

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume 28

Reference on Bandung Conference

I. ASIAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE

1. To Ali Sastroamidjojo¹

New Delhi

February 20, 1955

My dear Prime Minister,²

This letter will be taken by Mohammad Yunus,³ who is leaving tomorrow morning for Djakarta. He is one of our team for helping the Joint Secretariat of the Asian-African Conference.⁴ Another members⁵ of this team will go early in March.

As you know, I have been away in England and only returned three days ago. On my way back I stopped for two days in Cairo and had talks with the Prime Minister and other Ministers of Egypt. Prime

¹ JN Collection. Copies sent to B.F.H.B. Tyabji, Ambassador in Indonesia, and Subimal Dutt, Commonwealth Secretary, MEA.

² (1903-1975); Prime Minister of Indonesia, 1953-55 and 1956-57.

³ (b. 1916); member, Indian Foreign Service, 1947-74.

⁴ The 29 countries which participated in this conference, held at Bandung, Indonesia, from 18 to 24 April 1955, were: Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar (all sponsors), Afghanistan, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and Yemen. These countries had a population of about 1,440,408,000 or nearly two-thirds of the world population as estimated in 1953. The Joint Secretariat comprised of Ruslan Abdulgani, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia, as its Secretary General and B.F:H.B.Tyabji(India), Chaudhri Khaliqzaman (Pakistan), M. Saravanamuttu (Sri Lanka) and Mya Sein (Myanmar) as members.

⁵ A. Appadorai joined the Joint Secretariat as Conference Officer.

Minister Gamal Nasser⁶ is greatly looking forward to his visit to Indonesia for the Asian-African Conference. He will probably come to India on his way to Indonesia and it is possible that we might come together to Djakarta.

The Asian-African Conference has attracted very great attention in the world. That would have been so in any event, but the continuation of the grave crisis over Formosa and the offshore islands of China will no doubt heighten the interest in our Conference. The situation in the Far East is a very difficult and serious one. Indeed, it might well be called an explosive one. The recent speech of Mr Dulles⁷ in which he has announced the American intention of shielding Quemoy and Matsu islands is bound to worsen the situation and add to the danger of major incidents. Much may therefore happen even before we meet at Bandung.

In view of this great importance of the Bandung Conference, I hope that the Joint Secretariat is making full and adequate preparations for it and will not be taken unawares at the last time. The full Conference will probably only meet once or twice, but there are likely to be numbers of committees meeting as well as private consultations between various delegations. We are only meeting for a week or so and time is thus very limited. I hope that this time will not be taken up much by protocol routines or by banquets and the like. The more time we have to have private discussions amongst ourselves, the greater the success of the Conference will be.

The Conference is unique in many ways. The mere fact of our meeting is of high importance. Then we have at the Conference representatives of countries holding diametrically opposing views. All this will require the most careful and tactful management. On the one hand, we cannot be just a gathering of diverse people talking vaguely about world problems; on the other hand we cannot obviously take up highly controversial issues as between our countries. Such a

⁶ Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970); Prime Minister of Egypt, 1954-56.

⁷ John Foster Dulles (1888-1959); US Secretary of State, 1953-59.

Conference cannot decide any question by majority vote. In spite of these difficulties, I think that the Conference can well help in producing a broad common approach in some matters affecting Asia and Africa and throw its weight on the side of peace.

I am venturing to write to you this matter because of the high importance of this Conference and the necessity to make it a success in every way. The Joint Secretariat will no doubt work to this end. But I hope that they will have your personal guidance.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

To B.F.H.B. Tyabji⁸

New Delhi
February 20, 1955

My dear Badr,⁹

As Yunus is going tomorrow morning to Djakarta, I am giving him a letter for the President¹⁰ and another for the Prime Minister.¹¹ Copies of both are enclosed. Please have them delivered.

I am rather anxious about this Asian-African Conference and, more especially, about the arrangements. I wonder if the people in Indonesia have any full realisation of what this Conference is going to be. All the world's eyes will be turned upon it and I have no doubt that vast numbers of press correspondents will go there for the occasion. The Conference will represent a historic event of great significance and might well mould the future of Asia and Africa. The immediate subject that it will probably have to face will be a very

⁸ JN Collection.

⁹ (1907-1995); Ambassador to Indonesia, 1954-56.

¹⁰ Letter to Ahmed Sukarno, President of Indonesia, not printed.

¹¹ See the preceding item.

grave crisis in regard to Formosa, etc: I do not mean that it should throw itself into this muddle, but it cannot wholly ignore it either. Because of all this, we cannot take the slightest risk of lack of adequate arrangements. There is no reason why there should be this lack because everything can be done if there is proper understanding and intention to do it. What I fear is that there is not full understanding even and much less intention. It will be a tragedy if the arrangements are feeble and a break-down occurs.

You have been pointing out that the Indonesians are sensitive. We should respect their sensitiveness. But we cannot afford to have everything messed up because they are sensitive. The harm to Indonesia will be very great indeed if all the world sees that they cannot organise the Conference or organise it very badly. The whole work of the Conference might go to pieces because of lack of foresight and lack of proper organisation. As for the foreign delegations that come there, they will go back with irritation and, maybe, even ill-will.

These are serious consequences which we cannot ignore simply because people are sensitive. I want you to realise this and I want the Indonesian Government and the Joint Secretariat to realise it fully. I have no doubt whatever that if things do not come up to standard, there will be a burst up even while we are in Indonesia and others will take charge of the situation and not calmly look on while everything goes to pieces.

I have learnt that it is proposed to crowd numbers of people in single rooms. It is difficult for me to say much from here, but the Indonesian Government or your Joint Secretariat will not get much praise from anybody if delegations are herded up like cattle. As I said when I was in Djakarta,¹² we put up thousands of people for our Congress session in temporary huts or tents. Surely something can

¹² Nehru visited Djakarta when he came to attend a conference of the Prime Ministers of the five Colombo countries at Bogor in Indonesia in the last week of December 1954.

be improvised. Above all, one fact should be remembered, and this is usually forgotten in Indonesia. This fact is an adequate provision of bath rooms and lavatories, etc. People can do without drawing rooms, but they cannot do without bath rooms and lavatories.

I am writing about what might be considered trivial matters. But these trivial matters upset people and frayed tempers are no good when we consider important problems.

You have been referring to some offer of Unilever of a house for me. I do not particularly like accepting this kind of private hospitality of a British firm. But if there is no way, I would accept it. But I do not understand these private arrangements. The Unilevers should place their house at the disposal of the Indonesian Government or your Joint Secretariat. It is for the Joint Secretariat to use it as it chooses. It seems to me quite improper for us to have a private arrangement, and rather a pompous one, when others are herded up in small places. Therefore, this matter should be dealt with through the Joint Secretariat or the Indonesian Government, whichever is dealing with such matters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Problems of Dependent Peoples¹³

Mr Chairman,¹⁴ when this matter was brought up yesterday I thought, and I still think, that it is rather out of order, quite apart from the merits of the question.

But that point does not arise now because we are discussing it and I think on the whole it is better that the truth comes out rather than

¹³ Speech in the closed session of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, 22 April 1955. File No. SI/162/9/64-MEA.

¹⁴ Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Conference on 18 April shortly after its inauguration by President Ahmed Sukarno

not and spoil the entire system. Therefore, let us discuss it now as we are doing.

The first thing to remember, as the delegate from Syria¹⁵ pointed out, is what are the purposes of this Conference. I think it is important to remember that we have laid them down clearly and communicated them to the representatives of the countries present here.

When Sir John, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, spoke yesterday¹⁶ and when he spoke again today, he said that he did not desire to discuss ideologies or even to put forward any resolution. However, a resolution has been put forward by some other representatives whom I heard today. Speaking from memory, it seems to me to go against what Sir John Kotelawala and others have said. In fact, the delegate of Iran¹⁷ who just spoke also laid stress on the point that we should not touch ideologies. But that actual position does not seem to be that. What exactly are we discussing?

There has been a talk of new colonialism. Well, speaking technically, however much we may oppose what has happened to countries in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, it is not colonialism. It may be an objectionable thing, but the use of the word is incorrect. However, I am not quibbling about words. What exactly is the resolution? As far as I can gather reference has been made to the fact that many colonial territories have not been mentioned at all, that we have concentrated on West Irian, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. In Africa there are British colonial territories, French colonial territories, Portuguese colonial territories and many others. In India, there is a

¹⁵ Khaled el-Azem, Foreign Minister of Syria and leader of the Syrian delegation.

¹⁶ John Kotelawala (1897-1980); Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, 1953-56. Kotelawala had made a specific reference to 'Soviet imperialism' on 21 April and said: "Think, for example, of those satellite States under communist domination in Central and Eastern Europe-Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland. Are not these colonies as much as any of the colonial territories in Africa and Asia? And if we are united in our opposition to colonialism, should it not be our duty openly to declare our opposition to Soviet colonialism as much as to Western imperialism?"

¹⁷ Djalal Abdoh, acting head of the Iranian delegation.

little bit called Goa; there are many others which we have not mentioned and I do not propose to mention them-it is a bad example-because we propose to deal with them ourselves. Then reference has been made to what is called Soviet ideology. I should like this Committee to remember that we are a meeting of governments and we should function within the limitations of governments meeting. When we talk about Soviet imperialism we refer presumably to the countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. What are these countries? Some of them like Poland and Czechoslovakia are represented in the United Nations. We cannot deal with them. Poland is at present a Member of the International Commission on Indo-China. Many of us have recognised-as far as India is concerned we have recognised-many of these countries including Hungary. We have established diplomatic relations with them. Maybe, some other countries too. It may be that some of the Western powers deal with them as individual nations and also have treaties with them.

It seems to me rather extraordinary that we should discuss nations as such whose people we have recognised in the capacity of sovereign nations and then say that they are colonial territories. It may be-I do not know-that there are minorities and groups; but the fact is that the United Nations recognise these countries as sovereign, independent countries and give them a place within their framework. And for us, this Conference meeting as governments, to challenge the very basis of the recognition of the United Nations of these sovereign independent countries is a most extraordinary position to take up -- for anybody, and more especially for representatives of the governments of Asia and Africa.

I am not for the moment criticising any government. We have criticised, not directly but indirectly, the French colonial powers because of their colonies and we have every right to do that in the moderate, plain language of statesmanship. But there is a distinct and great difference in criticising the very basis of independent

nations that are represented in the United Nations and with whom we have diplomatic relations. There is a great difference between that and our talking about Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia. They are not admittedly from any point of view independent nations. They are represented in the UN by the colonial powers: by France, Britain, Portugal or whatever country it may be. The East European countries are represented directly at the UN by their own representatives. One may say that that is only the framework but some other power is behind them. That, of course, may be some peoples' opinion. But surely proceeding as representatives of governments we cannot go on this extraordinary presumption or assumption. If we do that, a question might well arise, as, I think, it has already been hinted by some hon'ble delegate who spoke: "What about the other countries which presume to be independent? How far are we under the pressure or coercion of another country?" We will have to discuss all those questions. I think the honourable delegate from Syria mentioned that some people might raise the question of American imperialism, whether it is direct or economic. Some people might remember the case of Guatemala.¹⁸ What exactly it was is a matter which does not shine forth brilliantly as the notable achievement of any country. So that once you enter into these matters, you enter into a region of doubt, uncertainty, difficulty and international confusion about which you can argue day in and day out. Whatever the result you may arrive at, it will be a confusing one. You cannot do that in a conference of this type. I am not raising a point of order as such, but it would make our conference rather delicate if we function in that way. Surely, we are a meeting of responsible people who are giving the views of what is happening in

¹⁸ In June 1954, when insurgent forces advanced into Guatemala from the frontier along Honduras, in a bid to overthrow an elected government, the Guatemalan President accused Honduras and Nicaragua of conducting an open aggression along with the US. See also Selected Works (second series), Vol. 26, pp. 404-405 and 565-566.

our state. If we look at this question in its entirety, as the honourable delegates from Iran and Iraq¹⁹ said, and impartially, and if we examine the state of freedom, the state of individual or national freedom, the state of democratic liberty or democracy itself in the countries represented here, well, I feel many of us are lacking, terribly lacking. In our own countries there are therefore movements for reforms, movements for progress, social, economic and so on. Then we have to go back to the time when Asia and Africa had to face dynamic revolutionary situations because Asia and Africa felt that there had to be reforms for the sake of humanity. That is why we became independent and obtained independence for a good number of our territories. Now we are gradually working our way and are working hard to progress and catch up socially and economically with other progressive countries. But we feel that in spite of resolutions independent countries may remain backward. But it is not independent if it is weak. All kinds of pressure is exercised on it and the reality and substance of independence goes. If we sit down and discuss these matters in all integrity in its entirety then we shall have to go very far and discuss how far countries represented here fulfill that noble standard which we laid down yesterday in the human rights or even the ordinary tenets of democracy or individual freedom. I submit that it is completely wrong for us to consider those territories which for generations past-I am talking about the Central Asian territories-formed part of the Soviet Union. I cannot speak from personal experience but from my general knowledge I cannot say that these people are being subjugated. I do not know. If we get a statement from a small dissident group, that does not mean that the majority of the people of that territory subscribe to it. Because somebody whispers into our ears that his country is under subjugation, are we going to come to a decision and issue a paper on it that it is colonial territory? Obviously, as responsible people, we cannot.

¹⁹ Mohammad Fadhil .Tamali, leader of the delegation of Iraq.

I agree in one matter though, and that is that while we have passed a resolution about West Irian,²⁰ Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia²¹ we have not passed what may be called a general resolution about other territories. It would be good if we do that because many of such countries are not represented here. Many of us know what is happening in North Africa. I do not want to mention them though I feel very strongly about it. I think it would be desirable to have a simple form of words as a preamble before dealing with West Irian, Morocco, and so on, which are dominated by colonial powers. When the Colombo powers met on the first occasion I think they said something to the effect that the Prime Ministers discussed the problem of colonialism which they felt still existed in various parts of the world; they were of the view that the continuance of such a state of affairs was a violation of fundamental human rights and a threat to the peace of the world. I am not suggesting this form of words but some such preamble should come from various countries where colonialism in whatever form may exist.

I am not an admirer of the Soviets. I dislike many things they have done as I dislike many things the Western powers have done and at the proper moment, if members consider it necessary, we will give expression to it in our own language. But for the reasons I have given, this is a question we cannot raise as a formal matter. How are

²⁰ Following the independence of Indonesia (former Dutch East Indies) in 1949, the Dutch retained control of West Irian (West New Guinea). The Conference supported the position of Indonesia regarding West Irian and urged the Netherlands Government to reopen negotiations on the basis of the relevant agreements between the two countries and expressed an earnest hope that the UN would assist the parties concerned in finding a peaceful solution to the dispute. However, years of dispute culminated in the transfer of the territory to Indonesian control in May 1963 and a plebiscite in August 1969 when tribal leaders voted to remain under and become a part of Indonesia.

²¹ In its final communiqué issued on 24 April, the Conference declared its support of the right of the people of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to self-determination and independence and urged the French Government to bring about a peaceful settlement of the issue without delay.

we going to say that a dissident group is the majority group? What facts have we got to study it? Obviously we have not, except our own predilection, prejudice or opinion in the matter. They have treaties not only with many of us but also with the Western powers-England, France and other countries; trade and commercial treaties, and so on. I was therefore, very much surprised at the attitude taken by some members here. If you wish to discuss this matter fully and put forward a resolution then undoubtedly we shall have to consider the question of the pressure exercised not only by the Soviet but many of the Western powers as well. Take Guatemala, for instance. How are we going to consider all this? That is a matter which will possibly come up at a later stage of the Conference. Quite apart from the subjugating of territories, each one wants to put himself in an advantageous position in regard to a future conflict. Every question, whether of Palestine, Morocco or Tunisia is considered in the light of what would be the most advantageous to another country. In the United Nations every fact is not considered on its merits. If it is considered relevant to the big power countries there is all kinds of pressure brought to bear. We were discussing the West Irian resolution yesterday. It is very interesting that in the voting of the United Nations Political Committee a number of countries voted for the West Irian resolution which was proposed by India and other countries but at a later stage those very countries voted against it- obviously on account of pressure and coercion exercised on them to change their minds. Some members will remember they came and told us they were very sorry they were against the resolution because of the pressure brought on them by the great powers. There is another aspect, namely, subversion and infiltration. That is an important consideration, not arising in this context at all but it is an important consideration arising independently of this context. It is for these reasons that I feel we should emphasise that one country should not interfere in the internal affairs, be it political, social or economic affairs of another country. It is a fact that there is

infiltration and interference of various kinds; you might call it interference, another type of pressure, but there is infiltration undoubtedly, not only from this group but both groups. We have to face both and we have to check them politely but firmly. We face a very delicate and dangerous situation. I am sure many of us realise the dangerous situation of the world today. Although no major incident has happened in the last two weeks, still, I say, the fact is that we are on the verge of war. Prominent statesmen have contemplated a meeting of what they call the big powers; for two years they have been talking about it. Sir Winston Churchill²² made the proposal to find a way out of this tangle. There might be a meeting of these countries in the near future. Now the question is: are we assisting them in finding a solution or are we merely doing something which will come in the way and thereby add to the danger of war? I think that one of the major functions of this Conference as well as of our committees is to do our bit in favour of peace although we may not agree with this or that policy, or some action of this or that country. Let us certainly criticise the policies of any country, if we like, privately in our own countries, but not in gatherings of this nature, for the reason that the international atmosphere is charged with passion and fear. But we can play a more useful part here, and play it satisfactorily, namely, throwing our whole weight in a friendly manner in favour of peace.

