

**Keynote speech at People's Conference to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Bandung Conference
23 April 2015**

I am highly honored to be invited as keynote speaker of the People's Conference to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Asian African Conference of 1955 in Bandung and to unify the people for a joint declaration of struggle against imperialism and for national sovereignty. I congratulate the Indonesian Chapter of the ILPS and the Front Perjuangan Rakyat (People's Struggle Front) for realizing this conference.

I am deeply pleased that this conference is a crucial part of the campaign with the theme:

Strengthen the unity of the peoples of Asia and Africa against US-led neocolonialism: fight for national sovereignty. Yours is the celebration worthy of the spirit of the Bandung Conference which clearly opposed colonialism and neocolonialism, in contrast to the official commemoration which shall pay lip service to the Bandung Conference but will condone and even promote neocolonialism and neoliberalism.

The Asian African Conference of 1955 arose upon the initiative of newly independent countries that were concerned about upholding and strengthening their national sovereignty and independence in the face of the persistent attempts of the imperialist powers headed by the US to preserve colonialism wherever still possible, to impose neocolonialism on the newly-independent countries and to divide and rule over the newly-independent countries.

The US and other imperialist powers deemed neocolonialism as a clever and effective method for controlling the newly-independent countries, without having to pay for the costs and risks of outright colonial domination, especially in the face of the rise of national liberation movements and several socialist countries in the aftermath of World War II.. Neocolonialism involves the persistence of imperialist economic and financial interests and privileges within a previously colonized country and the continued subservience of the local exploiting classes to foreign monopoly capitalism. Unequal treaties are forged in the economic, trade, financial and military spheres in order to bind the neocolonies or semicolonies.

The organizers of the Bandung Conference were the states of Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (then still known as Ceylon) and India. Twenty nine countries, with more than one half of the world's population, were represented in the conference. The newly-established states were a mixture of those that acquired national independence through armed revolution, through grants of independence by the previous colonial ruler or through a combination of both. They were able to make a consensus in forging the 10-point Declaration which reiterated principles from the UN Charter and integrated those principles of peaceful coexistence governing the relations of states.

The principles of the Declaration are as follows:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the charter of the United Nations
2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations
3. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small
4. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country
5. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself, singly or collectively, in conformity with the charter of the United Nations

6. (a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve any particular interests of the big powers (b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries
7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country
8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties own choice, in conformity with the charter of the United Nations
9. Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation
10. Respect for justice and international obligations

The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence, which were previously codified in a treaty between China and India in 1954, are as follows:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
2. Mutual non-aggression.
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
4. Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit.
5. Peaceful co-existence.

The US and other imperialist powers took a negative position towards the above principles and interpreted them not as a guide to the harmonious relations of all countries but as an attack on colonial and imperialist hegemony. They were hostile to the Bandung Conference and they made every attempt to prevent the holding of the next Asian African Conference. They considered it as an instrument of the most assertive newly-independent countries for opposing neocolonialism, colonialism and imperialism, supporting the peoples still fighting for national liberation in Asia and Africa and for cooperating with the socialist countries.

The Bandung Conference was followed by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference in Cairo in 1957. And the Belgrade Conference of the 1961 led to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The imperialist powers succeeded in preventing the holding of the Second Asia African Conference in Algiers in 1965 by emboldening a coup against the Ben Bella government. The Nonaligned Movement (NAM) appeared to be the extension and expanded version of the Bandung Conference, especially in upholding the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence and overriding the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union. However, the imperialist powers headed by the US could sow intrigues and manipulate some member-states against others to render NAM less effective as an instrument for defending national independence and promoting genuine development. The US feverishly unleashed political and economic sanctions, subversion and overthrow of governments that opposed imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism in the course of the Cold War.

