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## CHOU EN-LAI AT BANDUNG

### Chinese Communist Diplomacy at the Asian-African Conference

A Report from A. Doak **Barnett**

Djakarta  
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For a week, from April 18 through 24, the beautiful West Javan mountain city of **Bandung** was, in the words of Nehru, "capital of Asia and **Africa**." Representatives of 29 countries **stretching** from Liberia to Japan gathered to attend the **Asian-African Conference**, which had been convened by the five Colombo Powers--India, Burma, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Ceylon. They came to "**promote** good will and cooperation," "consider social, economic, and cultural problems and relations," discuss "problems of special interest" such as those "**affecting** national **sovereignty**" and "**racialism** and **colonialism**," and "**view** the position of Asia and Africa\* in the world and the contribution their countries could make to "**world** peace and cooperation."

The composition of the conference ensured from the start that the meetings could deal only in generalities for the most part. The Arab bloc, African states, Asian neutralists, plus two Communist states and a group of clearly anti-Communist nations in both the Middle East and Asia, represented a tremendous variety of ideologies, viewpoints, and policies.

It was a unique and important conference, nonetheless. In the flood of oratory which it evoked, the meeting was described, with **many** extravagant phrases, as "**a** new departure in the history of the world," a symbol of the "**resurgence** of Asia and **Africa**," the "**greatest** concentration of anticolonial forces in world **history**," an historic \*experiment in **coexistence**." All of these descriptions contained at least a kernel of truth.

The main common denominators of the majority of nations attending the conference were: a desire for a larger voice in world affairs, opposition to **colonialism** and support for self-determination of all peoples, condemnation of the idea of white supremacy and demand for racial equality, a desire to develop economically in order to catch up with the rest of the world, and a hope for peace. The fact that these aspirations and feelings led to such a conference, excluding all Western Powers, and

produced a general declaration of common aims, however vague, was of unquestionable historic significance.

After seven days of deliberations, the conference ended with a public show of harmony and good will. But under the surface there were basic differences among the attending nations which remained unreconciled to the very end, and disruption of the conference was avoided only by compromises which in effect amounted to evasion of the disputed issues.

The most important of these issues centered on the conflict between the Communist and anti-Communist blocs, and the relation of nations in Asia and Africa to it. There were only **two** Communist states represented at the conference, so there was never any serious possibility of the meetings turning into forums for clear-cut pro-Communist propaganda. The issue concerned, **therefore**, the differences between the neutralist countries--for whom Nehru is spiritual leader--which advocate avoidance of any military alliances against the Communists, and those countries such as Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Philippines, and Thailand which regard the possibility of Communist expansion as a real threat and have therefore joined defensive pacts linking them **with** the West.

The debate on this basic difference of viewpoint took many forms. For example, some of the most heated arguments focused on the question of whether "Communist colonialism" should be condemned along with "**Western** colonialism" in the conference's general anticolonial declaration.

During the conference, issues of this sort became **inter-**meshed in subtle ways with many other complicated problems, conflicts, and alignments. **For** example, rivalries within the Arab League resulted in a division of the Arab states, some supporting the **neutralists** and others lining up with the anti-Communist group. As a consequence, one major line of political cleavage crystallized during the course of the conference and produced two groups which stuck together fairly consistently in the final voting on controversial issues.

The core of the neutralist group consisted of Mehru, **Burma's** U Nu, and Indonesia's **Ali** Sastroamidjojo. Afghanistan and Nepal, two rather weak landlocked states located north of **the** Indian peninsula and on the edge of the Soviet bloc, followed along. Shortly before the conference, little Cambodia joined up, and Laos leaned in the same direction.

Cooperating with the neutralists **was** **Egypt's** Nasser, who carried Saudi Arabia, **Yemen**, and Syria with him. This alignment was a clear result of the split in the Arab League caused early this year when Iraq signed a **pact** with Turkey,

Finally, the two Communist states, China and North Vietnam, found **it** more to their advantage to cooperate in a general

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way with the neutralists than to take an isolated position in opposition to all 27 non-Communist nations at the conference.

