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Rethinking the Bandung conference in an Era of 'unipolar liberal globalization' and movements toward a 'multipolar politics'

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Abstract

In April 1955, a historic conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia. Political leaders from 29 Asian and African countries gathered on the initiative of the leaders from China, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and Myanmar, to address the issues about economic co-operation, self-determination, decolonization and the peace. These ideas contributed to the creation of the non-alignment movement (NAM). However, in Africa, Nkrumah's proposal for political unity was defeated, which led to the creation of the Organization of the African Unity as a compromise. NAM was later penetrated from within by the forces of imperialism, notably dictatorships and authoritarian regimes supported by the United States, the Soviet Union, the former colonial powers and their local cronies, weakening its functionality.

General introduction: issues and objectives

This is not a historiographical study of the Bandung Conference. This article is essentially a reflection on the Bandung Conference, which is framed within its historical and ideological constructs as defined by its final declaration. It is not an empirically and historically tested and verified factual work. It focuses more on interpretative significance of the conference in relationship to goals of the non-alignment movement (NAM). However, the reflection is intended to project its significance beyond April 1955 within neo-global liberalism.

This work is divided into 6 sections: the first part is this general introduction; the second heading is about the concepts of unipolarity, bipolarity and multipolarity; the third section is on the Bandung Conference within a historical context; the fourth section is on the Non-Alignment Foundation of the Conference in a historical context, the fifth section deals with the final declared resolutions of the conference; and the last section is on rethinking the Bandung Conference: where to go from here?

Rethinking is both about reconceptualization and re-contextualization of the significance of the Bandung Conference and its policy implications in the 21st century. It is about questioning its claimed relevancy, identifying its potential in a new regionalist and globalist discourses, and examining its embodied vision of progress. In the rethinking, we should also identify and examine the contradictions as part of analyzing social phenomena.

Since the Bandung Conference of 1955 in Indonesia, which set up the motion for new international cooperation between Africa and Asia during the colonial and post-colonial eras, many studies have been published, many conferences have been organized and some scenarios have been developed with the objectives to understand and project further the significance of the new needed solidarity between Africa and Asia. However, it is still relevant to interrogate its objectives and its agencies in order to go forward in the 21st century and beyond.

Furthermore, the Bandung Conference was essentially an international event. As part of international relations' paradigms, it can be examined as being part of the nation-states' projects in Africa and Asia.

My main goals in this paper are:

- (1) To interrogate the main objectives and the mission of the Bandung Conference in 1955 in its historical and political context;
- (2) To identify the claimed political values associated with these objectives, especially those related to its solidarity base;
- (3) To assess broadly the issue of whether or not the goals of the Bandung Conference in 1955 are still politically and economically relevant in a world politics that is dominated by unipolarity claims and trends, which are reflected in global liberal capitalism as the only single system that has real practical power;
- (4) And finally, to imagine a new spirit of Bandung in replying to the questions of what should be done? Where to go from here? And what kind of solidarity is needed between Africa and Asia?

By and large, I am interested in understanding, through the study of the Bandung Conference as a political discourse, whether or not the nature of the imperatives of the global liberalism adopted by all the nation-states in Africa and Asia might allow the revival of the spirit and ideals related to the Bandung Conference. It is in interrogating the objectives of the Bandung Conference and its agencies that we might be able to project what role the spirit and ideology associated with the Bandung Conference can be instrumentalized for building new solidarity.

The world of the European colonialism and imperialism was supposed to function effectively on a unilinear way of thinking, unilinear societal organizing and unilinear governing systems. The world or political changes, either through revolutions and evolutions should be moving toward one direction. Thus, because nothing should be random from the above way of thinking and acting, we can predict the behaviors or actions of all the members of societies, including their states and citizens. Despite minor differences in the ways this linearity (viewed mainly through the prism of the question of adaptability) was perceived and implemented through various forces of domination and the control, the normative agreement was that modernizing world of tomorrow should be better bureaucratically, economically, politically and militarily.

However, it should be noted that the processes of political decolonization did challenge structurally, functionally, or historically in many cases the linearity arguments and propositions of the European colonialism. For instance, the approach of the so-called scientific colonization that the Belgian colonial power used, as part of this linearity to rule the Congo, was defied by the objective Congolese conditions and people's

struggles against imperialism (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). Studies of modernization and economic development based on the Rostowian logic and the so-called naturally defined stages were conceived as Westernization (Rostow 1971); (Hoselitz 1971); (Huntington 1968); (Apter 1965). Becoming Western or European was projected as the ultimate aim of modernization paradigms though this did not happen in most colonized countries.