After the turmoil in revisionist-ruled countries, the fall of revisionist ruling cliques and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US and its imperialist allies have been able to impose neocolonialism and neoliberalism on other countries more freely than ever before and unleash state terrorism and wars of aggression with impunity more than ever before. Oblivious of these catastrophes, the summits of Asian-African states in 2005 and 2015 to commemorate the Bandung Conference are mere passing rituals. The so-called New Asian-African Strategic Partnership invokes the Bandung Conference in vain as it accepts and promotes the framework of neocolonialism and neoliberalism in claiming to stand on such generalities as political solidarity, economic cooperation and socio-cultural relations.

It is important and relevant to recall how extremely the US hated the Indonesian leader Sukarno for championing the Bandung Conference and the “new emerging forces” against neocolonialism, colonialism and imperialism. The US masterminded and provided logistics to the regional and sectarian rebellions against the Sukarno government. It became even more vicious when the Indonesian government relied on the support of the NASAKOM united front. It prepared for the 1965 massacre of 1 to 3 million people, by indoctrinating and training a number of officers in the Indonesian Army, and collecting in advance the intelligence for the massacre of those classified as communists or sympathizers (those in mass organizations). The massacre ultimately made impossible the continuance of the Asian-African organizations based in Indonesia.

The Indonesian government under Sukarno gained high prestige by co-initiating and hosting the Asian African Conference. But the 1965 massacre of communists and a far bigger number of noncommunists with impunity and the subsequent fascist dictatorship of Suharto which lasted for more than three decades brought ignominy to Indonesia. To this day, the people of Indonesia and the world are outraged that no justice has been rendered for the victims of the massacre and for the entire Indonesian nation subjected to the most brutal forms of oppression and exploitation by foreign monopoly capitalism and the local reactionaries headed by the military fascist regime of Suharto.

Under the Suharto fascist dictatorship, neocolonialism prevailed at the expense of the Indonesian people and for the benefit of the multinational firms and banks and the local reactionaries who collaborated with them in plundering the country as big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists. It was also in the time of Suharto rule that neoliberalism came to aggravate neocolonialism from the early 1980s onwards. Neoliberalism has meant the unrestricted liberalization of investments and trade, privatization of public assets, deregulation of social and environmental restrictions and full denationalization of the Indonesian economy.

To this day, neocolonialism and neoliberalism are policies dictated by the imperialists and implemented by the local reactionaries in order to ensure the extraction of superprofits through the plunder of the natural and human resources, the foreign monopoly control of trade and investments and the practice of international usury in Indonesia, in the countries of Asia and Africa and in the whole world. Like the exploited and oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa, the Indonesian people suffer a high rate of real unemployment, low income and dispossession of independent means of livelihood, the lack or inadequacy of social services and the deterioration of infrastructure and public utilities. These are the result of the extreme methods of extracting superprofits under neocolonialism and neoliberalism.

The rampant poverty and social suffering in Indonesia and in most countries of Asia and Africa are the consequence of the lack of genuine national independence, people’s democracy, social justice, a well-balanced industrial development, a patriotic and progressive culture and a policy of international solidarity for peace and development against imperialism and reaction. In the joint declaration that your conference intends to issue, you must take the standpoint of the people, describe their situation and make all the necessary demands to build an Indonesia and countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that are truly independent , democratic, socially just, developed in all basic respects and in concert with the people’s of Asia and Africa and the whole world.

By way of celebrating the Bandung Conference, you must give special attention to strengthening the unity of the peoples of Asia and Africa against imperialism, neocolonialism and neoliberalism and renew the call to fight for national sovereignty and independence.

JOSE MARIA SISON || Strengthen unity of peoples of Asia and Africa against US-led neocolonialism: Fight for national sovereignty

You must expose and oppose not only the cruel economic methods of plunder by neocolonialism and neoliberalism but also the use of state terrorism against the working people and the wars of aggression that the US and NATO have wantonly unleashed to violate and destroy the national sovereignty and independence of countries and their peoples.

We, the International League of Peoples' Struggle, resolutely and militantly support all your efforts to uphold the spirit and principles of the Bandung Conference and to strengthen the unity of the people in the struggle for national liberation and democracy against imperialism and its puppets and their policies and acts along the line of neocolonialism, neoliberalism, state terrorism and aggression.