The question we must put to ourselves now is, are the actions we take here going to serve the cause of peace or the cause of passion and mutual recrimination? I submit, therefore, that we should add a kind of preamble to the other resolution we passed about West Irian, Morocco, etc. Let it be a small preamble which may be a basis for what follows, taking into account what the Colombo powers stated some time ago; the context may be more or less the same, as regards dependent countries. Let us not have a further resolution or start a detailed discussion which undoubtedly will lead to

²² (1874-1965); Prime Minister of the UK, 1951-55.

condemnation of this side or that side, to recriminations, etc. And I would very earnestly appeal to all the distinguished delegates present here, and more especially to those like the distinguished Prime Ministers of Ceylon and Pakistan, the Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey,²³ the distinguished delegates of Iran and Iraq who may feel this way, to look at this question from the broad point of view that I have tried to set out and help in creating an atmosphere that will be conducive to peace which we so much desire.

World Peace and Cooperation²⁴

Mr Chairman, the turn this discussion has taken is a much wider one than that we had expected. In fact, it has covered the whole major heading. We have just had the advantage of listening to the distinguished leader of the Turkish delegation who told us what he, as a responsible leader of the nation, must do and must not do. He gave us an able statement of what I might call one side representing the views of one of the major blocs existing at the present time in the world. I have no doubt that an equally able discourse could be given on the part of the other bloc. I belong to neither and I propose to belong to neither whatever happens in the world. If we have to stand alone, we will stand by ourselves, whatever happens and India has stood alone without any aid against a mighty empire, the British Empire-and we propose to face all consequences.

What has the "reality" led us to? What has the reality of the peace that followed the last war led us to? I would like the hon'ble delegates to realise that, to appreciate that. This so-called realistic appreciation of the world situation, where has it led us to? It has led us to the brink of war, a third world war. It has been stated by eminent persons who know about it that if there is another war there will be

²³ Fatin Rustu Zorlu, leader of the delegation of Turkey.

²⁴ Speech in the closed session of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, 22 April 1955. File No. SI/162/9/64-MEA.

total destruction of mankind. That is to say, a third world war would bring us not only to the abyss of civilisation and culture but would mean total destruction. We have to face that.

The delegate for Turkey has gone through the history of the past ten years. Perhaps that history could be, here and there, interpreted differently. Much of it may be true and much of it may be interpreted differently. It is hardly possible for us to discuss the history of the past ten years because we have been living in revolutionary times. Following this last world war, in Asia great things have happened. There is that great nation, China, which has risen after hundreds of years of strife and oppression. That is a major fact of the situation. There is India which does not presume to possess any military might but presumes to have the strength to face any danger, whenever it may come.

We do not agree with the communist teachers, we do not agree with the anti-communist teachers, because they are both based on wrong principles. I never challenged the right of any country to defend itself; it has to. We will defend ourselves with whatever arms and strength we have, and if we have no arms we will defend ourselves without arms. I am dead certain that no country can conquer India. Even the two great power blocs together cannot conquer India; not even the atom or the hydrogen bomb. I know what my people are. But I know also that if we rely upon others, whatever great powers they might be, if we look to them for sustenance, then we are weak indeed.

True our outlook is different. Ideologies are talked about. Let us not talk about ideologies. What did the honourable delegate from Turkey talk about ideology? He talked about it all the time. If I am to talk about another ideology, the Gandhian ideology, I can go on for hours, but I do not want to impose it on honourable members here. I know that Gandhi won my freedom. I am afraid of nobody. I suffer from no fear complex; my country suffers from no fear complex. We rely on

nobody except on the friendship of others; we rely on ourselves and none others.

I do not want to take up the time of honourable delegates here but I wish to tell this House that I neither believe in the communist nor the anti-communist approach to this question. So far as we are concerned, we have adopted a line of action and we propose to adhere to it, come what may. But let us examine the situation as it is today. What does it lead to? Some delegates have pointed out the dangers of the situation. One side says, "Let us arm, and arm and arm because the other party is arming" and the other party says, "Let us arm, and arm and arm because the other party is arming." So, both sides go on making arms.

My country has made mistakes. Every country makes mistakes. I have no doubt we will make mistakes; we will stumble and fall and get up. The mistakes of my country and perhaps the mistakes of other countries here do not make a difference; but the mistakes the great powers make do make a difference to the world and may well bring about a terrible catastrophe. I speak with the greatest respect for these great powers because they are not only great in military might but in development, in culture, in civilisation. But I do submit that greatness sometimes brings quite false values, false standards. When they begin to think in terms of military strength-whether it be the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union or the USA-then they are going away from the right track and the result of that may be that the overwhelming might of one country will conquer the world. Thus far the world has succeeded in preventing that; I cannot speak for the future. But you have today two mighty colossuses, neither of whom can put an end to each other but obviously they can ruin each other and the rest of the world. There is no other way out. Everybody recognises it, the great statesmen of England, Russia and America recognise it. Let us admit that we have all committed mistakes. Let us admit that one has committed more mistakes than the other. However, that is immaterial, except in academic debate.

We have to face the position as it is today, namely, that whatever armaments one side or other might possess, war will lead to consequences which will result in not gaining an objective but ruin. Therefore, the first thing we have to settle is that war must be avoided. Naturally war cannot be avoided if any country takes to a career of conquest and aggression. Secondly, we countries of Asia have to consider whether we can, all of us put together certainly not singly, prevent the great powers or big countries going to war. We certainly cannot prevent the big countries going to war if they want to but we can make a difference. Even a single country can make a difference when the scales are evenly balanced. What are we going to do? Are we going to throw our weight in the scales on the side of peace or war? It is no use blaming the Soviet Union or America. It is perfectly true that at the present moment we, not only in Asia but in Europe as well, have every reason to dislike and oppose, not only external aggression but internal subversion and all the rest of it. Let us then talk of the steps we can take. The first step is to make our view clear that these things should not happen. So far as I am concerned, it does not matter what war takes place; we will not take part in it unless we have to defend ourselves. If I join any of these big groups I lose my identity; I have no identity left, I have no view left. I may express it here and there generally but I have no views left. If all the world were to be divided up between these two big blocs what would be the result? The inevitable result would be war. Therefore every step that takes place in reducing that area in the world which may be called the "unaligned area" is a dangerous step and leads to war. It reduces that objectivity, that balance, that outlook which other countries without military might can perhaps exercise.

Honourable members laid great stress on moral force. It is with military force that we are dealing now but I submit that moral force counts and the moral force of Asia and Africa must, in spite of the atomic and hydrogen bombs of Russia, the USA or another country,

count! Unfortunately, in discussing this very desirable proposition put forward by the Prime Minister²⁵ of Burma, we have drifted to all kinds of other things. On the face of it, nobody can challenge the proposition of the Prime Minister of Burma. All that may be said of it is that it does not go far enough, that it is rather reiterating, even repetitive, of the Charter. Every truth that you say is likely to have originated somewhere or other. The point is that a certain truth has a certain application at a particular moment. If it has no application at a particular moment, it will be forgotten. Why does this simple word "coexistence" raise all sorts of turmoil in peoples' minds? Because it has a significance in the present state of the world. Otherwise everybody recognises it. What is the alternative to peaceful coexistence? There may be coexistence, not peaceful, but something in the nature of cold war. Why then be afraid of the word? Are we choosing war deliberately or moving unconsciously towards war, which cold war implies. I say that there is no alternative for any country, unless it wants war, but to accept the concept of peaceful coexistence. In some countries the very word; peace, is looked upon with horror. It is most amazing. That word is considered dangerous. So I submit, let us consider these matters practically, leaving out ideologies. Many members present here do not obviously accept the communist ideology, while some of them do. For my part I do not. I am a positive person, not an "anti" person. I want positive good for my country and the world. Therefore, are we, the countries of Asia and Africa, devoid of any positive position except being pro-communist or anti-communist? Has it come to this, that the leaders of thought who have given religions and all kinds of things to the world have to tag on to this kind of group or that and be hangers on of this party or the other carrying out their wishes and occasionally giving an idea? It is most degrading and humiliating to any self respecting people or nation. It is an intolerable thought to me that the great countries of Asia and Africa should come out of bondage

²⁵ U Nu (1907-1995); Prime Minister of Myanmar (Burma), 1947-57.

into freedom only to degrade themselves or humiliate themselves in this way. Well, I do not criticise these powers. They are probably capable of looking after themselves and know what is best for themselves. But I will not tie myself to this degradation. Am I to lose my freedom and individuality and become a camp-follower of others? I have absolutely no intention of doing that.

A reference was made to these various attacks made in the Middle East, South-East Asia and so on. The whole course of the discussion has proceeded on that theme. Mr Mohammad Ali²⁶ put forward an excellent resolution. Certainly the first four points in that resolution are acceptable to us all. The fifth deals with self defence, singly or collectively: I do not deny the right of any country to defend itself. It is a natural right that cannot be denied. Then why is it put there? It has been put there because of these pacts that have been organised in Western and Eastern Asia. If that is the position I am not prepared to accept it. If that point is put there to cover those pacts, how can we accept it? I do not challenge Mr Mohammad Ali's right to enter into any pacts although I may disagree with him, but under cover of words to ask this Conference to accept the principle of those pacts is, I submit, something that should not be done. It is open to him to have those pacts. It is open to me not to have them. But to bring in this way the collective defence pacts made in the last year is going far beyond our subject and bringing in things which are highly controversial and which tend to lead to fundamental differences of opinion.

I submit to you, every pact has brought insecurity and not security to the countries which have entered into them. They have brought the danger of atomic bombs and the rest of it nearer to them than would have been the case otherwise. They have not added to the strength of any country, I submit, which it had singly. It may have produced some idea of security, but it is a false security. It is a bad thing for any country thus to be lulled into security.

²⁶ (1909-1963); Prime Minister of Pakistan, 1953-55.

The distinguished delegate of Turkey referred to NATO. I have nothing to say against NATO. It is open to the European countries to join it for self defence. I cannot challenge it in the slightest. But I should like to point out to this assembly that this conception of the NATO has extended itself in two ways. It has gone far away from the Atlantic and has reached other oceans and seas. Leave that alone. Secondly, do honourable members of this Conference realise that the NATO today is one of the most powerful protectors of colonialism? I say that explicitly. I am not saying that indirectly, but directly and explicitly. Here is the little territory of Goa, in India, which Portugal holds. We get letters from the NATO powers-mind you, Portugal is a member of NATO-and Portugal has approached its fellow members in the NATO on this point-telling us, "You should not do anything in regard to Goa, you should not do this and that." I will not mention these powers; they are some of the so-called big powers. It does not matter what powers they are, but it is gross impertinence. The Republic of India told them that it is gross impertinence on their part. Let there be no doubt about it, we shall deal with this little matter in the way we like.

The distinguished delegate of Iraq was eloquent about Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Does he realise that these three territories would probably have been independent if it were not for NATO? Today because of the assistance given by these great powers NATO has bases for various purposes in these parts of the world. So we must take a complete view of the situation and not be contradictory ourselves when we talk about colonialism, when we say "colonialism must go", and in the same voice say that we support every policy or some policies that confirm colonialism. It is an extraordinary attitude to take up.

So I do submit that we must for the moment leave out past history, as to what happened in Potsdam, at the Cairo Conference and at Yalta, as to what President Roosevelt²⁷ said or Winston Churchill said

²⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945); President of the USA. 1933-45.

and what somebody else did. All post-war confusion has arisen from all kinds of steps taken, right or wrong, in the past. And we have to suffer today because of this confusion, because it clouds our view of the total world situation. Turkey said that the US and other powers disarmed rapidly after the war. Let us admit that. What happens today? Can we forget that the situation we have to face today is that the world, a good part of it, is ranged with one big bloc or other, both having a certain ideology? I do not know the ideology of the Western bloc. Certainly it is not one single ideology; those in it differ, but in a military sense they hold together. There are other countries in the world which have not aligned themselves in this way. Some may sympathise with this bloc or the other, and some may not. Two big colossuses stand face to face with each other, afraid of each other. Today in the world, I do submit, not only because of the presence of these two colossuses but also because of the coming of the atomic and hydrogen bomb age, the whole concept of war, of peace, of politics, has changed. We are thinking and acting in terms of a past age. No matter what Generals and soldiers learned in the past, it is useless in this atomic age. They do not understand its implications or its use. As an eminent military critic said: "The whole conception of war is changed. There is no precedent." It may be so. Now it does not matter if one country is more powerful than the other in the use of the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb. One is more powerful to cause ruin than the other. That is what is meant by saying that the point of saturation has been reached. However powerful one country is, the other is also powerful. It is the world that suffers; there can be no victory. It may be said perhaps rightly that owing to this very terrible danger, people refrain from going to war. I hope so. The difficulty is that while governments want to refrain from war, something suddenly happens and there is war and utter ruin. There is another thing: because of the present position in the world there is not likely to be aggression. If there is aggression anywhere in the

world, it is bound to result in world war. It does not matter where the aggression is. If one commits aggression there is world war.

I want the countries here to realise it and not to think in terms of any limitation. Today, a war however limited it may be, is bound to lead to a big war. Even if tactical atomic weapons, as they are called, are used, the next step would be the use of the big atomic bomb. You cannot stop these things. In a country's life and death struggle, it is not going to stop short of this. It is not going to decide on our or anybody else's resolutions but it would engage in war, ruin and annihilation of others before it allows itself to be annihilated completely. Annihilation will result not only in the countries engaged in war, but owing to the radioactive waves which go thousands and thousands of miles it will destroy everything. That is the position. It is not an academic position; it is not a position of discussing ideologies; nor is it a position of discussing past history. It is looking at the world as it is today.

The leaders of the great nations like the President of the United States have to carry a world of responsibility in having to face this position. So are the leaders of United Kingdom and Russia. It is a tremendous burden. I do not know at what time an error might be made this way or that way which would lead to war.

Now, therefore, are we, the Asian and African countries, going to look on it passively or are we going to take a step which will upset the balance on one side or the other? This is not a question of security. Will not security be damned if war comes? Who is going to protect us if war comes and if atomic bombs come? Of course, every country will look after itself, but it will be difficult to do that with atomic bombs, radioactive waves and all that. Therefore, I would beg this Conference to appreciate the gravity of this situation. It is very grave situation indeed. We have not discussed Formosa and the rest, nor is it necessary for us to discuss the merits of the question. But the fact is that in the Far Eastern countries the situation is very grave. One does not know where it will lead to. Therefore, can we not in our

own way say something peacefully, and in a friendly way, firmly declaring something, which will set the scales in favour of peace? That is the problem.

I do submit that the so-called five principles (whatever the number may be, they have more or less been included in the resolution of the Prime Minister of Burma) is not a magic formula which will prevent all the ills of the world. But it is something which meets the needs of the day. It lessens tension; it does not harm anybody, criticise anybody, condemn anybody. And I assure you, broadly speaking, President Eisenhower²⁸ is in agreement with those principles. I know that the present Prime Minister²⁹ of England has said so in a public address given to our Members of Parliament.³⁰ Some of us here may disagree with it, but surely that is the reverse of the right step for us to take. I therefore beg of this Conference to consider the matter in the light of the actualities of today. I am entirely one with the honourable head of the Turkish delegation when he says that we must take a realistic view, a view which is related to facts of today, not yesterday or the day before yesterday.