Within the hierarchy of world values, the European values were perceived to be ranked the highest and superior to others. However, based on ramifications of the political and social struggles, the power of the information technology, the functioning of both state and regional capitalisms, the current political remapping of the world with its dynamics does not fit any longer the nature of the mission of, and the goals associated with, the power of small Iberian European nation-states (Spain and Portugal) in the 15th and 16th centuries when they created the old political mapping. The so-called new world was created on the basis of powers of God, Gold and Glory (GGG). The contradictions within these 3 forces and imperatives of each are also creating new possibilities or alternatives for change within their own rules and practices in order to either survive or be more effective and expand.

Concepts of 'unipolarity', 'bipolarity' and 'multipolarity'

The main objective of the Bandung Conference tends to support the claims related to multipolarity in which ideology and geo-politics play an important role in re-mapping the world. Can the claims related to self-determination, political decolonization, decentralization, non-alignment, and independence be effectively advanced in a world, which is dominated by the World Trade Organization (WTO) dictum of Adam Smith's principle of invisible hand with its main elements, which include, free trade, liberalization, and competition among the economic actors?

Concerning the evolution of a teleological world, it should be noted that in the past 600 years or so the world system (nation-state, international political economy, and financial, economic, military, social and political organizations) have evolved toward unipolarity. Unipolar world tends to be philosophically deterministic. Unipolar, bipolar and multipolar systems are about the mechanisms and processes of the location and distribution of power in the world.

The concept of unipolarity is both an ideological concept, as well as an analytical concept. It is about constructing the world and explaining and understanding it. It has been operating on a linear way of thinking and analyzing the world. This way is perceived as the best as compared to other perspectives. This so-called the best way has an absolute value. It embodies the notion of the survival of the fittest. Modern nation-state inherited through European traditions and practices the values of the capitalist economy and its free market (or as mentioned earlier the invisible hand of Adam Smith) and liberal democracy with its individual rights express the values of unipolarity. However, this contemporary 'unipolar evolutionism (especially its militaristic dimensions that are commanded by the United States through the Washington-Consensus) is being challenged by various movements toward some interpretations of multipolarity.

Since the end of the 20th century, the capitalist economy has been operating more forcefully toward the controlled dynamics of both regionalism and globalism. While capitalists at the regional levels have tendencies to advance some national and cultural

interests in the process of making their surplus or acquiring and protecting their capital, the globalists tend to see the world more on the perspectives of the so-called free market. The free market principle determines what people sell and buy and what they produce. Regionalism is more associated with geo-politics and history than globalism, which has claims and tendencies of promoting 'universalism' from a perspective of a world without borders. Regionalists are more sympathetic to economic protectionism even if the actors who advocate globalism like United States also use protectionism as an instrument of advancing their national or class interests.

While capitalist regionalists accept the existence of other poles of influences in other parts of the world as they are defined politically, economically or culturally, the globalists emphasize universal human values as defined by the market and individualism.

Furthermore, bipolarity is a complex phenomenon that explains dualism. On the one hand in the history of Western civilization, especially that of classical Greece, the body and the mind were always divided as the reason ought to conquer the irrationality of body, but on the other hand, ideologically political bipolarity of the Cold War era was a challenge to the "monistic" European civilization.

Bipolarity was defined ideologically, militarily, economically and culturally. It shaped local/national political behaviors and relations of nation-states and political actors in such way that the process of creating and supporting a complex system of clientelist regimes and patronage of hierarchy of powers was ideologically justified. But it was generally viewed as a short-lived phenomenon. However, I claim that the demands for multipolar politics and its multiculturalism that have political agendas have been gradually rising in various forms in every region of the world, or continent.

It is self evident that, since the end of Cold War era, which is characterized by the brutal collapse of the formal bipolar politics, which was manifested itself in ideological struggles between the West, represented by the United States and its allies, and the Soviet Union and its alliances, world politics has been advancing many elements of multipolarity. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992 and the rise of the new Russian federalism is also the symptom of this multipolarity.

In May 2011, the World Bank published a report called "Multipolarity: the New Global Economy". According to the World Bank, emerging countries like Brazil, Russia, Indian, China, and South Africa will induce clear signs of change in the socio-economic power relations (World Bank 2011). Multipolarity is a measurement of the distribution of power concentrated in several poles of power, those poles being the great powers. BRICS are projected as becoming great powers along the United States and the European Union.

In short, the South-South agenda is to project the creation of a multipolar world. Thus, multipolarity is about a system of multiple global and regional powers, which exist simultaneously. It is about the dispersal of powers, the rise of new club of powers, and the new reconfiguration of trade, financial and economic activities at regional level. Global financial institutions are becoming effective statecraft challenging the nation-state sovereignty.

Furthermore, more reflective dimensions of the multipolarity can be noted in the rise of China with its ideology of socialism with the market economy (or the state capitalism), the new role of Russia in its world politics, and the consolidation of the European Union, despite its internal weaknesses on the question of national politics, the gradual

redefinition of the role of politics of the Economic Community of the West African States, the new role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in promoting political and economic cooperation and regional stability and in defining the current economic crisis and economic position of its members, the building of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), to cite only these few illustrations.