These three diverse groups met en route to the conference. Nasser first flew to New Delhi. He and Nehru then flew together to Rangoon and met U Mu. There, all three were joined by Communist China's Chou En-lai and North Vietnam's Pham van Dong. These leaders had numerous meetings together before reaching Bandung.

On the other side of the fence, the principal link was between those nations which openly oppose international Communism and the Soviet bloc in an active way. Some, but not all, of them were nations which have joined Western-oriented defense pacts. The chief delegates of Turkey, Philippines, Pakistan, Thailand, and Lebanon were the behind-the-scenes leaders of conference strategy among this group, but during the conference sessions Iraq and Ceylon unexpectedly emerged as the group's most blunt and vocal spokesmen.

The final voting line-up during the last two days of the conference followed a fairly consistent pattern. On the one side were 15 countries: Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Ceylon, South Vietnam, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Liberia, Gold Coast, and Sudan. On the other side were 14 countries: India, Burma, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, Communist China, and North Vietnam.

This division indicated several significant trends in international alignments. First, the politics of Asia and the Middle East seemed to become increasingly intertwined as a result of the conference. The intraregional splits in both regions were reflected in groupings which cut across Asia and the Middle East. Second, the Colombo Powers group seemed to lose much of whatever importance it had as a political bloc, as a result of the clear opposition of Pakistan and Ceylon on the one side to the stand of India, Burma, and Indonesia on the other. The Colombo Powers may well continue to cooperate, particularly in the economic field, but the political split in the group became clearer than ever before. Third, the neutralist region under Nehru's leadership seemed to shift eastward. With Cambodia clearly accepting Nehru's lead, and Laos apparently following, some observers now wonder whether or not even Thailand may in time be affected, if it finds itself "surrounded by neutralism."

On balance, however, it was clear that Nehru did not do very well at the conference. His obvious effort to assert leadership, his intemperate and tactless criticism of those who opposed him, and his transparent pique when things did not go his way, antagonized many delegates at the conference and irritated most, including some of his friends. If Nehru hoped that the Asian-African Conference would create a political ground swell which would point toward a neutralist Afro-Asia under his leadership as

the wave of the future, he was disappointed.

Perhaps the most important development of all, however, was the emergence of Communist China into the political scene. Like the trends mentioned above, this was not an entirely new **development** by any means. Since the Geneva Conference last year, Communist China has steadily been increasing its contacts with other Asian countries, and its tactical approach toward Southeast Asia has **clearly** been one of cooperating **with** and supporting the neutralists. But the Asian-African Conference provided an unprecedented opportunity for Chou En-lai to use all of his diplomatic ability and personal charm in an attempt to win friends and influence people.

Chou's performance at Bandung was extremely skillful. During the early days of the conference he played a patient, conciliatory, and one might even say **defensive, role**. When attacks were made against the Communists, he kept his temper. He refrained from any of the standard propaganda blasts which typify Chinese Communist pronouncements from Peking. He did not assert himself, and for the most part he stayed in the background. Then, on the last three days of the conference, he emerged as the main performer, and in a series of fairly dramatic diplomatic moves he **assumed** the role of the reasonable, moderate man of peace, the conciliator who was willing to make promises and concessions in the name of harmony and good will.

Within the conference halls, Chou did not pitch into the verbal duels between the neutralists and the anti-Communists; instead he spoke like a pacifier. Outside the conference, he made well-timed peaceful gestures on two important issues: the question of Overseas Chinese dual nationality, **which** is a major problem for many Southeast Asian countries; and the Formosa situation, which **as** a threat to the peace is of concern to all. Privately, Chou made numerous assurances and promises to almost all of the countries bordering Communist China.

In view of **Peking's** general foreign policy line, a majority of **observers** predicted even before the conference that Chou En-lai would play a role of moderation. But there were doubts in the minds of some. These doubts increased when just before the conference an Air India plane carrying a few of the Chinese delegation crashed **off** Borneo and the Chinese **Communists** charged that American and Chinese Nationalist agents had sabotaged **it**. Chou En-lai, on his arrival at **Bandung** airport, distributed a brief statement repeating the charge that "**some** people" are "**trying** by all means to sabotage" the conference.