Between the day before yesterday and today there have been wars and vast revolutions have taken place; many changes have taken place and all kinds of things have been happening. So that one must consider things as they are today. If the hon'ble delegate of Iraq represents the right viewpoint, I can say that the world is going to ruin. It is not an approach to this question and his speech is full of irritation, hatred and disregard. His whole speech is a tirade. It is not a balanced speech. Let us not align ourselves as independent nations of Asia and Africa, but take a line of our own. I do not say that it should be a single line. I do submit that the resolution put forward by the Burmese Prime Minister is the correct solution. A word may be

²⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969); President of the USA, 1953-61.

²⁹ Anthony Eden (1897-1977); Foreign Secretary, UK, 1951-55; Prime Minister, 1955-57.

³⁰ Eden addressed the Members of Parliament in New Delhi on 3 March 1955.

changed here and there. It works on a correct basis, a friendly basis for all countries. It does not say anything which might irritate anybody.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan says that it is good but not enough, and he wanted to add many things. There is some resolution which he had about colonialism. We have dealt with it already. You take away the force of the resolution if you add all these things. He said something about the peaceful solution of disputes. Have a resolution or an amendment; but he has referred to all kinds of things. Some people have said: "Let us have the Charter". As a matter of fact, some of the hon'ble delegates were not present when the Prime Minister of Burma proposed his resolution. So, Mr President, with your permission, I shall read it out again:

"The nations assembled at the Asian-African Conference declare that their relations between themselves, and their approach to the other nations of the world, shall be governed by complete respect for the national sovereignty and integrity of other nations. They will not intervene or interfere in the territory or the internal affairs of each other or of other nations, and will totally refrain from acts or threats of aggression. They recognise the equality of races and of nations, large and small. They will be governed by the desire to promote mutual interest and cooperation, by respect for the fundamental human rights and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

I do submit that there is not a word in this resolution to which anybody can object. As a matter of fact, the word "coexistence" is not used at all, although we are discussing this resolution under that head. Unless one thinks that there is no alternative to this except war, and to be prepared for war, this resolution has to be accepted.

The Policy of Friendly Coexistence³¹

³¹ Speech in the closed session of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, 23 April 1955. File No. SI/162/9/64-MEA.

Mr Chairman, during the few days we have been here we have had important discussions, but I doubt if any discussion has been so important as the one we are having today. I am very glad that all of us have spoken frankly and fully upon these vital subjects. May I right from the beginning express my regrets to the distinguished delegate from Iraq for what I said yesterday about his speech exhibiting hatred? His speech I thought exhibited hatred and we were naturally upset about it. .

May I also say that when I spoke yesterday I rather criticised the military outlook of some powers here. I do not mean to say that we should all be pacifists. I regret I am no pacifist. I should like to be one, but I am no pacifist in the circumstances of today and because of the responsibility I have.

I do not believe in weakness, but in the strength of the people. Weakness creates a vacuum which power fills in. The question that arises is not of weakness or strength, but what constitutes strength in a nation. Armies and the like are only one factor, if I may say so, a relatively unimportant factor, in the strength of a nation. If we have an army today and no backing, it is of no use. It is the industrial backing that a country wants; if we had no economic power the army would not be able to hold on, because the weapons are made somewhere else. We have to depend on others. Apart from all these factors, there is a certain factor: the morale of the people-the morale which refuses to give in, whatever happens.

We have spoken frankly. Perhaps I spoke with a measure of warmth yesterday, and if any words that I used yesterday seemed disrespectful to any distinguished delegate present here, I apologise wholeheartedly. I spoke with warmth and frankness because I feel strongly about these matters. Here we are meeting in this Conference. What does this Conference mean? It means many things. If I may respectfully say, this Conference reflects the profound historical changes that are taking place in Asia. It is a vast chance that is going on, much bigger than the subjects that we are here

discussing. Unfortunately, the thinking of men's minds often lags behind events. It is an odd thing; although events take place because of the human mind, yet the human mind lags behind the very events that take place. So we often think in terms of the past when the present is already different from that past.

Now I have come here naturally in my capacity as a representative of India, but I have come here not merely as an individual or representative of India, but as a part of the revolutionary process that has been going on in India; for I am a child of that revolution. I am no static person; I have been in the market place; I have moved with crowds and seen the vast squalor and the poverty prevailing and so I feel strongly about these matters. We have dreamt dreams and we have partly realised those dreams not only for India but for Asia and the whole world. So if anything happens that seems to come in the way of the realisation of those dreams, that seems to shatter them into bits, then naturally we react strongly with all the energy and force at our command.

We have had a very important statement from the Prime Minister³² of China. He has spoken with full authority and made certain statements. I shall not say much about it except to point out what is obvious: the various things that he has said on behalf of his Government and his country deserve the fullest consideration. I shall rather deal with what the distinguished delegates from Iraq, Lebanon³³ and the Philippines³⁴ said chiefly in dealing with the speech I made yesterday. But before I do that I should like to repeat: the basic fact which troubles me often is the fact of our discussing things in terms of the past, when the present and the future are impinging upon us. We stand everywhere in the world, more so in Asia, on the sword's edge of the present dividing the past from the future. It is a

³² Chou En-lai (1898-1976); Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of China, 1949-76.

³³ Sami Solh, Prime Minister of Lebanon.

³⁴ Carlos P. Romulo (1899-1985); leader of the Philippine delegation at the Conference and Ambassador to USA, 1955-62.

precarious position, an exciting position, a fascinating position. But we have to be careful. We should be careful to preserve the hard-won freedom we have got, careful to see that it is not crushed out of existence, not by the enemy or opponent of us all, but by world events.

So that we have to see this large picture and in looking at it, one sees all kinds of changes. What are they due to? Well, many things. We may criticise communism, the Soviet Union, America, whatever we like, but all these things are parts of great historical processes-if I may go back 150 or 160 or 170 years-they are the culmination of the Industrial Revolution. This atomic bomb is the culmination of the Industrial Revolution.

Now, Asia fell back in the race of life because of the Industrial Revolution which came to Europe first and then to America. Asia became a power vacuum. Now, our going to Europe for building our arms and armaments would be of no use unless we build ourselves up on a much sounder basis. Therefore, we are all anxious-each country here-to advance forward in every way-economically, industrially and the like-to build up our source of power, our basic source of power, which, I submit, is morale and élan and the vitality of a nation. Here big countries and small countries can play a tremendous part because of the élan that they possess, because of the spirit of life they possess. Now that almost all countries represented here-big and small-have not been able to keep pace in the race of life, they have now to catch up and catch up rapidly. We have no time to lose; we have to face the technological changes that have brought about all this vast difference in the world. We the countries of Asia have the good in our grasp, but something terrible threatens to smother us, I mean the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb. But then this technological advance has also made the world one. We may be jealous of our nationality and sovereignty and independence but as the threat affects the whole world we are really beginning more and more not to consider each one of us as isolated

nations. Therefore, we have to bring up our thinking to this technological development.

Now it would be highly improper for me to criticise ideologies and theories and all that, but, with all deference and humility, I would suggest-I am only expressing my own personal opinion-that the way of approach to these world problems, which the great powers at present are adopting, whether they are on the communist side or the non-communist side, is completely out of date and that is why we are faced with all this trouble, all this confusion, because events outpace us-march ahead of us-and we are left behind. I am no believer in the communist theory-there is much in it which I accept in the economic theory, but basically I think it is out of date today, more especially in this atomic age. I think equally that the opposite theory is out of date in the context of modern world affairs.

Now one thing more. I think the delegate from the Philippines referred to the bigness of India and to the smallness of other countries. May I remind him that all the bigness of India did not prevent India from becoming a subject nation and remaining a subject nation for a long period of time. It is not physical bigness that counts and I venture to repeat what I said yesterday and to give the assurance that India will not do this or do that thing because of its population of 370 millions but because of the quality of the Indian people, not because of their numbers. I believe that that quality has developed in Indonesia and in other countries also. I want to develop that quality and I do not want any country in Asia to be lulled into a sense of, shall I say, dependence upon others, because that saps; that undermines the growth of that élan of a nation that spirit of self dependence, of having faith in themselves. That is the basic if you like, the only-reason why I do not like the business of creating a feeling of dependence. A feeling of cooperation is obviously right and it is necessary in the world of today.

I refer to pacts and other things because they have been directly referred to. Now, obviously it would be highly improper for me to go

about criticising everybody else as if I am a very wise man. I have no such inclination and if I refer to anything I refer to it in the context of world events of today. I cannot say whether what was done yesterday or ten years ago was desirable or not because one has to judge at the moment. The application of certain high principles depends on the historical context of the moment. Therefore, whatever I have said does not apply to the past, we can deal with the past separately. I will deal with the present as it is today and it is in that context that I plead that the military view of the situation-I am not referring to any particular thing is not correct. It would not have been correct anyhow with the coming of the atomic age. Now, for instance, I am not here to say that the countries of Western Europe were unjustified in having the NATO alliance; I cannot say that honestly. I do, as I said yesterday, take exception to the extension of the NATO alliance to the colonial territories because that affects me and all the countries here, but, for self defence, if they have the NATO alliance, I have nothing to say. When we come to the very edge of the precipice, then we have to be careful what we do, whether what we do does not topple us over the precipice and whether something that we do adds to the security or insecurity of our country. None of the Prime Ministers, or other Ministers, present here can responsibly discharge his task by complacently thinking that all is well. All is not well in the world today; that is the basic position and we have to think how we meet the situation. Anyway people have tried to meet the situation in the past few years. After all what is the history of the past two years? I am not going into history but I may say, with all respect, that it is a history of diplomatic failure. If we ask whether the past few years have taken us towards peace-lessening of tension-or towards war and increase of tension, I say there has been patently a failure. Whoever may be responsible is not the point, but the point is that this diplomatic failure has been leading the world towards war and increase of tension. It has led us nowhere

and, if not checked, it will rather lead us to wrong places and it is not wisdom to pursue it.

Let us think afresh. What was wrong with the past, what has led us to the brink of world war? The honourable delegate of Lebanon said that it is easy to quote some scientists or others talking about the destruction of the human race by the new hydrogen bomb and it is equally easy to quote people, equally distinguished, who would minimise the effects of that bomb. He is completely right. We can quote authorities for either side, but I say that if there is a danger of that, we must naturally see what is going to happen to our countries in the context of the present world conditions and I venture to say that no scientist in the world can say definitely what will be its precise effect because certainly we are piercing the curtain of the known and peering into the unknown. Nobody knows yet what the effect of these radioactive substances is likely to be. Some say it will have a disastrous effect; others say it might not be so, but the fact is that we have arrived at a stage when we do not know how deep would be its effect.

In fact, as everyone knows, one of these hydrogen bomb experiments has surprised the very persons, the very scientists, who were behind it, because it was much worse than they thought. We cannot say what is going to happen, but we are all agreed on the enormous danger of this new invention. As to what is the extent of that danger, we may differ in our estimation.

Now, Sir, with your permission, I shall take up some of the points that the distinguished delegate from Iraq has raised in a very cogent and logical speech. He said that there are two camps in the world today, which, of course, is known to all of us, and that. there are three possibilities-passive and negative resistance and peace through strength. We understand Sir Winston Churchill's peace-through-strength approach, universal disarmament, international control, etc. Now, as I have just said, my attitude or India's attitude is certainly not passive. It is certainly not a negative attitude. I have to take

India ahead. I have to increase the strength of India, and I presume everyone feels that way about his own country. It is definitely a positive attitude, realising that the objective should be peace and that we should positively and actively work for peace and try to counter every thing that takes one to war. Now the attitude of peace-through-strength of Sir Winston Churchill is true in a sense. Of course, as I said, weakness is the greatest crime that a country or a people can have, but I would beg to say that the strength at any time-much more so today cannot be measured by military standards alone. Anyhow, a country-in fact most countries-apart from very, very few-cannot really even take part effectively in a big war in regard to atomic weapons and the like. They cannot measure themselves and their strength by means of atomic weapons that they possess. So let us build up our strength, but the obvious answer to all this talking about peace through strength is for every power to talk of peace through strength. So both sides go on stressing strength for peace, with the result that armaments grow more and more and consequently the danger also grows. That way you are not solving the question at all. It is getting worse and worse. When arms grow fears also grow more and then there should be more arms to encounter the fears till the whole thing topples down. It is logical that every one country wants to achieve strength and work for peace, but the whole context of it is that if peaceful strength is talked about and worked for in a sense which frightens the other party, then obviously the other party reacts exactly in the same way and if you build up fifty per cent or more of strength, the other person has also built up fifty per cent or more of strength. That is the present position: How to meet it? Well, if you have arrived at this stage, the only way to meet it is to prevent a war, to promote confidence and to lessen tension.

Now, much has been said about disarmament. Some members have studied this question deeply. I do not pretend to be an expert, but I have studied ever since the old League of Nations considered the

question of disarmament year after year in Geneva and they appointed a Preparatory Committee on Disarmament which sat for three years. I myself am in favour of disarmament of every type of armament. Let us realise that from the point of disarmament it is not very logical to speak of only one weapon and leave somebody else in possession of another weapon. One has to see the whole picture. But what is this disarmament? Some people say, let us have disarmament first, then talk about coexistence.

I am sorry I used the word 'coexistence', because that word seems to bring up all kinds of frightening pictures before people's minds. A delegate, with great knowledge of past history, referred to what happened in 1924. I am not aware of that. It is true that we have got into the practice of using words, slogans and clichés that confound our thought and limit our logical processes of thinking and the sooner we do away with them the better it will be. Then what are we to do if somebody used the word in a wrong or mischievous sense? How do we give up that word? I doubt if any word has been so misused as peace. Have we to give up peace? That is the position. Somebody used it the wrong way., Let us use it in the right way and stop the person using it in the wrong way. Similarly, the word 'coexistence' has come up for so much discussion that it has lost its significance. I was talking about disarmament. Some people said that before you accept the principle of living together peacefully, we must disarm ourselves. That is perfectly true. On the other hand, it is equally true to say that nobody can disarm till the fears and tensions are removed. So you get into a vicious circle which goes on. Is it possible for advance to be made on both fronts? Let us try to advance on both fronts. No country, it is obvious, is going to take the risk; no responsible government can take the risk. On the other hand, not doing something in itself is a tremendous risk; it is the greatest risk of war. Therefore we have to balance these risks. Let each country strengthen itself so far as it can, but strengthening itself should not take place in the manner which increases apprehensions and fears.

There have been open threats and open challenges that if you do not do this, we will come and hit you on the head and invade your country. Is this a search for peace? Peace as a word has itself assumed the likeness of war today. I would submit that we should not indulge in this, because it is not creating peace; whatever the countries may feel and whatever their views and ideologies, we should not use the word which frightens others. Great things are happening in the world today. So far as I can help it, I do not go about denouncing a thing if I do not agree. Because one denunciation brings about another. It is no use slinging mud at each other. I go back again to disarmament as a whole, but one should really create lessening of tension. The moment the tension is lessened, disarmament becomes easier. I think in the last few years it has made some advance. How far this would go, I do not know. This is the state of affairs in the world today and we have to be realistic in facing the existing problems. What does disarmament mean? It means not having weapons for the purposes of war; but we must realise the fact that all these countries of the world are gradually being industrialised, they are having factories, chemical factories, and they can produce arms and ammunition at short notice. They may not be able to produce atomic bombs in a short time; but the hydrogen bomb is easier to make. It is an easy matter for the scientists. Therefore, we should not forget that in advanced countries industries can make all these things at a short notice, even if you decide to disarm those countries. And that was exactly the difficulty which faced the League of Nations too in disarming the different nations; it is so very difficult to talk of disarmament in the case of highly industrialised countries. If it comes to anything, these countries can produce all these things in a week's time. Therefore, I would pose a question to the delegates here: Are you going to stop industrialisation of the various countries so as to disarm them? I feel that we cannot hold that view because we have to make progress in the industrial field and thereby also improve our economic fabric

which is the most important and baffling problem facing us today. So the question of disarmament is a complicated question in which we cannot easily come to a fruitful decision. We can discuss it and it must be discussed, but for us merely to say that we should disarm ourselves, would not help us.

Now, I come to the few possibilities that the delegate from Iraq mentioned. The first possibility that he suggested was that we should be passive, which means that the people of a country are not a live people. We have been passive too long in Asia; it is about time that we gave up passivity and came to live like active people in the world. So I completely disagree with his first proposition.