I use and define the concept of multipolarity to be part of both a regular evolution of global capitalism as well as a 'protest' paradigm that is challenging both unipolarity and the old *déclassé* bipolarity. However, while the call for it is intensifying through indigenous, labor, social, women, youth and popular organizations and movements, its ideological basis is at the best hybrid. It is so because the forces associated with multipolarity (as we are using it) have not been able to interrogate sufficiently the nation-states. In many ways, it has also been challenging ethno-culturalism or culturalism of the state through civil societies but not the structures of the power system.

Calls for multipolarity underline political and economic decentralization of the world resources and their better management, and a fair distribution of these resources. It calls for more people's participation in the reconstruction of their economies, which implies that it puts more emphasis on building communities rather than 'idolatry' of individualism. It also requires values of multiculturalism, diversity and universal humanity. In international system, it calls for the reconceptualization and establishment of new international partnership/cooperation based on the win-win theory. Regions and nation-states that are doing well economically are those, which have also capacities to negotiate. In a nation-state, it calls for the development of social welfarism and the implementation and respect for the laws of the ecology.

By and large, a multipolar perspective implies the coexistence of several equally used and respected spaces or locations of power with similar value systems. It can be advanced through dialogical relations between the subject and object of learning. It implies: (1) Multiculturalism (a movement toward intra-intercultural dialogues within every society); (2) Articulation of the centrality of humanism, development and democracy as the key elements for the foundation of a political life with the emphasis on human, progress and social security; (3) Challenges to the hierarchy of the vertical values of power system that is based on militarism, and oligopolistic and monopolistic tendencies and traits of the nation-state and its international political economy; (4) Democratization of the nation-state and its economic system, and society; And (5) finally, building of a common unity of purposes between the public and the private.

Furthermore, the multipolar perspective, which I am proposing should be inspired by 4 laws of ecology. The first law of ecology is that everything is connected to everything else; the second law is everything must go somewhere; the third is nature knows best; and the fourth law is that there is no such thing as a free lunch (Smith 2009: 2–3).

As part of the protest paradigm, multipolarity should make the management of the current international system more difficult and the achievement of liberal global stability more problematic. In short, in social sciences, it requires the combination of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary methodologies and a critical theory, and at the political level it requires multilateralism at every level of state-societal relations, including horizontal social relations.

The Bandung conference within a historical context^a

General issues about the conference and its main objectives

Many major works have been produced and published on the Bandung Conference, to cite only a few such as: Kahin, McTurnan (1956); Nazli (1969); Mackie 2005; Seng and Amitav (2008); McDougall and Finnane (2010); Lee (2010). Most of these studies have underlined positive energy that derived from the conference toward the development of new way of thinking in terms of Africa-Asia relation and their collective relations with the European-American powers. They also projected the impact of this conference in economic and power relations between what became to be known as South-South relations. I am interrogating the nature of its claims and project, its pragmatism, and its potential to challenging the dominant system.

The conference produced a different kind of scholarship about Africa-Asia where small and big powers or countries were given an opportunity to be equally listened to. Bigger and most powerful countries like China or India did not impose their positions on smaller countries. My contribution is to project its impact both at regional and global levels.

Thus, *le fait accompli*, from 18 to 25 April 1955, the Prime Ministers of the group of five states: Burma (Myanmar), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indonesia, India and Pakistan, organized a meeting in Bandung, Indonesia, to discuss the themes and problems of economic co-operation, human rights, self-determination, the problems of dependent people, and the promotion of peace (Ampiah 1997:39). Egypt was also an active member of the organizing committee located outside of Asia.

This conference was a historic meeting in which political leaders and foreign ministers of 29 Asian and African countries gathered on the initiative of the leaders of the Third World at that time, including Premier Chou En-lai (China), President Achmed Sukarno (Indonesia), Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (India), Prime Minister Mohammed Ali of Pakistan, Prime Minister U nu of Myanmar, and Sir John Kotelawala of Sri Lanka.

One of the main issues raised is about the “political vision” embodied in the declarations of the conference. The question of “political vision” also implies the existence of an ideology or an ideological principle, or norms. However, historical facts indicate that based on various political locations and historical backgrounds of the participants, the Bandung Conference could not be intended to produce a consensual political ideology, which would have been incorporated into the national party politics of any nation-state.

As this author argued elsewhere: “One cannot fully or comprehensively understand the dynamics of the nation-states, the policies, politics, and their international relations without linking them theoretically and empirically to their ideological base. The Nation-state is essentially an ideological construct and a self-motivating entity” (Lumumba-Kasongo 2005:152). Although it would be difficult to systematically demonstrate that the non-alignment has been a common accepted ideology among the participants of the conference, it is also equally difficult, based on historical facts and the nature of alliances that took place after the conference, to argue persuasively that it was not an ideologically based forum.