When **the** chiefs of delegations met on Sunday afternoon, April 17, at the home of Indonesia's Ali Sastroamidjojo in **Bandung** to discuss the agenda and conference procedures, Chou En-lai was merely a listener, while Nehru quickly pushed through a series of proposals designed to ensure that he could exercise **a great** influence over the conference and its final communiqué. The next

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morning, after Indonesia's **Sukarno** and Sastroamidjojo had read their opening addresses to the conference, Nehru's proposals were challenged by Pakistan and others and, finally, were defeated. During this parliamentary in-fighting, Chou remained quiet and unobtrusive,

Monday and Tuesday, the first two days of the conference, were devoted to open sessions at which the chief delegates read prepared speeches. Nehru, who had wanted to skip these speeches and go directly into closed sessions, decided not to make a speech. U Nu did the same. When Chou En-lai's turn in the alphabetical list came, he also passed up the opportunity to speak.

The first few speeches were relatively noncontroversial and unexciting. It looked as if **Nehru's** desire to keep the issue of Communism versus anti-Communism out of the conference might prevail. Then, Iraq's Jamali got up to speak and tossed the first verbal bombshell into the meeting. He discussed "**three international forces in the world that disturb peace and harmony**": "**old-time colonialism**," "**Zionism**," and "**Communism**." Communism, he said, is a "**subversive religion**" which "**breeds hatred amongst classes and peoples**"; it has created a "**new form of colonialism**."

Once the issue of Communism had been introduced, it was inevitable that some of the other delegates would take it up. Pakistan's Mohammed Ali, Philippines' Romulo, Thailand's Prince Wan, and Turkey's **Fatin** Rustu Zorlu all discussed the threat of Communism and the necessity of taking defensive measures **against it**. Most of them dealt with it in the abstract, or referred to the Soviet Union rather than to Communist China; but Prince Wan specifically mentioned three situations, two of them directly related to China, which he said were a cause of concern to Thailand: organizational activity among the people of the Thai race in China's Yunnan Province, near to Thailand; the problem of dual nationality affecting 3,000,000 Overseas Chinese in Thailand; and the presence of 50,000 pro-Vietminh Vietnamese in northeast Thailand.

It is probable that Chou En-lai at first definitely planned to follow Nehru's lead and not read any speech. However, he finally decided to do so, perhaps as a result of the speeches of Jamali, Wan, and the others. (Nehru and U Nu stood by their original decision not to read speeches.) Chou had already written one speech, which was mimeographed and distributed among the delegates, but on Tuesday morning it was announced that Chou En-lai would speak that afternoon. It was clear that this speech would define the line which Communist China would follow during the conference.

A half-hour before the afternoon session began, the skies over Bandung--which had been cloudless since the opening of the conference--suddenly darkened, and with little forewarning there was a spectacular cloudburst, accompanied by ear-splitting thunder and by flashes of lightning. Inside the conference hall,

the roof sprang a leak in one spot, and water splashed down onto the floor next to the desk marked "**China.**" Some wondered if this were an omen, but no omen could have been more misleading.

Chou En-lai's turn came by mid-afternoon. Dressed in a simple grey "**Sun Yat-sen**" uniform, he walked to the front of the hall and, after a few introductory **words in Chinese**, **merely** stood while his second "supplementary speech" was read in English by a young, soft-voiced, Harvard-oducated interpreter.

The most striking aspect of the speech **was** its lack of thunder and lightning. In carefully chosen uords, Chou outlined Communist China's posture of reasonableness and peacefulness at the conference, and he replied to many of the direct and indirect charges made against the Communists in previous speeches.

