

President Sukarno at the Bandung Conference, 1955

The following is excerpted from Indonesian President Sukarno's [speech](#) to the 1955 Bandung Conference.



Indonesian President Sukarno at Bandung in 1955.

Our unhappy world is torn and tortured, and the peoples of all countries walk in fear lest, through no fault of theirs, the dogs of war are unchained once again.

Yes, there has indeed been a “*Sturm über Asien*” [Storm over Asia]—and over Africa too. The last few years have seen enormous changes. Nations, states, have awoken from a sleep of centuries. The passive peoples have gone, the outward tranquility has made place for struggle and activity. Irresistible forces have swept the two continents. The mental, spiritual and political face of the whole world has been changed, and the process is still not complete. . . .

Perhaps now more than at any other moment in the history of the world, society, government and statesmanship need to be based upon the highest code of morality and ethics. And in political terms, what is the highest code of morality? It is the subordination of everything to the well-being of mankind.

But today we are faced with a situation where the well-being of mankind is not always the primary consideration. Many who are in places of high power, think, rather, of controlling the world.

Yes, we are living in a world of fear. The life of man today is corroded and made bitter by fear. Fear of the future, fear of the hydrogen bomb, fear of ideologies. Perhaps this fear is a greater danger than the danger itself, because it is fear which drives men to act foolishly, to act thoughtlessly, to act dangerously. In your deliberations, Sisters and Brothers, I beg of you, do not be guided by these fears, because fear is an acid which etches man's actions into curious patterns. Be guided

by hopes and determination, be guided by ideals, and, yes, be guided by dreams! . . .

The battle against colonialism has been a long one, and do you know that today is a famous anniversary in that battle? On the eighteenth day of April, 1775, just one hundred and eighty years ago, Paul Revere rode at midnight through the New England countryside, warning of the approach of British troops and of the opening of the American War of Independence, the first successful anti-colonial war in history. About this midnight ride the poet Longfellow wrote:

“A cry of defiance and not of fear,
“A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
“And a word that shall echo for evermore.”

Yes, it shall echo for evermore, just as the other anti-colonial words which gave us comfort and reassurance during the darkest days of our struggle shall echo for evermore. But remember, that battle which began 180 years ago is not yet completely won, and it will not have been completely won, until we can survey this our own world, and can say that colonialism is dead. . . .

War would not only mean a threat to our independence: it may mean the end of civilisation and even of

human life. There is a force loose in the world whose potentiality for evil no man truly knows. Even in practice and rehearsal for war. the effects may well be building up into something of unknown horror.

What can we do? We can do much! We can inject the voice of reason into world affairs. We can mobilise all the spiritual, all the moral, all the political strength of Asia and Africa on the side of peace. Yes, we! We, the peoples of Asia and Africa, 1,400,000,000 strong, far more than half the human population of the world,—we can mobilise what I have called the Moral Violence of Nations in favour of peace. We can demonstrate to the minority of the world which lives on the other continents, that we, the majority, are for peace, not for war,—and that whatever strength we have will always be thrown onto the side of peace

Our task is first to seek an understanding of each other, and out of that understanding will come a greater appreciation of each other, and out of that appreciation will come collective action. Bear in mind the words of one of Asia’s greatest sons [Sun Yat-sen—ed.]: “To speak is easy. To act is hard. To understand is hardest. Once one understands, action is easy.”

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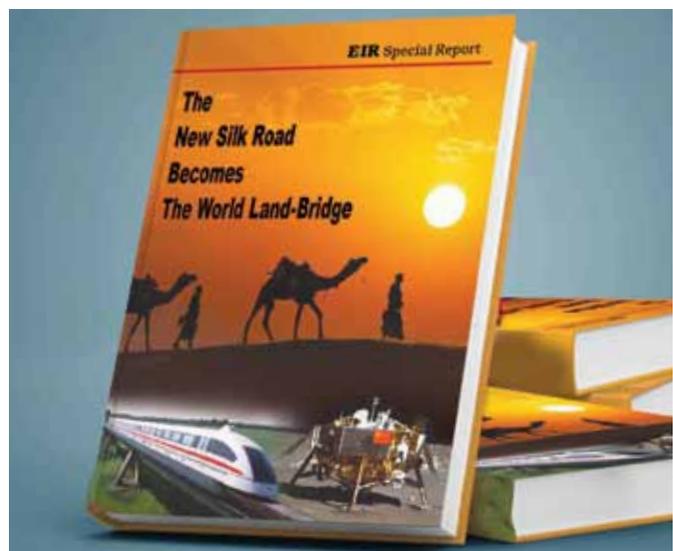
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