The second was peace through strength. Well, I doubt very much if many countries here can ever acquire strength at least for a long time to come to resist any of the great powers of the world. That is not possible. We certainly require strength to protect our liberty, but then our strength will be dependent on industrialisation. We have to industrialise the countries as much as possible. The whole industrial background of the various countries represented here has to be given a new outlook and finally and most important, it depends on the improvement of economic fibre of the country. Well, now, for instance, you cannot make a country strong by supplying it arms and deadly weapons like atom bombs and hydrogen bombs, because until such time as it is industrialised and able to produce these weapons itself, you will have to go on supplying weapons. So the position does not change at all. The balance is the same. Therefore, it does not help us to talk about peace through strength. So actually disarmament is the only remedy that we have in view, but that has got to be achieved through international control. We quite realise that a highly industrialised country is an armed country because it can produce all types of arms including hydrogen bombs at a short notice, while others are not. So, therefore, we have to approach this question in its proper perspective and certainly we can industrialise each and every country for peaceful purposes to keep up the moral

fibre of the nation at its highest pitch. It is necessary to make every country realise that it would be a stiff job to adopt aggressive motives against any country.

Then, the honourable delegate from Iraq said that we should all be united in one single bloc as there was great danger of obliteration to the small nations if they are left single by themselves. I have never suggested that we should not organise for self defence. But what I said was that if you organise in a way which does not solve the problem, you are constantly in danger. Today, what is the nature of war? In this atomic age, havoc can be played within a very short time. There cannot be real defeat or real victory in war in the present day world of scientific development. Therefore, I say that we should not involve ourselves into a common danger by forming a separate bloc of nations. Really, small nations have greater chance of survival if they keep away from military alliances. Therefore, we have to think and think very seriously before we form ourselves into a common bloc. By all means, if you all think in terms of forming a bloc of small nations, you can do so, but there are grave dangers involved in it as I feel that we are in a stage where we cannot help each other effectively. I do not quite understand how we can reduce the tension which exists today by making military alliances.

I am all for ideological disarmament; it is quite true that ideological disarmament can bring about harmony and peace but, for that, we have to work. We have to stop cursing each other, we have to stop using the language of war. In this connection a reference was made to the Cominform. Well, there is no doubt about it-and to admit it quite frankly-that any organisation like the Cominform cannot in the nature of things fit in with peaceful coexistence. That is to say, any organisation with the object of carrying aggressive and interfering propaganda in other countries obviously goes against the idea of two countries existing peacefully together; it obviously goes against the principle among the so-called five principles of non-interference; it is entirely opposed to them.

China mentioned other organisations in the world of different kinds, but aiming at internal interference. It is perfectly true. All countries here have had the experience not only of the activities of the Cominform in the past but the activities of the anti-communist organisations. And we have to deal with both in India and we do so effectively, I hope. If anybody misbehaves, we ask him to behave, and if he does not, we ask him to go away, communist or anti-communist. I entirely agree that if there is to be peaceful coexistence, if we have to adopt the principle of non-interference, with each other, then any interference, whether it is communist or anti-communist, must stop, and each country should develop according to its own notions. But you cannot put a wall against ideas. Ideas grow. I do not mind ideas coming. You cannot stop them. It is not the ideas that I object to, but it is the foreign interference in a country, doing aggressive propaganda this way and that way. The delegate from Lebanon referred to my speech yesterday about my saying something about pacts. I do not remember my words but I am sure I had not meant exactly that. What I said was for any country of Asia putting itself in a position where it is dictated to in its affairs is, personally speaking, a humiliating spectacle. That was my point. It is far too much for any country, whether it is on the communist side or the non-communist side, being bound hand and foot and not being able to act as it likes.

One of the necessary steps that the world should take in order to bring about lessening of tension is to encourage trade. Yet there are all kinds of embargoes on trade. Many countries desiring trade are compelled and coerced into not going in for it, thereby not only acting against their wishes but I feel acting against the interest of peace. So I ventured to say yesterday that there was great danger in Asia-great danger because we are trying to stand up on our feet to stand firmly on our ground-if we begin to align ourselves with big power blocs.

The honourable delegate from Philippines referred to the Manila agreement³⁵ and pointed out that it was purely defensive and aimed at economic development and all that. I entirely agree but I would ask you, with all respect, to remember its timing. It was soon after the Geneva Agreement.³⁶ What was the threat in South-East Asia then and where did it come from? There was not the slightest fear of aggression to any of the countries of South-East Asia. I saw none and see none. It was thought that the threat might come from a big country called China. True it is a big country. But, was there any threat then? Actually at that time there had been a lessening of tension because of the Geneva Agreement. And yet some people rushed to Manila and had this treaty. They may have given economic help but this occasion was rather extraordinary. It seemed to be an angry reaction to what had happened in Geneva. It had made no difference to anybody; it had not strengthened even the military potential or the economic potential of South-East Asia; it had not added to the security even in a military sense. It added rather to the insecurity of the region because it has put others on guard that here is an organisation which is a military pact.

Fear exists on both sides. The Geneva Agreement had gone a long way in lessening the tension. A horrible war was going on for seven long years; it stopped the war. It did much more. Why did the Geneva Agreement succeed? Because in Geneva all the great powers came up against the terrible threat of war. If the Geneva Agreement had not come off, war would have started in Indo-China, a war not

³⁵ By a treaty signed at Manila on 8 September 1954, the US, the UK, France, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand agreed to stand together against aggression in South-East Asia and South-West Pacific, and asserted their determination to stop "any attempt in the treaty area to subvert freedom."

³⁶ An international conference was held at Geneva from 26 April to 21 July 1954 to restore peace in Korea and Indo-China. The participating nations which could not find any solution to the Korean problem, however succeeded in signing separate ceasefire agreements covering Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia on the last day of the Conference, bringing to an end the war in Indo-China.

only in Indo-China but inevitably on a bigger scale which would have developed into a world war. The Geneva Agreement laid down that the Indo-China states should not be aligned with any of the big blocs. Now, observe these great powers coming to an agreement, because they were up against this grave danger of a terrible war. They chose the way of non-alignment not for themselves but for the Indo-China states. If any of the Indo-China states aligned themselves, let us say, to the communist bloc, then obviously the Western powers feared that communism would spread all over Asia. China was apprehensive of the Indo-China states becoming a base for the Western powers. So if either of the eventualities happened, there was the danger for war. Therefore, the only way out was to prevent either bloc from sitting down in Indo-China and using it as a jumping off ground. Therefore, circumstances compelled the great powers, all of them, to agree to a policy of coexistence and non-alignment for the Indo-China states. It is a very good-and significant example of how to deal with a situation like this. We have heard the representative of Cambodia³⁷ stating quite frankly what the position was. He said that press correspondents asked him: "Are you lining up with America or China?" He replied that he was lining up with Cambodia. The only way, therefore, open is the way of the Geneva Agreement which is the way of non-alignment and friendly cooperation and peaceful existence. There is no other way. Now let us try this example in the wider field. Please remember that I am not saying that you lay down your arms. You will have to be awake, wide awake. That is perfectly true but at the same time you must realise that the policies that countries like America and Russia are pursuing in the past two years have brought us to this. For us the best course would be to be friendly with them. Of course we can evolve our own policies independently, put them before them, discuss with them and not by way of arms. We should influence them in two ways. First of all we

³⁷ Norodom Sihanouk (b. 1922); Prime Minister of Cambodia, 1955-57, and leader of the Cambodian delegation.

should put them in a friendly way. The arguments put forward now usually are not put forward in a friendly way, they are threats. Even good arguments are put forward as threats and the other party also puts forward equal threats. But if you say in a friendly way-we are not their enemies, they will consider, because whatever our present position may be, we do represent potentially a mighty force that is Asia: It is a tremendous thing. Therefore, we have got this great opportunity, unique opportunity of playing a constructive, peaceful role in the world today in a friendly way, not that we like everything that happens in the Soviet Union or in America. We should not increase the feeling of dislike and hatred. If you do things in the right manner, people will respond, and you will have good results. The results may~ not be there immediately. I submit therefore that the policy that this Conference should pursue is that of friendly coexistence.

Conversation with Chou En-lai and U Nu³⁸

In the course of my conversation with the Chinese Prime Minister and U Nu, the former asked me about the next session of the Asian-African Conference. There was talk of this being held in Egypt. What did I think about it? He also asked me about a proposal to have a liaison office. He thought that some such liaison office might be desirable. Perhaps the Joint Secretariat could function as such.

2. U Nu said immediately that his mind was quite clear that there should be no kind of organisation or liaison office. Further that if another session of this Conference' was held, he had decided not to send any representative of Burma to it. He was firm about it.

3. I told U Nu that in my opinion, in spite of all difficulties and differences of opinion, the net result of this Conference was very good. I was not referring so much to the resolutions passed but

³⁸ Note to V.K. Krishna Menon, Bandung, 23 April 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML. Also available in JN Collection.

rather to the effect produced in Asia and the world. Also to the great advantage of all of us having met together and getting to know each other.

4. Mr Chou En-lai agreed with me, but U Nu refused to agree and said that the Conference only brought out differences of opinion and even the resolutions passed indicated that. What was the good of repeating platitudes, etc.

5. I told U Nu that I did not like the idea of the Joint Secretariat as a liaison office. Also that it seemed to me unwise to fix the place or time of the next conference. He agreed and said that this might be left to the five sponsoring powers to consider later in consultation with other countries. I agreed that this might be done.

A Historic Milestone in Cooperation³⁹

Mr President, for seven days we have been in this pleasant city of Bandung, and Bandung has been the focal centre, perhaps I might even say, the capital of Asia and Africa, during this period. For all the world's eyes have been upon us. We were neighbours for these seven days as you all know, and we have dealt with many problems and we have come to certain conclusions that have been placed before you. Why did we meet? The Prime Ministers of five countries invited us. But do you think that is the reason why we met? There were the conscious or unconscious agents or other forces. We met because mighty forces are at work in these great continents, in millions of people, creating a ferment in their minds and irrepressible urges and passions and a desire for change from their present condition. So however big or small we might be, we represented these great forces. We met. What have we achieved. Well, you have seen the draft statement which has been read out to you and I think it represents a considerable achievement. Other delegates have

³⁹ Speech at the concluding session of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, 24 April 1955, AIR Tapes.

referred to it and 'you have agreed to it but I should like to draw your attention, to direct your minds not to that statement which is an important statement but rather to the 'imponderables, to the fact that we have met, gathered here from thousands of miles, conferred together, seen each other, and in spite of all manner of differences and arguments, made friends with each other.

My friend, the Prime Minister of Burma, referred to our diversities of opinion and our differences and our arguments. We have wrestled with each other in many ways because we were not all of the same opinion, because obviously the world looks different from where you are. If you are sitting in the far east of Asia you have a different perspective of the world. If you are sitting in the far west of Asia you have a different perspective again, and if you are in Africa naturally the problems of Africa overwhelm you. So we all came with our own perspectives, with our own problems, each one, no doubt, considering his own problem the most important in the world, but at the same time trying to understand that big problem, that is, the problem of the world; and the second big problem, that is, the problem of Asia and Africa, and trying somehow to fit in our little problems in this larger context, because in the ultimate analysis all our little problems, however important they might be, are (parts of this larger problem and can hardly be solved unless that larger problem is tackled and solved. How will you solve this problem or that problem if peace is shattered, endangered and thrown overboard? Obviously you cannot. The very primary consideration is peace. You and I, sitting here in our respective countries, are all passionately eager to advance our countries peacefully. We have been backward. We are backward. We have been left behind in the world race, and now we have got a chance again to make good. We want to make good, and we have to make good rapidly because of the compulsion of events. It is not so much a choice of yours and mine, it is a choice dictated by this compulsion of events because if we do not make good we fade away and we stumble and fall not to rise again for a long time. We are not

going to do that. We are determined not to do that. We are determined in this new chapter of Asia and Africa to make good: primarily, not to be dominated in any way by any other country or continent; secondly, to rise in the economic domain, in the social domain, to become prosperous, to bring happiness to our people, to put an end to all the age-old shackles that have tied us, not only political—you rightly call them colonialism—but the other shackles of our own making which have also tied us. We criticize other nations in our resolutions, and it is a fact that that criticism is just. Therefore we advance it. But in the final analysis the criticism has to be directed against ourselves, because a country falls because of its own failings, not because another attacks it or does anything to it. It is because we fail that we fell, and it is only when we make good that we will succeed, and not all the resolutions in the world would make much difference if we are weak of heart and weak of spirit. But there is another spirit in Asia today. Because Asia today is not static, is not passive, is not submissive, does not tolerate chains as it has tolerated so long. Asia is dynamic, Asia is alive and full of life. Asia will make mistakes, has made mistakes, but it does not matter. If life is there, every mistake is tolerated and we advance. If life is not there, then all our right words, right actions and right eloquence is no good. What have we achieved then? I think our achievement has not only been great in the agreements we have arrived at, but much greater in the background of that agreement, because as I said we have wrestled with problems, we have wrestled with our differences, we have argued till fatigue overtook all our bodies and minds, and finally in spite of those differences, we have agreed. That is the main thing. We are not 'yes-men', I hope, sitting here saying 'yes' just to this country or that, saying 'yes' even to each other. I hope we are not. We are great countries in the world who rather like having freedom, if I may say so, without dictation. Well, if there is anything that Asia wants to tell them it is this: No dictation there is going to be in the future; no 'yes-men' in Asia, I hope, or in Africa. We have had

enough of that in the past. We value friendship of the great countries and if I am to play my part, I should like to say that we sit with the great countries of the world as brothers, be it in Europe or America. It is not in any spirit of hatred or dislike or aggressiveness with each other in regard to Europe or America, certainly not. We send our greetings to Europe and America, I hope, from all of us here, and we want to be friends with them, and to cooperate with them. But we shall cooperate only as friends, as equals. There is no friendship when nations are unequal, when one nation has to obey another, and when one dominates over another. That is why we raise our voices against the domination of colonialism from which many of us have suffered so long, and that is why we have to be very careful that any other form of domination does not come in our way. Therefore, we want to be friends with the West and friends with the East and friends with everybody, because if there is something that may be called the approach of minds and spirit of Asia, it is one of toleration and friendship and cooperation, not one of aggressiveness.

I wish to speak no ill of anybody. In Asia, all of us have many faults, as countries and as individuals. Our past history shows that.

Nevertheless, I say that Europe has been in the past a continent full of conflicts, full of trouble, full of hatred, and their conflicts continue and their wars continue, and we have been dragged into their wars because we were tied to them. Now are we going to continue to be dragged in, tie ourselves to the troubles, hatred and conflicts of Europe? I hope not. Of course, Europe and Asia and America and Africa and all these countries, it is perhaps not quite right to think of them as isolated, because they are not. We have to live together and cooperate with each other in this modern world which is going up towards the ideal of one world. Nevertheless Europe has got into that habit of thinking. Whatever political or economic persuasion there may be, America and Europe are in the habit of thinking that their quarrels are the world's quarrels and therefore the world should submit to them this way or that. Well, I do not quite follow that

reasoning. I do not want anybody to follow Europe or Asia or America. If others quarrel, why should I quarrel, and why should I be dragged into their quarrels and wars. I just do not understand it. Therefore, I hope we shall keep away from these quarrels and exercise our pressure with others not to quarrel. I realise, as the Prime Minister of Burma said, that we cannot exercise tremendous influence over the world. Our influence will grow no doubt, it is growing, and we can exercise some influence even today but whatever our influence, big or small, it must be exercised in the right direction, in an independent direction, with ideals and objectives behind it, if we represent the ideals of Asia, if we represent the dynamism of Asia. Because if we do not represent that, what are we then? Are we copies of Europeans or Americans or Russians, what are we? We are Asians or Africans. If we become camp followers of Russia or America or of any other country of Europe, it is not very creditable to our dignity, our new independence, our new freedom, our new spirit and our new self reliance.