The main objectives of the Conference is summarized in what Ampiah stated:

The conference was organized to promote the highest aspirations of the peoples of Asia and Africa; that is, positive life chances for the disadvantaged nations of the

international community. These ambitions were to be further channeled into an articulate and coherent 'third force' in a world supposedly frozen into two camps by the Cold War. ...The one underlying theme that ran through the economic, cultural, and political objectives of the conference was a sense among the members, irrespective of their ideological orientation, that they would not be trapped with their experiences as 'dependents' or appendages of colonialism. This was clearly expressed in the conference's universal declaration that 'colonialism in all its manifestations is an evil which should speedily be brought to an end'. Essentially, the spirit of the conference hinged on the determination of the member states to preserve their newly won freedoms and to reach out for more through their persistent opposition to colonialism and imperialism, as well as through a systematic attempt to advance the economic well-being of the people they represented, thereby questioning the essence of the UN (1997: 39–40).

The issue of anti-colonialism was also central, as its sentiment was the foundation of this Afro-Asian alliance.

Political actors, their agendas within their historical contexts and the significance of the conference

The agenda for holding an Asian-African Conference was gradually negotiated among its organizers on the initiative of Ali Mohammed of Pakistan. The vision was not shared by all at once. It is not clear what interests he had in Africa and on Africa and what concrete factors motivated him to start this initiative. There was no collective regional interest in Africa at the time. As George McTurnan Kahin stated:

Indonesia's idea originating primarily with Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo. At first his proposal was to invite only the Afro-Asian group within the United Nations, and it was with this in mind that he introduced the idea to the prime ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, and Pakistan at their meeting in Colombo at the end of April 1954. Initially only Pakistan's Mohammed Ali was enthusiastic; Ceylon's Sir John Kotelawala was willing to go along but India's Jawaharlal Nehru and Burma's U Nu, while both nodding polite approval of the idea, were skeptical of the feasibility and value of holding such a conference. Not until his trip to New Delhi in late September 1954 did Sastroamidjojo, win Nehru's full acceptance of his proposal (1956:2).

What criteria used to invite the participants? Why were some countries in Asia and Africa invited but others were not? An attempt to answer these questions takes us to discuss the nature of the new international order and its contradictions at the time. According to Kahin:

All the countries in Asia and Africa, which have independent governments should be invited. However, "minor variations and modifications of this basic principle" were made and the invitations were limited to 25 specific countries as follows: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Central African Federation, China (not Formosa), Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam (North),

Vietnam (South) and Yemen. It was further stated that “acceptance of the invitation by any one country would in no way involve or even imply any change in its view of the status of any other country” and the Prime Ministers also emphasized that “the form of government and the way of life of any country in no way be subjected to interference by another”. They were certain striking omissions from the list of countries invited: North Korea, South Korea, Nationalist China on Taiwan (Formosa), Australia, New Zealand, Russia (which is at least in part of Asia), Israel and the Union of South Africa. While the basis for these omissions were politically obvious, there were never any official reasons given (1955:2–3).

There were more than 2,000 delegates, journalists and observers who attended the meeting. The African region had the smallest number of delegates from Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast (Ghana), Liberia, Libya and Sudan. The Egyptian delegation was led by Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser. That of Gold Coast/Ghana (only 3 members) was led by Kojo Bastio, Minister of the State.

As indicated earlier, there were all together 29 nation-states represented at the conference. In addition to the Prime Ministers who were the conveners, foreign ministers and many delegates from African colonized countries and many parts of Asia also joined the conference. The conference was well popularized and publicized. In that year, in Africa, only Egypt, Ethiopia and Liberia were independent countries.

The case of Japan as a unique power-actor should be underlined. The invitation of Japan to the Bandung Conference was a product of international political dynamism in Asia. This conference is widely known as the arena of the union of newly independent Asian and African countries that hoisted the flag of anti-colonialism.

Although Japan became occupied by the American and allied forces, it was an imperial power in Asia not long back before the conference. In addition, the delegates talked about a ‘third way’ while Japan was already located in the ‘first way’ associated with capitalism led by the United States. Thus, it is clear that Japanese delegates had some difficulties locating themselves in the discourse of the conference.

Despite the reluctance to accept the invitation, the Japanese delegates attended the conference after being persuaded by the United States to do so. “The proposal of the invitation was made by Pakistan with support of Ceylon, but also a certain amount of contention from others” (Ampiah 1997: 41). As a result, in a strange or awkward way, Japan came back to Asia through a gradual implementation of many dimensions of the Bandung Conference.

In reality, this conference was strongly coloured by the bipolarity of the Cold War system in which Asian countries of liberal camp defended against offensive move by communist or neutral countries like India and China. India tried to call China to the conference. On the contrary Pakistan, who was in the liberal camp and opposed to India, schemed to invite Japan, an important figure as anti-communist, in order to put a check on the India-China leadership in this conference. Japan tried to survive this difficult situation by the passive political stance but her existence itself had already become an important part of international politics regardless of her intentions.

