers of the five South Asian countries in the Joint Communique of the Bogor Conference. We hold that in order to promote world peace and co-operation, the countries of Asia and Africa should first of all, in line with their common interest, seek goodwill and co-operation among themselves and establish friendly and neighbourly relations. India, Burma and China have affirmed the five principles of peaceful coexistence as the guiding principles in their mutual relations. These principles have received support from more and more countries. Following these principles, China and Indonesia have already achieved good results in their preliminary talks on the question of the nationality of the citizens of one country residing in the other. During the Geneva Conference, China also expressed its readiness to develop friendly relations with the Indo-Chinese states on the basis of these five principles.

There is no reason why the relations between China and Thailand, the Philippines and other neighbouring countries cannot be improved on the basis of these five principles. China is ready to establish normal relations with other Asian and African countries on the basis of the strict adherence to these principles and is willing to promote the normalization of relations between China and Japan. In order to promote mutual understanding and co-operation among us, we propose that the governments, parliaments and people's organizations of the Asian and African countries make friendly visits to each other's countries.

Mr. Chairman and Fellow Delegates, gone for ever are the days when the destiny of the Asian and African peoples was manipulated at will by others. We believe that if we are determined to preserve world peace, no one can drag us into war; if we are determined to strive for and safeguard our national independence, no one can continue to enslave us; if we are determined to enter into friendly co-operation, no one can split us.

What we Asian and African countries want are peace and independence. It is not our



intention to make Asian and African countries antagonistic to countries in other regions. We want just as well the establishment of peaceful and co-operative relations with countries in other regions.

This meeting of ours was not easily brought about. Though there are among us many different views, they should not influence the common desires that we all hold. Our Conference ought to give expression to our common desires and thus make itself a treasured page in the history of Asia and Africa. At the same time, the contact that has been established by us through this Conference should be maintained in order that we may make greater contributions to world peace.

As His Excellency President Sukarno of the Republic of Indonesia has rightly said, we Asians and Africans must be united.

Let us greet in advance the success of our Conference.

(April 19, 1955)