So we mean no ill to anybody. We send our greetings to Europe and America. We send our greetings to Australia and New Zealand. And indeed Australia and New Zealand are almost in our region.⁴⁰ They certainly do not belong to Europe, much less to America. They are next to us and I should like Australia and New Zealand to come

⁴⁰ In reply to a questionnaire submitted by Douglas Wilkie of the Sun News Pictorial of Australia, Nehru said on 25 March 1955 that: (i) The question of Australia and New Zealand attending the Conference did not come up at the talks among the Prime Ministers of the Colombo powers held at Bogor, Indonesia, on 28-29 December 1954 to discuss the proposed Asian-African Conference, because it was assumed that they did not form part of Asia; (ii) There was no foundation for any suggestion that Australia had been left out of the invitation because of its dispute with Indonesia over the question of Irian (Dutch New Guinea); (iii) It was far from the minds of the sponsoring Asian Prime Ministers to create a so-called third world bloc -- or in fact any bloc; (iv) There was no intention of ranging the East against West or non-white against white; and (v) If Australia wanted to attend the Conference it should have made known its wishes to the Prime Minister of Indonesia who was the sponsor of the Conference.

nearer to Asia. I would welcome them because I do not want that what we say or do should be based on racial prejudices. We have had enough of this racialism elsewhere.

We have today passed many resolutions, etc., about this or that country, but I think that there is nothing more terrible, nothing more horrible than the infinite tragedy of Africa in the past few hundred years. When I think of it everything else becomes insignificant before that infinite tragedy of Africa ever since the days when millions of them were carried away into America or elsewhere: the way they were taken away, fifty per cent dying in the process, we have to bear that burden, all of us, I think the world has to bear it. And when we talk about this little country or that little country in Africa or outside, let us remember of this infinite tragedy. But unfortunately even now the tragedy of Africa is more than that of any other, I venture to say, even today, whether it is racial, whether it is political, whatever it may be, it is there. And it is up to Asia to help Africa to the best of her ability, because we are sister continents.

So, Sir, I trust that the achievement that we have had in this Conference has left, I am sure it has, a powerful influence over the minds of all who are here. I am quite sure that it has left an impress in the minds of the world. We came here, consciously and unconsciously, as agents of a historic destiny. And we have made some history here and, we have to live up to what we have said, and what we have thought and even more so, we have to live up to what the world expects of us, what Asia expects of us, what the millions of these two continents expect of us. I hope we will be worthy of the people's faith and our destiny.

Note to Chief Ministers⁴¹

The Asian-African Conference met for seven days at Bandung. These were days of hard, and often concentrated, work. The open session of the Conference met for two days to begin with. It then dissolved itself into three committees -- the Economic Committee, the Cultural Committee and the Political Committee. The Political Committee which consisted of the heads of all delegations, was in fact the Conference and it considered the reports of the Economic and Cultural Committees.

2. This Political Committee was supposed to meet in camera, but in effect there was not much privacy and fairly long reports have come out in the press about its proceedings. These reports are not wholly correct. The Political Committee appointed several drafting committees, as they were called. These drafting committees tackled some of the most difficult and controversial problems and had to do the hardest work, often sitting for six or seven hours almost continuously. The agreements arrived at were in these drafting committees which were subsequently approved of by the full Political Committee. In the Economic Committee, our representatives were B.K. Nehru⁴² and K.B. Lall⁴³ assisted by P. Vaidyanathan, Commercial Secretary in our embassy at Djakarta. In the Cultural Committee, our representatives were Dr Syed Mahmud⁴⁴ and C.S. Jha⁴⁵ assisted by

⁴¹ . New Delhi, 28 April 1955. Paragraphs four to twenty were drafted on 25 April 1955 in Bandung. From G. Parthasarathi (ed.), Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1957-1964, Vol. 4, pp. 159-171. Also available in File No. SI/162/9/64-MEA.

⁴² (b. 1909); served in the Department of Economic Affairs. Government of India, 1954-58.

⁴³ Krishen Behari Lall (b.1915); joined ICS, 1937 and served in various capacities; Chief Controller, Imports and Exports, 1953-54; Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1955; Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1958-60; Ambassador to Belgium, 1962-66; Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, 1966-69, of Foreign Trade, 1969-70 and of Defence, 1970-73.

⁴⁴ (1888-1971); Congressman of Patna and a friend of the Nehru family.

A.J. Kidwai⁴⁶ In the main drafting committees of the Political Committee, our representatives were V.K. Krishna Menon,⁴⁷ S. Dutt,⁴⁸ B.F.H.B. Tyabji and C.S. Jha. The main burden of work on our side in these drafting committees fell on Krishna Menon and Dutt and I am grateful to them for the ability and restraint with which they conducted this work, often .in the face of considerable provocation. Krishna Menon, more especially, deserves credit for this work.

3. The Conference issued a Joint Communiqué which was unanimously agreed to. This has already appeared fully in the press. It is being printed and will be circulated soon. I am, however, taking the earliest opportunity, after my return, to note down my own impressions of this Conference.

4. Every country invited, except the Central African Federation, accepted this invitation and sent its delegates. Thus, twenty-nine countries of Asia and Africa were represented at the Conference. The number of delegates, advisers, etc., which they brought with them was much larger than we had expected. Probably, the Japanese delegation was the biggest. The Egyptian delegation had 34 persons. Our own delegation had 26, including stenographers, assistants, private secretaries, personal staff, etc., and a security officer.

5. Some of the delegations brought their own security staff. The Chinese delegation had the largest. I am told that this consisted of forty to forty-five security men. The disaster to the Air-India

⁴⁵ Chander Sekhar Jha (1909-1998); joined ICS, 1933; Secretary, Supply and Transport, Government of Orissa, 1943-46; served in MEA in various capacities since 1946, and became Joint Secretary in 1954; Ambassador to Japan, 1957-59; Permanent Representative to UN, 1956-62; High Commissioner to Canada, 1962-63; Commonwealth Secretary, 1964-65; Foreign Secretary, 1965-67.

⁴⁶ (1917-1996); Deputy Secretary, MEA; Secretary, CSIR, 1962-64; Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, 1971-73, and of Information and Broadcasting, 1973-75; Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 1978-83.

⁴⁷ (1896-1974); India's representative in the United Nations, 1952-62.

⁴⁸ Subimal Dutt (1905-1992); Commonwealth Secretary, MEA, 1954-55, and Foreign Secretary, 1955-61.

Constellation Kashmir Princess had produced a special sense of the need for security arrangements.

6. Apart from this, it should be remembered that there is a party in actual rebellion in parts of Java. This is an extreme Muslim religious group. They have a habit of sniping. Therefore, the Indonesian Government took extraordinary precautions all along the route to Bandung and practically put a cordon round Bandung town, using a very large number of soldiers for the purpose. Inside Bandung also, there were very special precautions and each delegation was separately guarded.

7. There was also a very large number, many hundreds, of newspapermen from all over the world. Among these were some top-ranking American commentators and columnists. To find accommodation for all these put a great strain on the organisers. The arrangements, however, were very satisfactory. There are some good hotels in Bandung, and a number of small but good houses were taken, where Prime Ministers and heads of delegations stayed.

8. Indeed, looking at this Conference and these arrangements, I realised how poor we were in Delhi in this respect. We could not rival Bandung either in regard to hotel accommodation or the halls and rooms required for the Conference.

9. The open Conference was held in a large hall with ante-rooms and with modern equipment of tables for each delegate, microphones and arrangements for simultaneous translations. The seats provided for the delegates were comfortable.

10. Then there was another large building which had very big committee rooms, small committee rooms, office rooms, press rooms, private rooms for separate delegations, canteen, etc. The press was very well provided for. The only rather unsatisfactory arrangement was that of reporting. It seems to me that tape recording should be adopted in such conferences, apart from any other kind of reporting.

11. Delhi is becoming a city of conferences and yet we are very poorly equipped for this purpose. I think that we must take this matter in hand immediately⁴⁹ quite apart from the Unesco or any other conference.

12. The Asian-African Conference was a world event which had attracted great attention. Every country in the world was following it closely and, sometimes, with apprehension. Many observers from other countries had come here in some capacity or other.⁵⁰ Some Intelligence men had come as delegates. The USA had sometime ago opened a new department for this purpose and had collected their Far Eastern experts. They had also added considerably to their staff of the Indonesian Embassy. Many odd individuals had also come to watch from outside and meet delegates. These included representatives of freedom movements in colonial territories as well as men and women from the big powers.

13. The delegates who came represented every view, political or other. Some were definitely committed to either NATO or SEATO and were thus parts of the American system of military pacts and alliances. They had been fully briefed for the occasion and took up, almost in detail, the American line. Two countries, namely, China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Viet Minh), were communist.

14. India and Burma took up an independent line according to their policy. Indonesia and Egypt usually supported them. Most of the other countries, represented were keenly interested in some local problem and had rather vague ideas about world issues. Sometimes, they appeared to agree with India's line, but seemed to be under pressure not to go too far. Many of these countries either receive aid from America or look forward to receiving it.

⁴⁹ Also see post, pp. 515-516.

⁵⁰ For instance, Moses Kotane and I.A. Cachalia of South Africa attended the Conference as observers representing the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress respectively.

15. The Prime Minister of China, Chou En-lai, attracted the most attention, both in public and in the Conference. This was natural as he was not only playing a great part in the crisis of the Far East but was rather a mysterious figure whom people had not seen. He conducted himself with ability and moderation in the Conference and its committees. Whenever he spoke, he did so with authority. He took particular pains to meet delegates and went to many parties given by heads of delegations. He had private talks also with them. He did not put forward any important proposal but objected to something if it seemed to him to be opposed to any principle for which he stood. He was obviously anxious that the Conference should succeed and, therefore, tried to be as accommodating as possible. He was patient even when he had to put up with rather offensive behaviour, which sometimes happened. Only once did he lose his temper for a short while in a committee and said that China would not be bullied. He had naturally more intimate contacts with India and Burma. Altogether, he created a very good impression on the delegates who were impressed by him. Even those who were entirely opposed to him and tried to irritate him by their behaviour, were definitely impressed by him. They said so. At a private meeting of a few heads of delegations, he was asked many questions about Formosa, Korea, Tibet and communism, etc. He came out well from that questioning and even some of his greatest opponents, who were present, realised that his case was not a bad one.

16. Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Iran were the most aggressive in the Conference and in the committees. They represented fully and sometimes rather aggressively, the pure American doctrine. Thailand and the Philippines fully supported them but in a quieter way. Ceylon also was inclined that way but was rather quiet except for one speech in which the Prime Minister criticised Soviet domination of East European countries.

17. The Egyptian Prime Minister played an important role in committees and helped in arriving at compromises. Sÿria and

Afghanistan also played a considerable part. Jordan and Saudi Arabia were on the whole moderate.

18. Probably the most aggressive of the delegations were those of Turkey and Pakistan, though Iraq and Lebanon ran them close in this respect.

19. U Nu, as is usual with him, did not make long speeches, but what he said was pertinent and obviously sincere. He made a good impression. On behalf of India, I spoke three times at some length in the Political Committee⁵¹ and also spoke at the closing session of the open Conference.⁵² I dealt not only with the particular points raised by resolutions but also with the basic approach and philosophy of India's foreign policy. I think those speeches created an impression and made delegates think.

20. In the Political Committee of the Conference and its subcommittees, there were long and exhausting discussions. As I have said, Premier Chou En-lai was very accommodating and he did not bring up any controversial issue. His object was to get an agreement. The object of Pakistan and Turkey especially appeared to be to create as many obstacles as possible. They did not seem to be much interested in agreement or in the success of the Conference. Indeed, at one occasion in a committee, Pakistan threatened to prevent any agreement being reached and therefore let the Conference fail. It must be remembered that there was no question of decisions by majority voting. In fact, unanimity was the rule. This made it easier for a small group to stop progress.

21. With this background, it can well be realised how difficult it was to arrive at any conclusions. The fact, therefore, that ultimately we issued a Joint Communiqué which was unanimously agreed to, is remarkable. Some of us would have liked this communiqué to be somewhat different, but we were anxious to succeed and agreed to many things. The Conference thus represented a headlong conflict of

⁵¹ See ante, pp. 100- 124.

⁵² See ante, pp. 125-128.

ideas, forcefully expressed, and at the same time an amazing capacity to find some common ground and decide ultimately unanimously. It may be, of course, that people carried away reservations in their minds.

22. Taking an overall view of the picture, it seems to me that the Conference was a remarkable success. Quite apart from the Joint Communiqué issued, it represented the coming together of all these varied and differing nations, their delegates getting to know each other and learning something from each other and finding ultimately that, in spite of so many differences, they had much in common. Thus a feeling of common purposes among the Asian and African countries became more and more evident. We should not imagine that all is well in Asia or Africa, or that our differences have been resolved. I have no doubt that they would be dissolved but for external pressure and military pacts and financial aid and the like. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that we have gone some way towards helping the creation of this common feeling among these countries. What is even more important is the psychological impact of this Conference on the people of Asia and Africa and also in Europe and America. This impact, though imponderable, will have far-reaching consequences.

23. In the course of the Conference, private meetings took place in regard to specific problems. More especially, some of us were concerned with the problems of Indo-China and we met repeatedly the delegates from Indo-China as well as China. U Nu often assisted at these meetings. As a result, some considerable success was obtained in regard to relations between Cambodia, Laos and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Viet Minh) but, unfortunately, South Vietnam proved recalcitrant and took up an indefensible attitude. In effect, they challenged the very basis of the Geneva Agreement. Meanwhile, some kind of a civil war was going on in South Vietnam between different factions. South Vietnam is in a bad way, and because of this it talked loudly and aggressively and most

unrealistically. Their representatives even refused invitations to meals and discussions. Turkey and Pakistan generally supported the South Vietnam representatives. This means that America supports them. The future of Vietnam, therefore, is not a hopeful one.

24. Another successful result was an agreement arrived at between Thailand and North Vietnam about a large number of Vietnamese who had gone to Thailand on account of the civil war. This indicates how at such conferences, problems which had defied solution because of lack of contacts could be dealt with successfully when people came face to face with each other.

25. Premier Chou En-lai made some important declarations in the course of his speeches which were frank, courteous and to the point. He stated clearly that he was a communist and represented a communist government but he stated explicitly that China desired no expansion or internal subversion in any country. He was there to have a common understanding and there were the five principles which dealt with these matters and with which he entirely agreed. He did not press for the exact language of these five principles but wanted the substance with a view to establish collective peace. He was prepared to give every assurance to remove apprehensions. He was of opinion that each country must respect the way of life and economic system chosen by another country. He specially mentioned that he respected the way of life of the American people and their country as also that of the Japanese. But he claimed the same right for himself and his country. China asked for no special privileges or special status in its dealings with other countries. They wanted equality of treatment and were prepared to settle international disputes by peaceful means.

26. In the course of a private conversation at which the Prime Ministers of Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia and Burma were present, and also Prince Wan⁵³ of Thailand and Dr Romulo. Premier Chou En-

⁵³ K.N.B. Wan Waithayakon (1891-1975); Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Thailand, 1952-58, and head of the Thai delegation.

lai answered many questions about Formosa, Tibet, communism, etc. He gave the background history of Tibet, Formosa and the Chinese civil war. He referred to Chiang Kai-shek⁵⁴ being kidnapped by one of his own Generals⁵⁵ and how he was released at his (Chou En-lai's) instance. The poor General who had kidnapped him through patriotic motives and who was one of the ablest and most patriotic of Chiang's Generals, was subsequently imprisoned by Chiang Kai-shek and he was still in prison in Formosa after about eighteen years. When asked if he wanted to push communism into Tibet, Chou En-lai laughed and said that there could be no such question as Tibet was very far indeed from communism. It would be thoroughly impracticable to try to establish a communist regime in Tibet and the Chinese Government had no such wish. Indeed, they had appointed a committee, of which the Dalai Lama was the chairman, to consider what should be done in Tibet.⁵⁶ Tibet was an autonomous region of China and they had no desire whatever to interfere with its customs or ways of life. They had gone to Tibet because it was an integral part of the Chinese state and because it had been used for imperialist intrigues, meaning thereby the British recently and previously Czarist Russia.

27. As regards Formosa, Chou En-lai said that they wished to treat this also as an autonomous region. It was a part of China. Most of the people who lived there had Chinese origin and spoke the Fukian dialect of Chinese. The Chinese Government had no desire to punish in any way Chiang Kai-shek's officers and army. They would gladly absorb them in their own army. Even Chiang Kai-shek could be offered an honourable position. He was asked if he would agree to

⁵⁴ (1887-1975): President, Republic of China in Taiwan, 1950-75.

⁵⁵ Chiang Kai-shek had been kidnapped by General Chang Hsueh-Liang at Lintung. and held in detention from 12 to 17 December 1936. Chang Hsueh-Liang, who was Commander-in-Chief of Kuomintang troops, was arrested and tried by a special military tribunal.