"The Chinese Delegation has come here to seek **unity** and not to quarrel," Chou said, "**We** do not hide the fact that we believe in **Communism**," but "**there** is no need at this conference to publicize one's ideology and the political system of **one's country.**" Communist **China's** aim, he claimed, is "**to seek common ground, not to create divergence,**" and common ground can be found in "**doing away with the sufferings and calamities of colonialism.**" Chou stated that China agreed to the four general purposes defined by the convening nations and did "**not** make any other proposal<sup>n</sup>

Then, in an extremely shrewd way, Chou raised several issues which, he said, Communist China "**could** have submitted<sup>N</sup> to the **conference but** would not submit. By raising the issues in this way, he was able to state **his** case and yet create the impression, in some listeners' minds, of reasonableness in not introducing them into the debates. First, he mentioned **Formosa.** After making a passing verbal thrust at the **U.S.**, by claiming that the tension around Formosa is "**created solely by the U.S.,**" he reiterated Communist China's willingness to accept the Soviet proposal for an international conference on the Formosa question (excluding Nationalist China); at the same time, however, he once more asserted that Formosa is "**entirely a matter of our internal affairs.**" Chou then said that he could also raise, but would not, the issue of **China's** seat in the UN and what he labeled the "**unfair treatment**" of China by the UN.

Thereafter, he proceeded to discuss three specific questions: ideologies, religion, and subversion.

On the "question of different ideologies and social **systems,**" he maintained that the existence of differences "**does** not prevent us from seeking common ground and being **united.**"

Turning to religion, Chou claimed that "**China is a country where there is freedom of religious belief.**" Obviously impressed by the frequent references to religion in the speeches preceding his, Chou asserted, with a frankness that was obviously

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meant to be disarming, "We Communists are atheists, but we respect all those who have religious belief. We hope that those with religious belief will also respect those without,"

Finally, he took up "the question of so-called subversive **activities**," and replied directly to Prince Wan, Regarding Overseas Chinese, Chou said that "the problem of dual nationality is something left behind by old China," but "new China..... is ready to solve the **problem.....with the governments concerned.**" As for the Thai in South China, he claimed that they had merely been granted autonomy, like other minorities in China, "How," he asked, "could that be said to be a threat to our neighbors?"

Then Chou En-lai declared that Communist China is \*prepared to establish normal relations **with all the Asian and African countries**, with all the countries in the world, and first of all with our neighboring **countries.**" What subversion is now going on, he claimed, was directed against China, not being carried out by China, He pointed to "**bases around China,**" and specifically to the Kuomintang troops in Burma, saying that "**we have always respected the sovereignty of Burma for the solution of this problem.**" Anyone who does not believe that the U.S. is carrying out **subversion against China "may come to China,**" he said, "**or send someone there to see for themselves.**" In closing, he said, "**Let us be united.**"

Chou En-lai's speech was an **extremely** skillful statement of China's conciliatory approach to the conference, and it was the climax of the first two days of open sessions.

On the following day, Wednesday, all proceedings shifted to committee rooms where the Heads of Delegations (in effect a Political Committee), an Economic Committee, and a Cultural Committee carried on their discussions behind closed doors until the final closing session on Sunday, April 24.

Although the committee sessions were supposed to be secret, "leaks" of information soon developed, and before the conference **was** over some participants were giving regular private briefings on the proceedings, so that what went on behind closed doors became fairly well known,

Chou En-lai's approach to these secret sessions was identical to that revealed in his public performance. Real controversy developed in the sessions of the Heads of Delegations, but Chou stayed out of the fray during the larger part of it,

The most **explosive** bombshell thrown into the Heads of Delegations' meetings was tossed by Ceylon's Sir John Kotelawala. On Thursday, hearty Sir John read a speech on colonialism, "You may say," he declared, "**that colonialism is a term, generally understood and capable of only one meaning. I cannot agree, Colonialism takes many forms,**" Apart from Western colonialism, he said, "**there is another form of colonialism.....about which**

many of us represented here are perhaps less clear in our minds and to which some of us would perhaps not agree to apply the term colonialism at all. Think, for example, of those satellite states under Communist domination in Central and Eastern Europe. ■■■.Are these not colonies as much as any of the colonial territories in Africa and **Asia?**"

Nehru was taken aback, and Chou En-lai bristled momentarily, but Chou then merely asked that the speech be distributed so he could answer it later.

Sir John's speech started some bitter controversy, which during the next three **days** touched on a number of subjects besides colonialism. The issue of neutralism versus collective defense against Communism was one of the topics argued most heatedly, and it ran as an undercurrent, in fact, through almost all of the debates.