It should be also emphasized that in Asia at large, the political situation was still very tense, volatile and extremely complex at the time of the conference as C. P. Fitzgerald, who also attended the conference, wrote:

From north to south there are four major trouble areas in the Far East: Korea, Formosa, Indochina, and Malaya. The Korea problem has been solved—or shelved—in manner highly unsatisfactory to both parties in Korea, yet in all probability for a long time to come. Formosa remains acute, Indochina threatens renewed danger, Malaya smolders on. In each case, behind the immediate local conflict is the factor that makes these troubles significant for the world at large, growing power of China and her alliance with Russia. The West has wished to impose settlements of these issues which took no account of China, and the attempts has failed everywhere failed; for where settlements or partial solutions have been achieved it has been in each case necessary to abandon the pretense that China does not exist and come to term with Peking. The example of Bandung, where China was accepted, and where useful negotiation between China and her inimical southern neighbors proved, cannot in the future be ignored (1955:114).

For instance, Burma (Myanmar) gained its independence in 1948, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1948 and Indonesia proclaimed independence earlier on 17 August 1945 but it took 4 years of diplomatic negotiations and armed resistance against the Dutch to recognize its independence on 27 December 1949. India won its independence in 1947 with non-violence but there was a bloody struggle between the Muslims and Hindus which was instigated, inspired and supported partially by the divide and rule principle of the British colonial political strategy. Pakistan separated from India by the British signing a peace treaty with India in 1947. Thus, British colonial administration was forced to “abandon” its former colonies of India, Burma and Ceylon after a combination of armed struggles and negotiations.

The rise of the communist movement in Malaya was fully supported by China. China had both Russia and Japan in its political mind and its definition of security. Britain did not admit that a “foreign Asian power” could have a strong influence in its former colony (op. cit.: 116).

In addition to nationalism, what were other important objectives pursued in the conference? The conference created a new possibility, new arena, for Japan to deal with the fear of socialism in the region. The spirit of nationalism associated with the conference engendered new dynamics between Japan and China. It should be noted that China was very influential to all over South East Asia, partially because of the nature of its revolution, namely people’s revolution, and partially also because of the existence of extensively scattered Chinese Diaspora. Most of these Chinese groups were obviously not Maoists or Marxists, but they had a strong cultural nationalism, which made them attached to the mainland. China came to the conference with attitudes and strategies not to antagonize anyone or to show any moral and intellectual arrogance, which generally is associated with any revolutionary socialism and its superiority complex. According to C. P. Fitzgerald, paraphrasing Chou En-lai (Zhou Enlai)’s keynote speech: “The Chinese Delegation has come here to seek unity and not to quarrel.... There is no need at this Conference to publicize one’s ideology and the political system of one’s

country.... The Chinese Delegation has come here to seek common ground, not to create divergence" (1955: 113).

The Conference offered a new departing ideological definition about the existing capitalist system and its main agency, the state. Politically, it also created an allied resistance to the United States' unipolarity and monopoly. As Samir Amin indicated:

The real obstacle to the United States hegemony came from the Afro-Asian national liberation movement. The countries in these regions were determined to throw off the colonial yoke of the nineteenth-century. Imperialism has never been able to make the social and political compromises necessary to install stable powers operating to its advantage in the country of the capitalist periphery (1994:28).

The United States' unipolarity and monopoly did not last for a long time. These two phenomena were located during the Cold War era, especially between the 1950s and the 1970s. However, with the rise of many new actors in world politics, the advancement of deregulation in the world market and the competition based on Euro-dollar and petro-dollar, the U.S. unipolarity started to be challenged by the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. In relationship to the dynamics of the Bandung Conference, the resistance to the U.S. was based on the intent and motivation to search for new development models in Africa and Asia. The coalition of purposes among new political actors produced a new movement within the United Nations system with China as its vanguard. Thus, the resistance became more ideological than anything else.

The significance of the conference

What was expected from this conference? And what was produced from it? Africa and Asia are not culturally, politically and historically monolithic societies. African and Asian delegates did not go to Bandung with the same agendas and expectations.

The ways these nation-states were going to gain their independence, their political location in international relations, the level of their socio-economic development and the level and quality of the struggles toward the independence are some factors that influenced the discourse that took place in the Bandung Conference and beyond. But participants had a commitment to have common resolutions.

The conference is therefore recognized as a symbol of unity and *rapprochement* amongst the Asian and African States. It took place in the middle of Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union, the United States and the People's Republic of China, and the continuous march of Western colonial powers in the countries within the Global South, despite the rise of the various forms of nationalist and popular resistance to Western imperialism.

