

September 4, 1954

Chinese Foreign Ministry Intelligence Department Report on the Asian-African Conference

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Summary:

The Chinese Foreign Ministry reported Indonesia's intention to hold the Asian-African Conference, its attitude towards the Asian-African Conference, and the possible development of the Conference.

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(1)

At the end of 1953 when Ceylon proposed to convene the Asian Prime Ministers' Conference in Colombo, Indonesia expressed its hope of expanding the scope of the conference, including African countries. In January this year, the Indonesian Prime Minister Ali accepted the invitation to participate in the Colombo Five States' Conference while stating that the Asian-African Conference should be listed in the agenda. (Note: During the period of the Korean War, the Asian Arab Group in the UN was rather active, which probably inspired Indonesia to put forward this proposal.) The Indonesian Foreign Minister Soenarjo believed that the Colombo Conference was the springboard to the Asian-African Conference. Ali proposed to convene the Asian-African Conference at the first day meeting of the Colombo Conference (April 28), but he didn't get definite support or a resolution from the conference. The Colombo Communiqué issued on May 3 only said that "the Indonesian Prime Minister may proceed to study the possibility of such a conference".

Indonesia was very active towards the Asian-African Conference before the Colombo Conference was held. The Indonesian newspaper, the Independence (Soekarno's paper), said that the conference would be convened on August 17 (the National Day of Indonesia) in Jakarta, and the Oriental Star believed that the conference would put Indonesia in a leading position, advocating Indonesia to put forward the proposal of the Asian Peace Group. But after the Colombo Conference Indonesia's activity tended to be quiet in June and July, and the Indonesian newspaper began to pose a number of realistic difficulties. The Source published on May 23 asked the government to take the membership, agenda and aim of the conference into serious consideration. The paper raised the question of whether to invite the Soviet Union, China, Japan, Taiwan, etc.? If the conference accepted some hostile states, there would be endless arguments; if the argument was avoided, the conference would achieve nothing. Therefore, the paper demanded to define the specific aim of the conference. On May 29, the Indonesian Prime Minister Soenarjo said that many issues were under discussion and when the conference convened, they could be decided. Regarding the membership, aim and agenda of the Asian-African Conference, the Indonesian Government has never put forward any definite proposals.

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The pro-government newspaper, the Independence, revealed that the original intention of Indonesia to organize the Asian-African Conference was attributed to the agony it felt for lack of energetic support in its pursuance of "a positive and independent policy" as the USA attempted to isolate it and pressed it to give up the existing policy. Ali pointed out on March 9 at the Indonesian Diplomatic Envoys' Meeting that the Asian-African Group recently had some signs of splitting (referred to US-Pakistan Treaty, disputes between India and Pakistan, the split of the Arab League, etc) so that it was necessary to organize the Asian-African Conference to encourage "independent" policy, and oppose military cliques and colonialism. In addition, Indonesia intends to make use of the conference to gain support in its effort to recover the West Iran.

In Indonesia, Ali's proposal for convening the Asian-African Conference won universal support from all parties and factions. The Communist Party of Indonesia actively supported Ali's effort in bringing about the Asian-African Conference and further urged him to establish Asian collective peace. The maintenance of Ali's cabinet relies on the support of the Communist Party of Indonesia and conversely Ali's cabinet respects the position to a certain extent. Internationally, the Ceylonese prime

minister expressed his support to the conference in May this year and it is said that Egypt would accept the invitation. The Indonesian ambassador in Cairo said that India and Burma would take part in the conference. It is even said that Magsaysay of the Philippines expressed interest in the Asian-African Conference in March.

In early August this year, when the "Southeast Asian Defense Treaty Conference" gradually came into shape, Indonesia not only dared to refuse to join it, but also rearranged the Asian-African Conference. The Indonesian newspaper, the Contention, published on August 11, said that Indonesia had sent 17 countries the invitation for participating in the Asian-African Conference, including 7 Arab League member states, Abyssinia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and the Philippines. But China was not invited. The name-list of invitees is generally in conformity with the principle made by Dubin, Minister of Intelligence of Indonesia: Only the Asian-African UN member states shall be invited in the first phase and the Asian-African non-UN member states, including China, shall be invited after an agreement reached by the above countries in the second phase.

US didn't openly oppose Indonesia's action, but the Philippines refused Indonesia's invitation and attacked that the Asian-African Conference as aimed at undermining the Manila Conference. The Indonesian Government immediately denied that its aim was to counter "the Southeast Asian Defense Treaty". UK didn't oppose the Asian-African Conference, but so far has not shown any signs to actively support it. It is said that India, Egypt, Ceylon, Burma, Pakistan, etc would participate in the Asian-African Conference, but all of them have not formally expressed their positions. The Ganlu Market Daily of India reported that Nehru once pointed out that it was a very complicated matter to convene the Asian-African Conference, needing to put forward a plan to replace the Southeast Asian Treaty and a reasonable name-list of the invitees, all of which were not an easy job. Therefore, the report said that India and Ceylon both asked to postpone the conference to next year. Thus, the Asian-African Conference, which was once to be held at the end of August, was postponed again by President Soekarno after Indonesia announced to postpone it to the date later than September 19.

It seems that India was recently discussing with Indonesia measures possibly taken in case the Asian-African Conference could not be held. Madam Pandit[1] went to Indonesia and openly talked about the issue of establishing the Asian peace zone. Nehru specially invited the Indonesian prime minister to have a discussion face to face before his visit to China. Therefore, the Indian newspaper predicted that they might discuss the details of the Asian-African Conference, as well as the signature of a non-aggression treaty between Indonesia and China. Since there are still many difficulties in convening the Asian-African Conference, the next development of India and Indonesia's activities is worth more attention.

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[1] Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was the sister of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and served as the Indian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, the United States, Ireland, Mexico, and Spain.