⁵⁶ Dalai Lama (b. 1935); temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet, was chairman from 1955 to 1959 of the preparatory committee to make Tibet an autonomous region.

state that he would not use force in regard to Formosa. He said that force is being used by Chiang Kai-shek and the Americans all the time. He for his part wanted a peaceful settlement and he thought this was possible provided the foreign element was removed, that is America withdrew. But he could not give a one-sided assurance about not using force in the circumstances. He was prepared to talk directly with the United States on this subject of Formosa or Taiwan.

28. It was subsequent to this private talk that Chou En-lai made a statement⁵⁷ about Formosa and said that China wanted a peaceful settlement and was prepared to have direct talks with the United States. In private he has said he could not say more at this stage or go into details till he knew what the American reaction was. The immediate American reaction was not helpful at all and the subsequent reaction, though better, did not carry things very far.⁵⁸ There is no doubt, however, that this is not the end of the matter and the initiative taken by Premier Chou has opened out various avenues of approach.

29. It is difficult to explore these avenues formally as each party adopts a stiff attitude when approached in that way. The most practicable course is to proceed as informally as possible through private talks with the parties concerned. It was this procedure that led to successful results at the Geneva Conference. The Formosa question is no doubt more difficult than Indo-China because the prestige of the United States is involved as well as the national pride

⁵⁷ After a luncheon with the delegates at Bandung on 23 April, Chou En-lai announced that the Chinese Government was willing to sit down and enter into negotiations with the US Government to discuss the question of relaxing tension in the Far East and especially the question of relaxing tension in the Formosa area.

⁵⁸ Dulles stated on 26 April that the US would probe further China's offer "but would not negotiate with a pistol pointed at its head", and added that it would not insist on Taiwan being made a party to the negotiations for ceasefire if China gave the assurance that she would not attack Taiwan. The next day, President Eisenhower, endorsing Dulles's statement, said that the US could enter into negotiations if the position of the nationalists in Taiwan was not affected.

and interest of China. Still, there appears to be clearer thinking now on this issue than there was before. This is evident even in the United States and certainly in the United Kingdom. At the Bandung Conference, although the subject was not discussed at the Conference, the atmosphere created was certainly in favour of peaceful approaches. As I was saying goodbye to Premier Chou En-lai, he mentioned to me that he would like to have further talks with Krishna Menon and had invited him to go to Peking for this purpose as soon as possible. I welcomed this proposal and told him that Krishna Menon would go there within the next two weeks or so. He will go there quietly and with as little fuss as possible. Publicity cannot be avoided altogether but, so far as we are concerned, we should play it down.

30. At the Bandung Conference, it was not India's purpose to play any aggressive role or, indeed, to seek the limelight. Some newspapers, especially in India, naturally played up India's role. We felt, however, that it was better for us to work quietly. The fact, however, remained that the two most important countries present at the Bandung Conference were China and India. Indeed, U Nu pointed out at a private meeting that without China and India the Conference would not have had much significance.

31. Not many people have probably read carefully the Joint Communiqué issued by the Conference. It deserves careful reading. Attention has been directed to certain controversial issues which were resolved by certain language acceptable to the parties concerned. In every compromise, there is an effort to find some such language, if agreement is sought. If I had done the drafting of the statement, without others' intervention, I would have drafted it somewhat differently. I think, however, that the Joint Communiqué, as it is, is a worthy document and there is nothing in it with which we can disagree. It may be that some countries will emphasise one aspect of it and some others another aspect. As a whole, it is a most important

document which will influence not only Asian and African thinking, but will also affect European and American thought.

32. The so-called five principles or the Panchsheel had somehow become a bone of contention. We were not anxious for the particular phraseology or the principle. We agreed, therefore, to a reformulation of them with some additions which meet our purpose.⁵⁹

33. There can be no doubt that the personal contacts at this Conference were of great value. Speaking for myself, I got a much better measure of the many well known people who attended this Conference than I had before. I had a certain prejudice against Prince Wan of Thailand, or rather the prejudice was against Thailand's policy. I found Prince Wan a very agreeable, decent and, if I may say so, civilised man. He was an old liberal type and probably he doesn't quite fit in the present politics of Thailand. So also I was impressed by some others. The Japanese, though present in very large numbers, did not play an important role. Privately they talked about trade matters and were anxious to push Japanese trade and commercial interests. Their leader confessed in private the limitations they suffered from because of pressures from the United States. The Conference, in spite of controversy and argument, was definitely a friendly conference.

⁵⁹ The Conference adopted on 24 April 1955 a Joint Communiqué which, inter alia, established the following ten principles for developing friendship and cooperation among nations: (i) respect for the fundamental human rights and principles of the UN Charter; (ii) respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; (iii) recognition of the equality of all races and nations, (iv) abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country; (v) respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively in conformity with the UN Charter; (vi) abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers; and abstention from exerting pressures on other countries; (vii) refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country; (viii) settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means; (ix) promotion of mutual interest and cooperation; and (x) respect for justice and international obligations.

34. For many of the Africans who attended the Conference, this was the first view of some of the countries of Asia. Many of the Arabs and others from Western Asia also came for the first time to South-East Asia. Coming from dry and more or less desert regions, they were surprised at the greenery and richness of the vegetation. They were even more surprised at the freedom of the women. Those who passed through India had first noticed this to some extent. Then they came to Burma and there women were very much in evidence. In fact, it was the time of the water festival and girls and women took a great part in it. Then came Indonesia and their surprise was all the greater that Muslim women should be so free and should take so great a part in public activities.

35. An Arab delegate made a characteristic remark. He said that Bandung did not look like an Asian city at all. It was too clean.

36. Everyone present at the Conference had a sense of participation in an historic process. The mere fact of our meeting there was unique. The other fact of our coming to a unanimous agreement, in spite of differences, was little short of astonishing. This agreement could not have been reached if there had not been a powerful urge to agree. The Conference has opened a new chapter not only in Asia and Africa, but in the world.

Message to Anthony Eden⁶⁰

I thought I should let you know briefly my personal reactions and judgment about the Bandung Conference. I feel that the Conference has been a very useful one and productive of more good to our common cause than perhaps we dared to anticipate. Apart from the public statements, which you must have seen, the Conference has given a momentum not only to the desire for peaceful cooperation among its participants, but for the peaceful approach to world affairs.

⁶⁰ New Delhi. 29 April 1955. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML. Also available in JN Papers.

I also think the contacts made not only by us but by other delegations as well with each other and particularly with China and some of those who are closely aligned to the Western alliances have been useful.

You must have read about the treaty about Chinese nationals concluded between China and Indonesia⁶¹ and also of similar offers for negotiation on the question made by Chou En-lai to Thailand and the Philippines.

I am also glad to say that the rather thorny problem of about 50,000 North Vietnamese nationals in Thailand has been satisfactorily settled by private talks between Prince Wan and Pham Van Dong.⁶² U Nu, Chou En-lai and I gave our assistance.

We have also had talks with the Prime Minister of Laos⁶³ and Pham Van Dong both separately and with all of us together.⁶⁴ These have

⁶¹ A treaty regulating the status of the Chinese living in Indonesia. signed on 22 April 1955 at Bandung by Chou En-lai and Sunarjo, Foreign Minister of Indonesia, provided that: (i) All persons over 18, including women, holding both Chinese and Indonesian citizenship, were required to choose between them within two years. Any person failing to do so would automatically be registered as Indonesian or Chinese in accordance with his or her father's descent; (ii) Children would acquire their father's citizenship. but would be allowed to choose for themselves on reaching the age of 18; (iii) Nationality would not be affected by marriage. unless either party chose his or her spouse's citizenship at the time: and (iv) Persons choosing Chinese citizenship would be liable to deportation if considered undesirable, whilst those choosing Indonesian citizenship would not be eligible for the Chinese Government's protection.

⁶² (b. 1906); Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), 1954-61 and leader of the delegation.

⁶³ Katay Don Sasorith (1904-1959); Prime Minister of Laos and chief of the Laotian delegation.

⁶⁴ Following a series of meetings between representatives of China, North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, Katay Don Sasorith and Pham Van Dong signed an agreement on 23 April 1955, whereby Sasorith affirmed his country's adherence to the five principles of coexistence and Pham Van Dong gave an assurance that North Vietnam had no designs on the Laotian provinces controlled by the Pathet Lao

resulted in a satisfactory approach and agreement on procedures in regard to the difficulties in Laos, especially in regard to the two provinces. The real solution of this problem lies in the elections which we hope will take place in September next in accordance with the Geneva Agreement. The two ministers issued a joint communiqué at Bandung in which they expressed their agreement. They have also agreed to meet each other both at Vientiane and Hanoi. This matter has to be pursued so far as the operational part is concerned and we shall take the necessary steps. Cambodian problems were also discussed separately and jointly. Prince Sihanouk, Chou En-lai and Pham Van Dong were cooperative. I regret to say that the attitude and behaviour of the South Vietnam delegation was singularly unhelpful. They were hostile even to the Geneva Agreement. With regard to Formosa, as you would know, there is nothing really new in Chou En-lai's willingness to negotiate direct with the United States. The fact that a public statement has been made by him no doubt takes this further. I have had talks with him and at my request Krishna Menon has also discussed this matter with him to explore various steps and details for finding ways and means of settlement.. As you will appreciate, this has to be a long and patient process and I think that it should be continued in Peking. I hope to make a statement⁶⁵ in our Parliament tomorrow. I have no doubt your influence will be exerted by way of favourable responses from the side of the United States. I confess, however, that I am not heartened by statements which appear to proclaim skepticism about the motives and sincerity of China or to pose the most controversial issues, such as cease-fire, as a prelude to negotiation. We have taken up with Chou En-lai again the question of prisoners and other matters. These prisoners would probably have been released but for the occurrence of the air disaster. We are continuing to make efforts

movement. Similar assurances of non-interference were given to Cambodia by Pham Van Dong and to Laos and Cambodia by Chou En-lai.

⁶⁵ Not printed.

in this direction as part of the steps to bring about a relaxation of tension.

You will have noted that the proceedings of the Conference and certainly our approach have not been characterised by any race hatred or anti-West attitudes. This is true also of the Chinese delegation. Some delegations were naturally concerned with their special problems. This was inevitable. We had considerable difficulties because of the attempts on the part of certain parties to project cold war controversies into the Conference. Yet I think it was as well that these were aired. The final results of the Conference, as revealed not only in the Joint Communiqué but in the approach of the great majority of members, are satisfactory. We ourselves have no difficulty in accepting it. The Conference has strengthened the feeling that the new Asia can and will make a contribution towards world cooperation and peace and, in doing so, is not animated by any continental compartmentalism or by racial or anti-Western feeling. I feel sure that you will also be impressed by the repeated references to the Charter of the United Nations. Contrary to newspaper reports, there was no opposition to this from any of us or from the Chinese delegation. Chou En-lai not only accepted the Charter but was anxious that it should be regarded as the basis of world cooperation, China being one of the Charter members. His difficulty was only in regard to resolutions passed by the United Nations organs to which he was not a party. Even in this respect, we were able to find a middle way and Chou En-lai was helpful.

In regard to the Middle East, while the issue of Palestine was the foremost in the minds of the Arab countries, they showed a sense of comparative moderation and a desire to build their own future in cooperation with their neighbours. I must say, particularly in regard to Egypt and some other countries, that there was an insistence not to be considered or treated as part of great power alliances. I think it is only fair that I should give you my impression of this even though it may not conform to your own present policies.

In regard to Africa, the Conference helped to give the African delegations and people a sense of confidence and equality. Here too there was no racial approach and the Conference accepted the basis of multi-racial societies.

The definite gains at Bandung, not only in the context of the Conference and its resolutions, but also in the general atmosphere it engendered in the present and some tangible results in regard to Indo-China territories and other South-East Asian countries and in the preliminary talks on Formosa, are substantial and considerable. The above is only a personal note for your information.

To Lady Mountbatten⁶⁶

New Delhi
April 30, 1955

My dear Edwina,⁶⁷

Bandung has been so full of impressions that i have to write at great length about it. It was an exciting Conference. The variety of human beings represented there was itself rather fascinating. We had practically every country in Asia represented, and then there were people from the Gold Coast, Sudan, Libya, Liberia and Ethiopia, in addition to Egypt. Merely to see this motley gathering, all assembled there with a semblance of common purposes, was rather a moving sight.

Then, of course, there were crowds of other folk-many hundreds of pressmen from all over the world and hundreds of other persons who had come just to meet the delegates or try to influence them for some particular purpose. I said on the last day that Bandung had become for a week the capital of Asia and Africa. There was some truth in that.

⁶⁶ JN Collection.

⁶⁷ (1901-1960); Edwina Ashley, Countess Mountbatten.

Then, there was the political interplay and backstage intrigues. Quite a number of people there were permanent performers of the UN and they functioned with all due pomposity. A tightly knit group represented, if it may be said so, the United States policy. This consisted chiefly of Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Lebanon. Also, of course, the Philippines and Thailand. These two were at least somewhat moderate in their expression. The other four were quite aggressive and sometimes even offensive. A threat was made out that the Conference would be broken up if their viewpoint was not adopted. Chou En-lai was a star performer. As a matter of fact, he did not say very much, but naturally he attracted most attention. He was the mysterious figure representing a country which was playing an important and perhaps dangerous part in the world, and both, those who were favourably inclined to him and those who were bitterly opposed, were anxious to see him and measure him. The Chinese in Bandung, and there was a large number of them, gathered in the streets to cheer him. Chou En-lai did not speak much, but what he said was to the point and authoritative. He was quiet and restrained and obviously determined to do everything in his power to make the Conference a success. He did not bring forward any controversial proposition. If, however, anything was said, which was objectionable from his point of view, he spoke firmly but quietly. He spent long hours in subcommittees and went to every party there. There were dozens of parties, sometimes three or four a day. Apart from this, he met small groups of individuals. Altogether he created a very good impression. Even his opponents melted somewhat and agreed that he was an attractive person. Only once, in a subcommittee, did he speak rather curtly and said that China was not going to be bullied. He had some reason to feel irritated because Pakistan and some others were creating every kind of difficulty.

So far as I was concerned, I behaved generally. Once I lost my temper, but regained it soon after. On two or three occasions I spoke

with some vigour. It is true, however, that I was often very irritated and it was with some difficulty that I restrained myself.

With all this background, it is really amazing how we succeeded in the end and brought out quite a good document unanimously agreed to. The surprising part is that this document is receiving praise from the USA as well as the Soviet and China. I think it is a good document. But, of course, what happened at Bandung was much more important than the mere preparation of a joint statement. Daily contacts and our being together day after day for long hours toned us all down and we tended to become rather a friendly gathering, in spite of our differences. Strangers to each other almost became friends, or at any rate behaved as such. I must say that I had to change my opinion about a number of delegates about whom I had heard much. Thus Prince Wan of Thailand went up in my estimation as a decent civilized individual, rather like a 19th century liberal. Others went down in my estimation. The Conference was a good place to give us a measure of persons attending.

Although there were five sponsors of this Conference-Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Pakistan and India-and we shared expenses⁶⁸ and had a Joint Secretariat, still a great burden of organising it fell on the Indonesian Government. They discharged this remarkably well. I doubt if we could have provided the same amenities in Delhi.

Altogether, therefore, the Conference was a remarkable success. I think all of us who were there came back a little wiser and certainly with a better understanding of the other.

It was interesting to observe the reaction of the Arab delegates to the new countries they were visiting. Hardly any of them had ever come to South-East Asia. Nasser of Egypt had never left Egypt previously,

⁶⁸ In reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on 19 August 1955, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister stated that the total expenditure incurred on the Bandung Conference would be in the neighbourhood of four million Indonesian rupiahs. Each of the five countries would pay eight lakh rupiahs, approximately equivalent to Indian Rs 3,33,000.

except to go to Mecca. For him this was a piling up of new experiences, first Pakistan, then India, Burma and Indonesia. He was excited like a little boy. The other Arab delegates were not so demonstrative but, I have no doubt, much surprised at what they saw. Used to a dry desert climate, they came to these richer regions with a lush vegetation and greenery. Another fact which impressed them no doubt greatly was the position of women in these countries. Nasser mentioned this to me in India when he found a large number of women attending our public meetings and generally being evident in the streets, etc. In Burma, there was much more of this. In fact, we reached Burma on the day of the water festival, and U Nu took us all, attired in Burmese dress, to a number of places in Rangoon where we indulged in this water-play. This was no joke. We were thoroughly drenched with pailfuls of water.