For many, this conference historically became the cornerstone of the African-Asian solidarity, despite the reality of the economic and political domination from the Global North and the structural weaknesses of the countries and states in the Global South, especially in Africa. Since the 1950s, regular African-Asian summits have been contributing to revive the spirit of Bandung and encourage the creation of a new partnership between African and Asian states and countries.

The significance of this conference has to be looked at gains from regionalist and nationalist perspectives. The collective agenda should support the nationalist political

projects. Yet, regionalism and nationalism without a strong political vision can lead to social conflicts and power struggles.

The leadership of the conference was divided between India, which had adopted its liberal democracy model, Indonesia, which had articulated its nationalism under Sukarno, and China with its communist revolutionary dogmas. However, it should be noted that Zhou Enlai of China displayed a moderate and conciliatory attitude that tended to quiet fears of some anticommunist delegates concerning China's intentions. The outcome of this conference set up a motion that consolidated the relationship between Africa and Asia through the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).

Non-alignment foundation of the conference in a historical and political context

The Bandung Conference promoted solidarity in developmental policy and political decisions among the countries in the Global South (African and Asian) through the emerging Non-Alignment Movement. This grouping later constituted the foundation of the group of 77 in the United Nations. As Samir Amin stated: "If I define Bandung as the dominant characteristic of the second phase of post war period, it is not from any "third worldist" predilection, but because the world system was organized around the emergence of the Third World" (1994:14).

The Bandung Conference has generally been recognized as a forum in which its political actors initiated the motion of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) from an Afro-Asian perspective. In this author's view, this conference was, in terms of its ideological and policy claims, and its international relations' implications, perhaps the single most important Afro-Asian Conference in the 20th century.

The establishment of the Non-alignment Movement in 1961 was intended to begin the process of actualizing solidarity and cooperation among all nation-states, which were willing to join a block of interests called the Global South. For instance, on the principle of "ideological neutrality" and cooperation, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed on August 8, 1967 by the representatives of Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia in order to deal with the sub-regional economic and political issues within the spirit of finding a common ground to address them. It declared its non-alignment position in 1971.

Within the United Nations, the Group of 77 was formed to pursue nonalignment as a way of consolidating strong ties among the states, which were either formally colonized by the Western powers or those with economic and political characteristics of the Global South. The G77 countries are a group of more than a hundred less industrialized countries, which set up as a counter-lobby to developed G7 countries (Adams 2001:89). As of 2001, the group was constituted of 128 countries.

In the decade of the 1950s, several African countries gained their nominal independence namely, Libya (1951); Sudan (1956); Morocco (1956) and Tunisia (1956). In the same period, the war of liberation was being waged in Algeria. In 1957, Ghana gained independence from Great Britain in the euphoria of pan- Africanism of Kwame Nkrumah with a strong cooperation of Nasser of Egypt who also was articulating pan-Africanism and pan-Arabism. The case of Ghana was highly popularized—partially because of Kwame Nkrumah's charisma and his pan- African perspective on Africa and also because Ghana was the first country to gain independence in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Between 1956 and 1973, the non-alignment solidly emerged within the United Nations system as a new solidarity group among the countries in the Global South. The solid participation of Africans in its conferences is an indicator of how African states adopted this movement as part of their national agenda. For instance, in every single conference whether it was in Belgrade in 1961, Cairo in 1964, Lusaka, in 1973, or Havana in 1983, the African delegates constituted almost half of the total number of the delegates (Ebodé 1999:82). In the last conference before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the members of the non-alignment in September 1989 in Belgrade, it was clear the movement was losing its fuel as a result of internal conflicts and the force of polarization of the Cold War era.

In the 15th summit of the NAM held in Cairo in Egypt in July 2009, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was elected as the President of the movement. Indeed, his election reflects the lack of seriousness and commitment among its members to consolidate the movement's momentum in order to deal effectively with the marginalization of its members in the functioning and political hierarchy of the world system. Mubarak was the strongest ally of the United States, the champion of this type of capitalism, as it was reiterated through the current financial and economic crisis.

The 16th summit of the Non-Alignment was held on August 26–31, 2012 in Tehran with the leaders from 120 countries. Iran is not Egypt. It is a strong partisan of a multi-polar world politics.

On June 14, 2014, while many leaders were preoccupied about the World Cup in Brazil and the situation in Ukraine, the G-77 summit took place in Bolivia. It celebrated the 70th anniversary of the non-alignment. This grouping counts now 134 members. Russia is being invited to join this organization.

The final declaration called for a new world order for living well and it supports the 8 Millennium Development Goals as defined by the United Nations. They also intend and plan to eradicate poverty by 2030. President Evo Morales of Bolivia went far as to request the suppression of the Security Council of the United Nations.

In short, the Bandung Conference was held when the colonial alignments were gradually breaking down in some parts of Asia. However, the United States, China and Russia were struggling to re-establish and/or maintain their interests in the region, while the colonial alignments were being redefined in South America, especially with the United States' neo-colonial domination and control in the sub-continent within a framework of "in my backyard policy reasoning" and when also, in Africa, the ideologies of colonial alignments with their regional nuances, were still too strong in most countries.