Although Chou **En-lai** took part in these discussions, he left most of the arguing to others, and the statements he made were generally moderate. **As** a Communist he represented, in a sense, the whole subject of the debate, the issue **about** which everyone was arguing. But he managed to stay on the side lines most of the time and let others argue it out.

Finally, on Saturday morning, April 23, when, in the words of some delegates, the **situation was almost "deadlocked,"** Chou **En-lai** chose to make his major speech of the entire conference. His diplomatic timing was almost perfect. After holding himself **in** rein for most of the conference, he stepped in when nerves were at least slightly frayed and took over the role of star performer. The impact of his speech was visible. Here was the representative of Communism at the conference taking the lead **in** smoothing things out, being the peacemaker, giving assurances of good will and good faith to everyone.

Chou began his speech by saying that everybody at the conference wanted peace. The attitude we should all adopt, he said, is that although we have different ideologies and **inter-**national obligations, our purpose should be to discover some common basis for world peace and cooperation. Some do not like the word "**coexistence**"; all right, then use the words of the UN Charter--live in peace.

Communist China is against all forms of military alliances, he said (not mentioning the existence of a **Sino-Soviet Alliance**), and China will be forced to sign treaties **with** other countries if the tendency to form alliances is continued. After **this** veiled threat Chou faced Mohammed Ali and said that **Ali** had told him in private conversation that he had no fear that China would commit aggression,

Then Chou **talked** about the controversial "five principles\* of coexistence, **which** had formed the basis of agreements



last year between China and India, and between China and Indonesia. Many delegates at the conference objected to them on the grounds that they did no more than rephrase UN principles and were in fact a Communist propaganda stratagem. Chou said that he would not insist on them and would be perfectly willing either to add to them or to subtract from them,

The most important part of his speech followed. Chou outlined a seven-point peace declaration, and in the course of elaborating on it he made reassuring statements or promises to all of the countries neighboring on China. As one delegate described it later, "He distributed gifts all around, at least one to each neighbor."

Chou's proposed peace declaration read as follows:

"The Asian-African Conference,

"Taking cognizance of the fact that the present world tension is impairing international cooperation and harmony,

"Recognizing the desire of the peoples of the world for a solid and lasting peace and for development of friendly relations between nations,

"With a view to achieve and maintain the independence and freedom of Asian and African countries, and

"With a view to safeguard and strengthen world peace,

"Declare:

"We Asian and African countries are determined to promote mutual and common interests and to live together in peace and friendly cooperation with one another on the basis of (1) respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, (2) abstention from committing aggression and directing threats against each other, (3) abstention from interference or intervention in the internal affairs of one another, (4) recognition of the equality of races, (5) recognition of the equality of all nations large and small, (6) respect for the right of the people of all countries to choose freely their way of life, as well as political and economic systems, and (7) abstention from doing damage to one another.

"Advocate the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means and support all measures that are being taken or may be taken to eliminate international tensions and promote world peace.

"Call for an immediate armaments truce among all nations and first of all an agreement among the big powers on the reduction of armed forces and armaments.

"Maintain that atomic energy be used for peaceful purposes, demand the prohibition of production, storage and use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and demand the stop by mutual agreement of all tests of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons and experimental nuclear **explosions.**"

In this proposed declaration, Chou En-lai supported most of the major ideas which received general approval during the conference. In the eyes of the majority of delegates, he definitely lined up on the side of virtue and against sin in this statement.

As he outlined the declaration, furthermore, Chou made specific references— in relation to many of the seven points--to problems which he knew to be of concern to China's neighbors. On point one, he talked once more of **China's** respect for **Burma's** sovereignty, despite activities of Kuomintang troops there. On point two, he referred to private conversations he had had with **Romulo** and Prince Wan, and the invitations he had extended to them and to others to **visit** China and inspect China's frontiers **if** they so wished. On point three, he stated that assurances on nonintervention had been given to Laos and Cambodia. Regarding point **six**, he mentioned both Japan and the **U.S.**, saying that China respected the political and economic systems in both of these countries.

Chou then said that China was willing to settle all problems by peaceful means. Without mentioning Formosa by name, he said: Let China and the **U.S.** also settle their problems by peaceful means. This statement foreshadowed the public declaration on negotiations regarding Formosa which Chou **was to** make publicly, outside the conference, later that day.