Perhaps the Arabs might have thought that India and Burma being largely non-Muslim countries, in Indonesia things would be different in so far as women were concerned. But they found that women there had complete freedom of movement and were present in large numbers everywhere. They were much impressed by all this. Prince Faisal⁶⁹ of Saudi Arabia, looking very distinguished and distinctive in his flowing robes and with a rather dissipated looking face, imbibed all this quietly. Others were a little more demonstrative. The Africans from the Gold Coast, tall and looking like giants before the Indonesians, evidently liked this new experience. Nkrumah⁷⁰ could not come owing to some constitutional difficulties but he sent two of his Ministers,⁷¹ hefty and giantly persons. They went about in their Roman togas. Most of the others were more

⁶⁹ Malik Faisal ibn Abdel Aziz (1905-1975); brother of King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia; Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1930-60; acclaimed Crown Prince, 1953; Prime Minister, 1953-60; was granted full control of finances, internal and external affairs, and the armed forces of Saudi Arabia by a decree of his brother, March 1958, until December 1960; Regent, 1963-64; King of Saudi Arabia, 1964-75.

⁷⁰ Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972); Prime Minister of Ghana (Gold Coast), 1952-57.

⁷¹ Kojo Botsio, Minister of State, Ghana and leader of the delegation.

soberly clad. One of the persons who had accompanied me was the Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Prince Mohammed Naim,⁷² rather a distinguished looking person and likable. Because he had no special kind of dress on, he was apt to be ignored and got lost in the crowd.

I spent ten days in Indonesia and then came back with U Nu, Nasser and Naim Khan. We dropped U Nu at Rangoon. The others accompanied me to Delhi. The next day, Nasser went on to Kabul. He is coming back to Delhi again. We are also having a number of other visitors like Faisal of Saudi Arabia and the Prime Minister of Sudan.⁷³ So we are being kept busy.

Parliament is working very hard sitting nine or ten hours a day in order to get through some important legislation. We are at last on the eve of passing the Hindu Marriage Bill⁷⁴ which has been pending for a long time, and we are taking another step in regard to the Hindu Succession Bill. Both these two measures have aroused violent opposition from the orthodox, but we shall get them through before long.

I am enclosing a press cutting of a statement which I made in Parliament today.⁷⁵ This is about the Bandung Conference. I need not tell you that Krishna played an important part at Bandung, chiefly in committees and in private talks. He has been invited by Chou En-lai to come to Peking for further talks. I expect he will go in about a week's time.

Yours,
Jawahar

⁷² Mohammed Naim Khan (b. 1911); served in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as Minister of Education; Ambassador to UK, 1946, and to USA, 1950; Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, 1953-63, and leader of the Afghan delegation.

⁷³ Sayed Ismail EI Azhari was the Chairman of the Sudanese delegation at the Conference.

⁷⁴ For Nehru's speech in the course of debate on the Hindu Marriage Bill in the Lok Sabha on 5 May 1955, see post pp. 468-478.

⁷⁵ Not printed.

Recollections of the Conference⁷⁶

The Asian-African Conference met at Bandung for seven days. Of this, first two days and the last two hours were open to the press and the remaining, you might say, five days were not open to the press, and nearly all the work was done in those remaining five days. Of course, this meeting, though not open to the press, was not very secret. When a hundred persons are present there, it is not very secret, but anyhow it was not open to the press and the result was that the press got their accounts from their own country's representatives who were present there. Of course, some of the delegates there from some countries were really newspapermen, specially from the Arab countries, Thailand and some others, so that the accounts you read were not always accurate, sometimes they might be, and they have a tendency to make out some striking fact outside the context and you do not see the context of it; you merely see a fact or two. Therefore, it is a little difficult to judge all these things, but the abiding impression of this Conference on me was a very great one. It attracted tremendous attention all over the world, and people viewed it according to their liking either with some apprehension and dislike or enthusiastically. There was a good deal of apprehension as to what this might do. A rather remarkable thing is that at the conclusion of the Conference almost every country has commended it, has approved of it—certainly the American press, the British press, the French press, the Russian press, the Chinese press and others. It is a remarkable thing that something should be done which is approved of by all these people who usually never agree about anything. It does not mean that nothing important was done there, only some pious platitudes were expressed, and therefore, everybody agrees with pious platitudes. I do not think so. The work this Conference did was not merely a repetition of pious platitudes. No doubt in their Communique there may be many pious platitudes, but as a matter of

⁷⁶ Speech at a closed-door meeting of members of the Congress Parliamentary Party, New Delhi, 3 May 1955. From AICC tapes. Extracts.

fact a large part of that joint statement was drafted after enormous argument and discussion, each word being discussed.

It was easy enough for everyone present there to condemn colonialism and to demand this and that. Personally, I am beginning to react very strongly to lists of demands. There is a type of resolution which lays down, "We demand this, we demand that," but does not cast any responsibility on the person making a demand. It just demands from others to do something, and then you go home. That is a type of irresponsible approach to a question. The Gandhian approach, of course, is that you make demand in yourself: "We are going to do this, we must do it, our country must do it, I must do it", that is the Gandhian approach, rather extreme! Because, if you do, have got to do, well, that will strengthen you and the other person who will be forced to do, he has got to do. Well, may be, we cannot adopt that Gandhian approach hundred per cent, specially in these political gatherings, and some balance has to be struck between these two approaches. The Bandung Conference was not a Gandhian conference, but in the course of arguments there, some heated argument about communism and anti-communism, I spoke three times, twice on one major issue, major resolution, where the resolution was really considering this broad approach to the conflict in the world between the two power blocs, and communism and anti-communism. And it had been stated that in regard to colonialism why should not we condemn the neocolonialism as it was called, in the communist countries of Eastern Asia or of Central Asia apart from the Soviet Union and the like. So this led to a broad argument on this question and I spoke at some length. It was not easy to speak and criticise others, but I endeavoured to speak rather constructively of our policy. That led to many questions in other speeches to which I had to reply. Those were my main contributions to this debate. In the course of that debate, I dealt with this question. I said, it is quite absurd to talk about colonialism in connection with Poland, Czechoslovakia and the rest. That has nothing to do with your

approval to the policy of Czechoslovakia, or Poland or Romania or Yugoslavia, that is, the communist countries. You have every right, any individual has every right to say that in these countries there is not the type of democracy that we approve of, you may like it or you may not. But to consider it as colonialism is, on the face of it, wrong. The word does not mean that. Secondly, I pointed out here that the agenda was, 'Dependent Peoples'. Now, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries are considered independent countries internationally. The United Nations and many countries have relations with them. Therefore, to put them in the same category as Morocco or Tunisia obviously was not suitable, quite apart from your liking this or that. With all respect to the countries represented there, as well as those who were not, if we enter into a minute examination of the extent of freedom or democracy in a country, in the so-called independent countries, well, that might lead us to strange revelations. Many countries that are called independent may really be, in fact, not independent at all, but completely dependent. Many countries that go under the flag of democracy have not an atom of democracy inside them, and yet they are called the democratic free world. So I pointed out all these factors which, obviously, we could not discuss in that Conference and we have to accept things as they were. Countries that we have considered independent, internationally speaking, we had invited. We dealt with them as independent countries. We did not go into their internal affairs. We could, if you like, take Pakistan. Pakistan may be a good country but nobody can say that it is governed democratically today; that is obvious. This point was not to be discussed there, because that will have meant squabbles between every country there. We had to accept things as they were. So I said that I did not understand this business of my being called upon, to be communist or anti-communist. Well, I am what I am, what I want to be in my country, my country is there.

Broadly speaking, we have been nurtured on a certain approach which might be called the Gandhian approach. I said, if you start

about ideologies, I might as well talk about the Gandhian ideology to all of you here. We could discuss the ideology, but that would serve little purpose, I said. And then, it was said by representatives of some countries about people being airy and idealistic, and not seeing the practical world as it is. Well, I ventured to point out that while idealism was good and I want the people to be idealistic, I was not putting forward anything on an idealistic basis. I had found that those people or countries who called themselves very practical, were usually very far from being practical, and the history of the last two wars showed where the so-called practical politics led the world to-to the brink of war-and it becomes worse and worse, and everybody talks about practical politics: I said if this is the test of practicality then we must find some other word for it.

Then again I said, I am no pacifist, if you think I am speaking here as a pacifist to surrender myself, my arms or anything to anybody else. I am not a pacifist. I like pacifism, the idea of pacifism, but in the world as it is, I do not call upon any country to be weak. I do not believe in the weakness of the individual or the group or the nation. I believe in strength, and it is by strength only that we can achieve anything, and if we have achieved our freedom it is through our strength, not through our weakness. It may be that our policy was a peaceful one but it was based on strength and certain principles. And, therefore, we succeeded. Therefore, I said I do not want any country to be weak and I want every country to make itself as strong as possible. But what is strength? I said, you are talking all the time in terms of military strength. Well, I do not deny that military strength is a type of strength which a country possesses and should possess, in present circumstances, although military strength has a new meaning today, that is, in the age of the atom bomb. Whether you have a few more guns or rifles or, a few more or a few less, it does not make much difference. Before the atomic bomb you are as unarmed as if you have no guns. So it makes no difference. It may make some petty difference on some petty squabbles. Therefore, the

whole conception of even strength has changed. Normally too, what is the strength of a nation? Let us say, it is the army, the defence forces, yes; but behind the defence forces you must have an industrial apparatus, industrial production to feed the defence forces. In fact you must have an industrialised economy, otherwise your army is depending even for its arms and equipment on some other country-you are dependent, you are not independent. Then, your industrial background. Thirdly, your general economy; that is, if your economy is not strong and you cannot carry on a war, you go to pieces. And fourth, and very important, is the morale of a nation. I said all this is the equation of strength of a nation, our defence forces, industrial output and condition, economy of the nation and morale of the nation.

So far as the military part is concerned, by all means have your armies. I am not saying that go and put an end to your defence forces, but realise that in the world today, these small armies that the countries of Asia might possess really do not make much difference, unless you want armies against your own people, as indeed they are sometime used in some of these countries. That is a different matter. But when you are talking about protecting yourself against communism or anti-communism, you are thinking of some attack. So, I said, you must look at it realistically in this atomic age. I developed this argument there. I said, I do not want my country to be weak. And I do not want any country in Asia or Africa or elsewhere to be weak. It is not weakness that I want. But you must understand what is strength and what is weakness today. In the ultimate analysis, before the atomic bomb there is no weapon that prevails; but nevertheless human will might prevail, human strength may prevail. A nation which refuses to bow its head, it is difficult to meet that nation with an atom bomb.

Now, right at the beginning, I had written to the Joint Secretariat of the Conference that it would be a good thing for us, all the heads of delegations, to meet a day before the conference itself so as to

decide on the procedure informally and save time next day.

Therefore, I went two days ahead. In fact most people came, some were delayed and we met the day before, 22 countries out of 29. There might have been three or four more present, but their airships were delayed. And we met and I suggested to them that we had only seven days at our disposal and if we spent two days just in opening speeches and in the conclusion we spend another day, and in drafting our final communiqué we spend another day, we get three days for the Conference's work. I said, this will be unfortunate, because this would not let us have time to discuss the important matters. So I suggested let us have no opening speeches, except the speech of the President of Indonesia and President of the Conference, and if anybody wants, (et him put in his written speech, and we circulate it. As a matter of fact, most people had written speeches, so it was easy. And after some argument, this was agreed to by the 22 present there, but that night some other delegates also arrived. They protested, first of all, you have no business to come to an agreement in our absence, we did receive no notice of it. Which was true. And anyhow we felt that people were very anxious to deliver speeches. It was not right to try to stop them by mere majority; we could not decide anything by majority there. So we decided to have speeches... Our approach to this Conference had been that what might be called obviously major controversial issues should not be raised there. Secondly, that things should not be decided there by a majority of voting. It was not exactly that there should be absolute unanimity. That will be a little absurd, because one country might hold up everybody else. But, broadly speaking, we have said that there should be no voting and there should be a consensus of opinion and maybe one might state that one country did not agree, if necessary. That was our approach. Now, this made it difficult. You can decide issues by majority, otherwise you either come to an agreement or there is nothing, there is a blank. Therefore, we laboured for an agreement and in spite of our wish that major controversial issues

should not be brought up, they were brought up in various forms. First, I have just mentioned about this question of neo-colonialism. Well, much had been said about the Panchsheel, the five principles. Nobody can disagree with them and yet simply because we have said it, others wanted to disagree with them and somebody produced seven and somebody produced ten and somebody produced more. In the end this was also referred to a subcommittee and it produced something, which we agreed to.

Now, there was much discussion on a point which I brought out in my statement in Parliament.⁷⁷ In one of the drafts, the question of self defence, singly or collectively, was brought in as one of the principles. Obviously, everybody has the right to self defence singly or collectively. That was brought in to cover the Manila pact or other pacts. We did not want to say anything against the Manila pact, because we were not raising controversial issues. We did not want to say anything about it, but neither did we approve of a cover being given to them in this broad way. It is interesting how this has been dealt with. I am sorry, I have not brought the Communiqué here with me but it was said—the right of self defence singly or collectively in terms of the United Nations Charter. The addition of that in terms of the United Nations Charter really made a great difference. I do not know if anybody realised it. First of all, as members of United Nations we are all bound by it, everybody. The representative of China stated at the beginning that he approved of and considered himself bound by the United Nations Charter. You must realise, he did not accept the resolutions of United Nations. He said, "I was not there and I am not prepared to accept the resolutions which were passed in my absence. But the Charter I accept, because China is a member, I am a member; although they do not like me to go there, I am a member and I accept the Charter." So that the Charter was a basis that nobody could deny. Now, the Charter deals with the question of self

⁷⁷ Nehru's statement made in the Lok Sabha on 30 April 1955 has not been printed.

defence in a particular way. I shall read out to you that particular Article of the Charter:

"Article 51: Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of a United Nations."

Observe, the collective defence comes in if an armed attack is made:

"Until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security, measures taken by members in their exercise of this right of self defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as deemed necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."

The Charter gives a right of self defence singly or collectively when an armed attack is made until the Security Council comes into the picture. It is a very limited right. So we gladly accepted this. It does not obviously cover these other pacts.

Then Article 52 deals with regional arrangements:

"Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action, provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations."

First of all, as members of the United Nations, we are all bound by the Charter. We have no objection to saying that. It is possible that some of those who subscribe to this phrase there, were thinking in terms of their regional pacts. But the language really does not cover that. The interpretation that this covers or protects these military pacts that have been made, is not justified. We did not wish to condemn them, ~or to say anything about them because they are controversial issues. In the course of arguments, certainly, references were made to them and I made a reference too. Then people said

that they had a right to do that in terms of the Charter, etc. I pointed out, first of all, that their interpretation was not correct; secondly, that if they were seeking security by their pacts, instead of adding to their security they were adding to insecurity. The security of South-East Asia has not been added to by the Manila pact, looking at even strictly from the military point of view. The countries which have armies and navies will have them. They have not increased because of the Manila pact; there they are.

The people living in big continental countries become narrow-minded in regard to other countries. A small country like Switzerland cannot be that, because you can hardly move from Switzerland without going to some other country. Here you can go 2,000 miles and you are still in India. Therefore, this kind of meeting broadens one's vision and understanding very much, just as many people coming to India have broadened their understanding very greatly. I will give you an instance. Take the Arab countries. There are many of them. Many of the people from the Arab countries as well as from Africa had never come this way, to South-East Asia or even to India. It was a first experience for them to go there. Some came to India. From India they went to Burma. From Burma they went to Indonesia. Well, even climatically, it was a new experience for them. Because most of them are used to dry Arab desert regions with rich oil fields, but generally desert regions. And going to Indonesia, which is a tropical country, with heavy and lush vegetation, greenery and you don't see a dry spot there, everything is cultivated; right up to the roadside there is cultivation. And there is a very heavy and thick population. The whole aspect is surprising-it is a new picture of the world that they saw. Another aspect, I might mention to you. Some of them who came to India were struck by the number of women they saw here, in the streets, in the public meetings. They mentioned it. They went to Burma. They saw many more of them as we reached Burma at the time of the water festival, which is a kind of Holi with a big exception, that they only use plain water. Sometimes they may put a little rose

water in it, but generally it is plain water. But they use it in large quantities. They soak you completely and those boys and girls, men and women doing th'is. This was a surprising sight too for many of the people who came.