Final declared resolutions

Despite cultural, ideological, historical and political differences among the delegates, a ten-point "declaration on promotion of world peace and cooperation" was adopted, which included the following principles:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights 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 an- other country;
5. Respect of 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 big power; (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 obligation (Jayaprakash 2005 and Jack 1955:28).

Other points of the final resolutions include: economic cooperation (trade affairs and nuclear energy), cultural cooperation, human rights and self-determination, problems of dependent people, other problems such as the existing tension in the Middle East, and the promotion of a world of peace and cooperation.

To actualize these resolutions into the policy arena, the state system was firmly valorized, regional cooperation was encouraged and supported, and the principles articulating human dignity were promoted. On the one hand, statism was going to maintain many dimensions of status quo in the world of the states, and on the other hand, the concepts of cooperation and solidarity, and the values of human rights were intended to advance political and economic reforms.

Nationalism, self-determination, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, and the spirit of cooperation were emphasized in this talk. The position of Japan in the new projected international and regional relations was difficult to very clearly read. Japan was still strongly aligned to the United States politics (Japan became the closest ally of the United States after 1952), foreign relations and their international relations. It did not adhere to the ideas of non-alignment. In fact, it was antagonistic to this movement. But at the same time, Japan was obliged to work with countries, which have adopted the non- alignment as their policy guidelines in international relations.

To conclude in this section, it is necessary to recapture the most important elements that are related to the claims and ideas of the Bandung Conference. These points are reflected in the grand ideas of the political leaders in Asia and Africa. The leaders of China, led by Zhou Enlai, articulated socialism not *à la Moscou* and peaceful relations, those of India led by Prime Minister Nehru expressed liberalism, nationalism and non-violence, those of Indonesia led by President Sukarno articulated nationalism and decolonization, and the emerging leaders in many African countries were pushing for political decolonization agenda with different strategies among which later nationalism, panAfricanism, or accommodationism became the most prominent. The opposition against colonialism, neocolonialism or any imperialistic based kind of policies was probably the most important single consensual position that unified various interests, mobilized human spirit in envisioning a new and better world system. One of the most

important questions is: Could this opposition be forcefully managed and actualized without any concrete and well-defined ideology?

The final speeches and the declarations made cannot escape the evaluation from an ideological canon of geo-political location of the participants. Broadly, non-alignment was *de facto* an “ideological alignment” of the countries, which were structurally facing similar problems within a bigger framework, oppressed by similar forces and subjected to the same global rules of the games.

It should be noted that the Bandung Conference projected, for the first time, the consciousness of Third Worldism. The term third world was first used as a political category at this conference. The conference’s main figures—Nehru (India), Nasser (Egypt), Zhou Enlai (China)—were already in power. This consciousness led to the movement of global solidarity among the countries located in the Global South. This was a big achievement then. However, within the current global economy, is this movement still relevant in the 21st century?

Rethinking the Bandung conference: where to go from here?

The Bandung Conference provided an avenue to discuss structural problems of the world and project how their impact in Africa and Asia would be. It gave hope through cooperation and struggle against all forms of oppressive colonial forces. However, it failed to address the question of the structures of the African and Asian states and their relations to the international political economy. Nor did it deal adequately with the issue of the nature of the ideologies of the states in Africa and Asia. Thus, although the symptoms of the problems were well defined, it did not sufficiently clarify what kinds of political societies to be created, based on what kinds of national ideologies, as a result of the declarations and final resolutions of the conference.

Even during the Cold War era, all the new the financial and economic institutions created after World War II preached the message of unipolarity. The U.S. is the champion of this unipolarity but at the same time it talks about free trade, the respect for human rights, and liberal democratic values, and international security, which also are the attributes of multipolar world. Unipolarity was applied through the building of the global capitalism under the supervision and the control of the United States. All the post-World War II global financial and economic institutions supported the centrality of the United States in world affairs. The U.S. is the biggest supporter of most of these organizations. This situation created a strong political clientelism and economic dependence that led to the weakening of the states in the global south. The U.S. viewed and interacted with the rest of the actors in the world from power and control perspectives.

One of the core values of the Bandung Conference was self-determination. It could not be consolidated in a new era without changing the existing power relations between African and Asian countries on the one hand, and between them and the industrialized countries in new Europe and the United States on the other hand. But it should be noted that European-United States together represent about 40 percent of the world commercial relations and about 50 percent of the world growth national product. African-Asian relations must challenge these trends and the tendencies of political monopoly, especially when it comes to the issues of international security, and economic and financial megapoly of the global capitalism.

The major questions here are: What kind of power system should the rethinking produce? What kinds of societies, states, and the economies, the rethinking should be able to project for African and Asian societies? What should be the ideological foundation of the new solidarity? And who should do the rethinking?