Finally, toward the end of his speech, Chou reported that Nehru had told him that even Prime Minister Eden agreed with the **"five principles,"** and he offered to sign an agreement supporting the principles with Britain **if** Eden **so** wished.

There was really not a harsh note in the entire speech. Chou En-lai expressed a willingness to compromise and be adaptable on many issues, and he went beyond generalities to give verbal assurances on a number of specific problems to China's neighbors\*'. Even those delegates who reacted warily, and said that words are not as important as actions, were definitely impressed by the speech.

Chou En-lai once again provided the climax, as he had previously done in the open sessions, and during the **rest** of Saturday and Sunday the Heads of Delegations' sessions were devoted to hammering out a **communiqué** which would compromise the views expressed up to that point and which **could** be accepted unanimously.

The **communiqué** was finally read in the last open session, which was held late Sunday afternoon, April 24. As expected, **it** was a rather vague document dealing for the most part in

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generalities, except for statements on South Africa, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, Palestine, West Iran, and Aden.

However, **it** did express some significant general propositions, and expressed them in a moderate, reasonable, and rather statesmanlike way. **Neither** Western colonialism nor Communist colonialism was condemned by name; instead the conference went on record against "**colonialism in all of its manifestations.**"

If Chou **En-lai's** aim had been to **propagandize** the Asian-African Conference and pressure **it** into adopting a declaration which **read** like comparable Communist declarations, the final communiqué would have been a mark of his failure. **It** was quite clear, however, that he had no such intention. **He** was prepared to compromise and to be both flexible and undogmatic, in order to exert the maximum personal influence on those present. In this he was quite successful.

As is often the case at large international gatherings, some of the most significant developments at **Bandung** took place not in the **conference** halls but in private meetings between delegates present. Chou En-lai, with some assistance from Nehru, took full advantage of the **opportunities** presented at the conference to meet and talk with many national leaders whom he had not encountered before.

**Chou's "coming out party"** was on the evening of Wednesday, April 20. At a private dinner attended by Romulo, Prince **Wan**, and others, Nehru, in the words of one delegate, "**introduced** Chou En-lai, like a debutante, to polite diplomatic society." That was just the beginning, and from then on Chou--as either host or guest--took part in a series of dinners, luncheons, and informal meetings which, during the course of the conference, brought him into direct contact **with** all of the key delegation chiefs. Many of these affairs were purely social, and at these Chou was reserved but friendly. Everyone thought he was charming--despite the pair of rather tough bodyguards **who** accompanied him everywhere--and he was certainly a social success, even **with** those who were, and remained, his political enemies. One delegate remarked, "**He's** entirely different from Molotov; **it** must be because his country is Confucian as well as **Communist.**"

Not all of these meetings were purely social affairs by any means. At many of them, Chou made friendly assurances and promises to the delegates of a large number of countries.

**He** assured the delegations from Cambodia and Laos that China would not interfere in their internal affairs.

**He** arranged a meeting between representatives of North Vietnam and Laos, at which North Vietnam assured Laos that **it** would not intervene to support the Vietminh-oriented leaders in the two troublesome Pathet Laos districts of northern Laos.

He assured Thailand and the Philippines that China stood ready to discuss and solve the dual nationality problem of Overseas Chinese in their countries.

He assured Thailand that China would not use the Thai Autonomous Area in Yunnan Province for activities against Thailand. He said that Pridi Panomyong, the ex-premier of Thailand who is now in China, is in Peking, not in Yunnan. He also stated that Pridi was merely being given political asylum, and that the broadcast last year in which Pridi attacked the government of Thailand was a mistake which would not be allowed to happen again.

He arranged a meeting between the delegates of Thailand and North Vietnam at which North Vietnam agreed in principle to accept the 50,000 Vietnamese refugees from northeast Thailand, and agreed also to an exchange of liaison groups to help implement the removal of these people.