Now, I went to Indonesia. It is a very attractive country, and the people are very attractive and likeable. Indonesia is a Muslim country in the sense that the great majority of the population is Muslim, 90 or 95 per cent. But it was utterly unlike the Muslim countries of western Asia-the life, etc., the women there, the living conditions there. There is no question of a woman in purdah. In fact, the women there were participating in every work. So that was surprising and it broadens one's wisdom. I have been there, of course, and I know. So all these people coming from Africa and other places, it gave them, suddenly, a new picture of Asia just as Mr Chou En-lai, who came from China to India or Burma and now in Indonesia, got a new picture of this part of Asia, which he did not have. And all these new pictures broaden one's wisdom, one's understanding. Then the discussions there were, on the whole, fairly frank. These discussions, undoubtedly, made all of us understand the fears and apprehensions of various countries. So it was an enormously educative Conference and in spite of what you might read in the papers about conflicts in the Conference, really it was a very friendly Conference. Conflicts there were in the sense that in argument somebody said something, somebody replied but it was a very friendly Conference and people were constantly meeting not only in the Conference but in large numbers of parties. Every delegation was giving party; every evening there were five or six parties and people going from one to the other. Some were of course very lavish parties, some were simpler. So it did create a sensation of some commonness of purpose in Asia and Africa which is a tremendous thing. On the whole, there was no, what might be called anti-European or anti-American feeling. There was no racial feeling, not much anyway, very little. But there was very definitely a pro-Asian feeling, a pro-African feeling, that is, a positive side was

present there with a feeling of Asia standing on its own feet and not being pushed this way or that by Europe or America. Then, of course, there were some countries very much afraid of communism, usually tied up with the so-called anti-communist group of nations. The communist group had only two countries there, China and North Vietnam.

While this Conference was meeting, there were not only people at parties and meals but they met also to discuss their particular problems. There was a long standing problem between Thailand and North Vietnam. They do not recognise each other, they could not deal with each other, but they did meet each other there and deal with each other and agreed to the solution of the problem. It is related to about 50,000 refugees from one country to the other. Apart from solving that problem it created a better feeling between those two neighbour countries, Thailand and North Vietnam. Then Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam met together and we were also there, and China and Burma, and quite a number of minor matters were settled. The disputes settled were not very important, but the whole atmosphere that was generated was a friendly atmosphere and, remember these people had been fighting each other in the past. One Prime Minister invited the other man to come to his place and discuss further, the other invited this man to come to his country and discuss. The whole atmosphere was one of trying to solve their problems themselves. It is a good thing. The only country that somehow stood out of these talks was South Vietnam. There is a civil war going on in the state of South Vietnam, and one can understand that it is rather difficult for anyone to represent South Vietnam. In fact, the Minister⁷⁸ who was representing South Vietnam in the middle of our Conference, resigned from his ministership there, because of these odd problems. So that, all these contacts helped in solving a number of petty problems and in creating an atmosphere for further solution. A major problem like Formosa was not discussed.

⁷⁸ Nguyen Van Thoai, Minister for Planning and Reconstruction.

Privately we had some talk about it with Chou En-lai and others and as you know Chou En-lai invited Mr Krishna Menon to go to Peking and probably in about five or six days or so he will go there.⁷⁹ Now, in all of these committees-drafting and subcommittees-our people did a lot of good work. In the Cultural Committee and the Economic Committee, it was heavy work but it was straight-going work; there were no conflicts. In the Political Committee there was a good deal of tug of war. Specially in some of the subcommittees in the Political Committee which sat for hours on end arguing about a word here and there and sometimes reached almost the point of breaking up. In one committee the Chairman was Col Nasser, the Prime Minister of Egypt. He was a very quiet man in the big Conference or the big committee, saying just a few words, but in this committee he functioned with an extraordinary ability and undoubtedly he was largely responsible for the agreement arrived at. Our own men there functioned very well. Our chief representatives in these committees were our Commonwealth Secretary, Dutt, and Krishna Menon. Krishna Menon has an amazingly fertile intellect for dealing with these situations. I do not know of anyone else who has that. That is, if one thing is not agreed to, he will find a dozen alternatives for it, trying to meet each person's viewpoints and so going on expressing. I may say, instead, what might well have happened in case like me: I would get irritated and walk out or do something.

Really he was extraordinarily helpful in these matters, and in the other matter also which is in a sense similar to it. That is, when you have these big, conflicts between great powers, if they meet in formal conference, they address each other formally and you cannot get an

⁷⁹ Krishna Menon visited Beijing from 11 to 21 May 1955 and had a series of talks with Chou En-lai and other members of the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Formosan question and other issues. Menon subsequently had talks with the British and Canadian leaders and thereafter with John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower on 14 June 1955.

agreement with formal addresses and speeches; you simply remain where you are. If one country through its diplomatic agent addresses another country, it is a formal document and it may help, of course, if you are friendly. But if you are suspicious of each other then it does not help at all and formal documents are apt to be rather curt. This is where the virtue of informal talks comes in. In Geneva, we were not officially represented but there is no doubt that a very great role was played by India, simply because India happened to be friendly to both the parties and we could meet them and discuss matters with them in a friendly way and for the moment become some kind of link between others. And Krishna Menon, there too, did a remarkable piece of work, quite amazing! I think he must have had, in the course of two or three weeks there, 200 interviews with the heads of delegations and each lasting two hours, long talks with each parties gradually, slowly getting hold of his viewpoint, putting some other viewpoint without commitment, and exploring and then ultimately helping to find some way which is agreed to by the parties of course. All this only happens when there is an urge. Now, in Geneva, for the first time, the conference came up against the prospect of immediate and sudden war on a big scale. If there had been no agreement in Geneva, there is no doubt about it that war would have flared up in Indo- China and this time the war in Indo-China would not have been limited to Indo-China. That might have meant America and China at war and so a world war. So that at Geneva they had a terrible prospect. All the parties present there worked hard for an agreement. But even when you worked hard for an agreement, it does help very much if your way is eased by some connective link which we, which India provided.

Now, of course, because Krishna Menon is going to Peking, one must not imagine that some wonderful result is going to come out of his going there. But the mere fact of his going there, on our behalf, at the invitation of the Chinese Prime Minister, indicates that some things are moving. That it is not a hundred per cent deadlock, that

helps, that prevents people, the American or the Chinese, from going to the extreme.

So, now after this Conference, some of the people who were at the Conference have come here on their way back-the Egyptian Prime Minister came here, the Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan came here. Now, as you know, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal is here. He went to the House today here and probably he is going day after tomorrow. And they had time to see our Community Projects today and were much impressed. So that, gradually an entity that might be called the Asian consciousness is arising. This Asian consciousness is a very big thing and to say that we all think alike, is wrong of course but nevertheless in the context of today, this is arising and it is helpful. How far it will help, one does not know. And therefore the Bandung Conference really was very important in the context of history, because these various forces, urges, etc., were given a certain shape by the Conference, a certain focal point, a meeting point. The Bandung Conference by itself could have done nothing unless there were these urges; it was because these urges were there, we met, and Bandung gave it a shape and formulation. None of us who went to Bandung, none of the countries that went to Bandung, are quite the same now. All of us have developed, in regard to each other, somewhat, which is important. If you have read any of the criticisms in some foreign newspapers, and which I have been reading since I came back, mostly they are angry criticisms: "What business have these people to meet without their elders and mentors." "Oh! they are going to meet like children away from their teacher, they want to play about and misbehave,"-this kind of extraordinary mental approach. Because the Conference, by and large, behaved responsibly and not merely as a public meeting, shouting. There was a feeling of relief in other countries which expected a lot of curses. So there is a relief. It was better than we thought it might be. Nobody realising that by cursing nothing much happens or by repeating pious platitudes, not realising

fully that something much more important has happened at Bandung. It is a step in the historic process; by itself it is nothing-some people do realise it, maybe.

And now, one step leads to another and inevitably India's responsibilities grow, whether we want it or not. India is in a difficult position. On the one hand, there is no doubt that there is a good deal of admiration for the progress made by India, and they may be impressed by Bhakra-Nangal and Chittaranjan and Sindri, but the things that affect them most are our Community Projects, because that is a thing which they can do themselves, they might, if they have the men. Because conditions in all these countries are, industrially speaking, backward, they are underdeveloped countries. And so they admired what has been done by India. At the same time, because India is a big country and potentially strong, and progressing rapidly, sometimes there is a certain feeling of apprehension against India, a little feeling of, I do not want to use the word 'jealousy', but still not liking that 'this big country is going ahead fast while we may not be,' that type of feeling. One has to be very careful about dealing with these countries, to remove their apprehensions.

We have this question of Ceylon before us. Well, we feel that the way Ceylon has dealt with the people of Indian origin there has not been fair. But how exactly are we to react to it. I am not talking about minor steps that you may take but basically, because oddly enough, any strong reaction from us produces the very conditions in Ceylon which we want to prevent. Because, ultimately Ceylon is afraid of India, afraid of the bigness of India, the strength of India, afraid of being absorbed in India. That is there. We want to remove that fear. If we take, in a metaphorical sense, a big stick, that is the very thing that they think that India might do, and confirms them, and it drives them into other people's hands. They say, "No, we are safer with Britain or Australia than with India; after all they are far away, India is right here". So it is always, these restrictive factors which have to be considered. We may take some steps but we have always to

remember that by, what might be called any use of sanctions, we just frighten them and they react more adversely to us. It is a difficult position. Ultimately, we do want to make them feel that their association with India, a friendly association, will in no way harm them, reduce their independence; it will be to their profit. Whether it is culturally or industrially or commercially, whatever it is, we do not wish to interfere with Ceylon's freedom and our cursing Ceylon, just apart from irritating them, frightens them.

That applies to other countries too. As I told Mr Chou En-lai when I saw him I think in Peking, I said: Now, it so happens that China and India are two huge countries in this part of Asia and they are progressing, they are getting stronger. It is quite natural, I said, that the other countries of Asia and South-East Asia specially, should be a little frightened of China or India, or both. I was driving home a lesson to him. From my point, I said no. I said that if Ceylon is afraid of us, she has no reason to be afraid, but the fact is, she is. If Burma or Cambodia is afraid of you, it is natural and you and we should go all out to remove their fears. The only way to get things done is to remove their fears and not to frighten them more, that is a difficulty. And he completely agreed with me. He said, "Yes, we should go all out to remove their apprehensions and fears. If they are afraid that China is going to interfere with them, well, I can give them not only every assurance but every act of mine will show that I do not wish to interfere with them, externally or internally". And as you see, gradually he is solving this question of Chinese citizens abroad or Chinese people abroad. Because the Chinese are spread out in large numbers in Burma, Indonesia, Indo-China, Thailand, and still because China and India in the past have been big countries, rather prolific and dynamic countries, one thousand years ago, and they spread out all over and there they are. It is an interesting story.

To conclude, I will just give you a thought that if you are acquainted at all with the history of South-East Asia, it is a fascinating story. In the early years of Christian era, maybe the second century, first

century, Indian colonists first went from India to South-East Asia, about 1;800 years ago, and not large numbers of them, and when they settled down round about these places like Malacca, Singapore and all over the region, they mixed with the people and they developed a kind of mixed culture, powerfully Indian and yet imbibing others, both mixed up, and a very fine culture, architecture, painting and dancing developed. At the same time, China was also a dynamic nation that spread, not in a military sense so much, but culturally and otherwise. And for a thousand years India and China faced each other in South-East Asia, not in a military sense, they never had any big war, but in the cultural and other areas, they met and both of them influenced South-East Asia. South-East Asian countries, of course, have their individuality, very powerful individuality, but they were both tremendously impressed by China, by India, in these thousand years, naturally.

Then came the period of European colonial rule. The Portuguese came, the Dutch, the British, the French and the Spaniards came in South-East Asia and they fought against each other and ultimately something developed, and for 250 years or more there was this colonial rule. Now that colonial rule has largely gone. Some relics remain in Malaya, here and there. And again you go back somehow to pick up old threads and China and India are again facing each other in South-East Asia, which we did for a thousand years previously. In those thousand years, so far as one knows, there was no major conflict between them. And there is no particular reason why there should be in the future. But it is inevitable by the mere fact of our geography, our bigness, our dynamism that this happens, We have to be very careful, because of our bigness, that we should be modest. We should not talk tall, we should not be jingoistic. Jingoism is, of course, bad anyhow but there is a tendency always to do that. Even in the Bandung Conference, it was our deliberate desire not to push ourselves to the front too much. Of course, we could not escape the fact that we came from a big and important country. One cannot

escape it. Somebody said there, that if China and India had not come here, what will the Conference be? Well, even then, the Conference would have been a good Conference, even without China and India, but nevertheless it would have made a big difference if China and India were not there. We cannot escape our bigness. We cannot escape a certain inevitable role that is coming to us, a historic role by our geography, by our bigness, by the fact that we are developing a certain dynamism, in our general economic life or psychologically, in everything, which is bound to throw more and more responsibilities upon us. And therefore we have to be exceedingly careful, to be modest about it all, not to shout about it, and to try to win other countries not by threats but rather by showing how peaceful and friendly our attitude is. Thank you.

The Spirit of Bandung⁸⁰

I have no doubt that the Bandung Conference has played an important role.⁸¹ It has represented various forces that have been developing in the past few years and has compelled the attention of other countries to these new developments. While the fact that there are some new independent countries in Asia is known to everybody, the real significance of this is not always appreciated. Bandung helped a little in bringing about this awareness to others.

2. There is, in large parts of Asia and Africa, an intense desire to be left free to work out our destiny. We want progress at a rapid pace. But with all our past memories of colonial domination, we suspect any

⁸⁰ Answers to a questionnaire sent by Louis Gibarti, a Hungarian communist, 23 May 1955. JN Collection.

⁸¹ Enclosing the answers, Nehru wrote to Gibarti on 23 May that he was not clear how Gibarti's proposal to have an unofficial movement to maintain and further the aims of the Bandung Conference could be organised. He added, "I have no objection to somebody trying to do this. But it cannot take us far...it will be far better for each country so inclined, to carry on a policy to further the Bandung idea and to keep in touch with other like countries."

attempt at interference or patronage. We have no ill will to any particular country and do not reflect the fierce antagonisms of Europe and America. We want peace not only because we are peacefully inclined but because it is essential for our progress. The aggressive attitudes of communism or anti-communism find no echo with us and we see no reason whatever why we should lose our own individuality, give up our thinking and become a mere camp follower of others. This may not represent the views of all the countries represented at Bandung. In fact some of them repudiated this approach.

Nevertheless this is the basic viewpoint of the peoples of all the countries of Asia and possibly of Africa also. We are a little tired of the conflicts and hatreds of Europe and see no reason why we should succumb to them. The Bandung Conference was the first clear enunciation by the countries of Asia especially that they have an individuality and viewpoint which they are not prepared to give up because of the views of or pressure from other countries.

3. Many of the newspapermen who came to Bandung from other countries had preconceived notions. Because of these ideas, they tended to judge everything accordingly. They attached importance to personalities rather than to the ferment in Asia and the forces at work there. They tried to look at Bandung as another arena for the cold war. No doubt some of the statements made there supported this viewpoint and much was made of them. But, as a matter of fact, all this was rather a superficial view and gradually the real meaning of Bandung is being understood.

4. It is true that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are not happy at present. They have not been very friendly for some years past. Attempts are being made by friendly nations to bring about some settlement at least in regard to the recent incidents. I hope they will succeed. As for Kashmir, this is an old and complicated question. On the whole, I think that there is much less tension over this question than there used to be. Certainly the feelings of the

Indian and Pakistan peoples towards each other are extraordinarily friendly.

5. It would be absurd to expect that the Bandung Conference would lead to the solution of international problems. It may help a little. The Bandung Conference should not be judged so much from the forceful speeches delivered but from the joint statement issued at the end.

6. I would rather not express any opinion about recent developments in Europe. That is too complicated a question to be dealt with briefly and, normally, I avoid discussing European problems. All I can say here now is that I do feel that there is a movement in Europe away from the tension and cold war of the past several years. I hope it will succeed.

7. I am going to the Soviet Union in response to an old invitation. I had accepted this many months ago. This has nothing to do with any recent development. We want to be friendly with the Soviet Union. I have no special problems to discuss there, but naturally we shall have talks about many general problems. There is no controversy on any issue between India and the Soviet Union. We hope that we shall cooperate in a larger measure in future.