The role of the organic intellectuals and their relations with social movements and the societies at large is particularly important. No major societal structural changes have occurred in any part of the contemporary nation-states without the engagement of a conscious social class. These intellectuals should challenge the top down approach that has dominated the contemporary political thinking. They are defined as socially engaged individuals. They can engage societies through the acquisition and the circulation of critical knowledge, or through dialogical relations of Paulo Freire (1978) with other social classes or by national struggles à la Fanon (1963). They should combine the process of knowledge production and political activism in civil societies, grassroot organizations, and professional organizations. They do not only intellectualize about their societies and others but they also participate in the process of changing those societies in associating themselves with organic institutions and social movements. They should form a vanguard group.

In order to imagine and invent relevant and effective strategies, which African and Asian nation-states and their institutions can use as instruments through which they can challenge the trends of megapoly of global capitalism, first of all, they have to transform solidarity to an effective ideological foundation of their actions. The appropriate question is solidarity for what? The short answer is for building a peaceful and developmental region where poverty eradication is the main objective. Thus, this becomes an ideological construct. Second of all, they have to do the inventory of what they have as natural and social assets, and as skills. Third of all, they have to know one another through educational systems and other training programs. Fourth of all, they have to set up their policy priorities based on their people's living standards. Fifth of all, they have to establish strong regional institutions through which decisions can be made collectively. And sixth of all, they have to deepen their own democracies. Furthermore, their concept of security has to be re-defined. It should go beyond militarism. It should include human security, which means the protection of social, political and economic rights, the protection of the eco-systems, and formulation and implementation of policies intended for the elimination of poverty.

I characterize multipolarity to be a 'contestation' paradigm that should challenge both unipolarity and the old déclassé bipolarity. The old bipolarity was the major feature of the Cold War politics. The world was divided on the basis of the ideological struggles between the United States and its allies, and their neo-liberalism and the Soviet Union and its allies and their international socialism. This ideological bipolarity shaped the world diplomacy and all economic relations and military alliances during the Cold War period.

However, in the post-Cold War (since the early 1990s), it should be noted that while the call for multipolarity has been intensifying through the rise of indigenous, labor, social, women, youth and popular organizations and movements, its ideological basis is at the best hybrid. It is so because multipolarity as we are using it has not been able to interrogate sufficiently the nature of states and their actions. It has also challenged ethno-culturalism or culturalism of the state through civil societies but not the structures of the power system. In general, multipolarity movements call for political and economic decentralization of the world resources, a better management of world resources and a fair distribution of these

resources. They call for more people's participation in the reconstruction of their economies. In international system, it should call for the reconceptualization and establishment of new international partnership/cooperation based on the win-win theory.

Regions and nation-states that are doing well or better economically are those who have also capacities to negotiate. Here African-Asian solidarity has to produce those capacities based on their new political vision. This solidarity has to produce institutions and people with knowledge and specializations about, and/or on, the region.

Finally, the policies based on new solidarity have to be articulated on some specific sectorial priorities. This solidarity should focus on the pursuit of peace and development, as these two interrelated values should be in the center of re-organizing the state and the state-societal relations. Africa, for instance, has the highest density of poverty in the world (about 88 percent). The sectors that should be developed in order to eradicate poverty include: law, education, health, rural development, and infrastructures as part of the first steps to be taken that would allow the consolidation, understanding and appreciation of the new African-Asian solidarity at the national level. For this author new rethinking has to produce first a political agenda. And secondly, this political agenda about development has to be able to challenge the Washington Consensus^b—the most important political expression of the claims of unipolarity *par excellence*, in mobilizing the people against the usage of the social dominant paradigm (DSP). In my view, given the level of the existing economic disparities among the people and the states in Africa and Asia, and different levels of development, the invisible hand of Adam Smith's economic integration is not a sufficient tool for the consolidation of this solidarity. They have to develop first the state's welfarism as the foundation of African-Asian solidarity. This is essentially a political issue.

Endnotes

^aThe majority of the information on this section of the paper is drawn from Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo's article entitled: "A Reflection on the Bandung Conference in the Era of Liberal Globalization, *CODESRIA Bulletin*, Nos 3 & 4, (2010): 32–39; and also from Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo's speech delivered as a recipient of the 2010 Distinguished Africanist Award. This speech was based on a chapter entitled 'The Bandung Conference (1955): Ideology of Non-Alignment and Pragmatism of Afro-Asian Alliances' in his book, *Japan and African Relations*, New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2010.

^bSince 1989, when this concept was coined by John Williamson then an economist from the Institute for International Economics, the term has been broadly used to refer to the policy prescriptions of economic reforms advanced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, their promotion by the White House and their support by the Pentagon. It reflects to the domination of neo-liberalism as the only dogma with which to rule the world and to manage its economy.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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