He promised the Japanese delegation that he would expedite repatriation of Japanese still held in China, except for criminal cases, and he offered to allow some of their wives to visit them in the meantime. He also reiterated Communist China's desire to establish diplomatic relations with Japan,

All of these moves made a real impression on the delegates at the conference. There is a big difference, of course, between verbal promises and action. Not many of the assurances or concessions, furthermore, cost China much if anything; most of them, in fact, amounted simply to promises not to take advantage of situations which the countries involved feared China might utilize for subversive or aggressive purposes. But, by assuming the conciliatory attitude which he did, Chou En-lai won a considerable amount of good will and at least some trust from many of the countries surrounding Communist China. It is possible, also, that by making these promises he did actually limit China's freedom of action,

The two developments at Bandung which probably had the greatest international impact also took place outside the conference. There was no real reason, actually, that they could not have happened either before or after Bandung; undoubtedly Chou timed them carefully to achieve maximum psychological effect. These two events were: the signing by Communist China and Indonesia of a Treaty Concerning the Question of Dual Nationality, an agreement dealing with the Overseas Chinese; and Chou En-lai's declaration of a willingness to negotiate with the U.S. on the Formosa question.

The Treaty concerning Overseas Chinese had been discussed informally between Indonesia and Communist China since late 1953. Formal negotiations were begun last November in Peking and were continued in Indonesia from the end of March onward.

The Indonesians wanted such a treaty because they felt

it would help them to control: and assimilate their large Chinese minority, and because they hoped such a treaty would reduce the possibility of subversion directed from abroad. **Traditionally,** the Chinese have always regarded persons of Chinese blood to be Chinese citizens, no matter where they lived or what other **citizenship** they might hold. The treaty agreed upon stipulates that Chinese in Indonesia must choose to be either Chinese or Indonesians and cannot continue to be both. **It** was the first treaty of its kind signed by ~~any~~ Chinese government.

Chou En-lai chose to finalize this agreement at **Bandung**, on the morning of April 22, when the Asian-African Conference was reaching its climax. Clearly, the time and place were chosen to indicate to other Southeast Asian countries having Overseas Chinese minorities that China would be willing to sign similar treaties with them, if they are willing to have relations with Peking as Indonesia does. In a short speech delivered after the signing at the mansion of West **Java's** Governor, Chou stated: **"I** know there are still several countries which have the same problems on their minds. This problem can be settled at our Asian-African **Conference."**

Actually, **it** is by no means clear at this point whether the specific, detailed provisions of the treaty will turn out to be more advantageous to Indonesia or to Communist China--despite the large concession in principle which China made in signing it--**but it** is clear that in signing the treaty during the **Bandung** Conference Chou achieved the maximum effect from **it**.

The event during the **Bandung** Conference which made the largest headlines was **Chou's** offer to negotiate with the U.S. on the Formosa issue.

The subject of Formosa never came up during the conference, but **it** was almost inevitable, in view of the tension off the China coast and of world concern over **it**, that someone would at least put out feelers on the subject while Chou was at **Bandung**.

As **it** so happened, **Ceylon's** Sir John Kotelawala made the first move, on his own **initiative** and with little or no diplomatic support. On Sunday afternoon, the day before the conference opening, Sir John hit upon the idea of inviting Communist China, the five Colombo Powers, Thailand, and the Philippines to an informal luncheon to discuss Formosa. Without much diplomatic finesse, he simply invited this **group**, and no one refused. But when he tried to set a definite date, the luncheon was repeatedly postponed until **it** looked as if **it** might never be held.

By Thursday, April 21, Kotelawala got fed up with the delay and, perhaps to try to force the issue, invited a few selected correspondents to a press conference on **his** lawn where he read a long statement expounding his views on Formosa. He proposed, in forthright terms, that "Formosa should belong to the **Formosans**," meaning neither the Chinese Communists nor the Chinese Nationalists,

and that it should become an "independent state." He suggested that the offshore islands be turned over to Communist China and that Formosa be placed under a trusteeship, either by the UN or by Asian nations, with a plebiscite in five years or so to determine its future.

Kotelawala had not gathered organized support for his views, and his press conference was a somewhat clumsy, although obviously well-meaning, diplomatic maneuver. As a result, his own proposal turned out to be a dud, at least so far as the conference was concerned, and did not come up again. **But** he did succeed in publicly raising the Formosa issue, and the luncheon he had proposed **was** finally held, although not at his home.

The gathering of the eight nations for lunch, took place on Saturday, at the home of Sastroamidjojo. It was a peculiar meeting. The eight chief **delegates** arrived, had a buffet lunch, and adjourned for coffee on the porch without any discussion at all about Formosa. The **luncheon** meeting was just on the point of breaking up when Kotelawala asked Chou how he thought tensions could be relieved in his part of the world. Chou had apparently made **up** his mind to express a willingness to negotiate with the U.S., and he took Sir John's question as his cue to say so. Wehru then asked Chou if he were willing to state this publicly, and Chou replied yes. There was no discussion of the Formosa issue or of any of the problems which have blocked negotiations for many months--or of Communist China's 'military preparations along the coast and its promise or threat to "**liberate**" the island.

Chou En-lai probably acted wholly on his own in deciding to make a statement on Formosa. At least there is every indication that Nehru had no foreknowledge of **it**. On Friday, in a television interview which Nehru knew would not appear until after the close of the conference, he had said that no serious plan regarding Formosa had been presented publicly or privately at the **conference** and that none could have been expected.

**Chou's** statement was released to the press late Saturday afternoon. It was very brief. "**The Chinese people,**" he said, "**are** friendly to the American people. The Chinese people do not want to have a war with the United States of America. The Chinese Government is willing to sit down and enter into negotiations **with** the United States Government to discuss the question of relaxing . tension in the Far East, and especially the question of relaxing tension in the Taiwan [Formosa] **area.**"

This statement was really a skillful trial-balloon rather than a proposal. Chou made no specific offer. He did not say where he would sit down, or with whom, or exactly what he would be willing to discuss. Exactly what he meant was undefined. But at a conference where representatives of 29 nations were gathered, he made a statement which could be regarded as a major peace move, and there is little doubt that the majority of delegates at **Bandung** did regard **it** as such.

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Chou's performance at Bandung fully justified his reputation as one of the world's most experienced and capable diplomats. He topped off the performance with a state visit to Djakarta, where he received the key to the city and visited the Indonesian parliament. The visit to Djakarta produced a joint Indonesian-Chinese statement which affirmed in only slightly modified form the "five principles" which were the basis of Indian-Chinese and Burmese-Chinese statements in 1954.

Specifically, what did Chou En-lai achieve at Bandung? He did not win any converts to Communism. He did not mobilize support for Communist propaganda slogans at the conference. He did not himself make, or encourage others to make, violent anti-U.S. or anti-Western statements. He did not undermine or weaken any of the existing support for SEATO, NATO, or other Western-oriented defensive alliances against Communism.

What then did he achieve? He convinced many of the delegates that he is a reasonable and sincere man of good will. He attempted, with considerable success, to convince them also that Communist China is pursuing a peaceful policy. And these were obviously his major aims,

Although foreign policies are no longer, as a rule, based primarily on personal relations between national leaders, it would be a mistake to underestimate the impact at Bandung of a personality such as Chou En-lai's. Even men like Mohammed Ali left Bandung saying that they were convinced of Chou's sincerity, honesty, and genuineness, and Chou's personal influence on the delegates attending the conference may have subtle long-range effects which cannot now be accurately foreseen or predicted.

What motivation lay behind the promises and proposals made by Chou En-lai at Bandung? Only time will tell.

It is possible that they were merely tactical moves. They fitted well into Communist China's current over-all policy of supporting neutralism and fostering closer relations with South-east Asian countries, a policy interpreted by many as a softening-up process aimed at preventing the development of effective defensive preparations in the region.

One cannot completely rule out the possibility, however, that Chou's moves at Bandung might indicate a shift in Communist China's policies, and a greater willingness on its part to be conciliatory and to make real concessions. Probably the most important test of this will be future developments on the Formosa question. At the end of the conference Mohammed Ali hinted that Chou had discussed privately with him a possible settlement of the Formosa issue involving much greater concessions than Peking has heretofore been willing to make. But there has been no public indication of this to date. So far the soft words spoken by Chou En-lai at Bandung provide only a basis for speculation about Communist China's real intentions in the future.

A. Doak Barnett