



The Bandung Conference: Historical Memory and Vision for the Future

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ISBN 978-5-907845-30-5



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of the Valdai Discussion Club, 2025

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Contents

3	Introduction
4	Chapter 1. Bandung Spirit & Indonesia Effort: Pursuing World Peace & Stability
	Bandung Spirit
	Indonesia Effort in Pursuing International Peace and Stability
	The Significance of Bandung for Indonesia
15	Chapter 2. We Will Continue to Meet. What is Chinese in the Bandung Spirit?
19	Chapter 3. The Bandung Conference: Charting the Future Course. Prospects for BRICS and the Non-Aligned Movement
	Historical Context and the Non-Alignment Legacy
	Metal Cartelization and Rare Earth Resources
	BRICS+ Strategic Metals & Geo-Economic Implications for NAM Countries
	Energy Cooperation and Industrial Transformation
	Security Cooperation
	Strategic Autonomy and Policy Balancing for NAM Countries
26	Chapter 4. Bandung Conference: Position of the USSR and Significance for Russia Today
31	Conclusion

Executive Summary:

On April 18-24, 1955, Bandung, Indonesia, hosted the Asia-Africa Conference that pioneered the Global South's general approaches to international politics and economics and to the fight against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Subsequently, the Bandung Spirit exerted considerable influence on the emergence of international political identity of developing countries and contributed to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Soviet Union was active in supporting the Global South countries in their fight against neo-colonialism. In many respects, the USSR's economic and political support was an important resource that these countries used to evolve and strengthen their positions.

Marked in 2025, the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference is a significant event for both Indonesia and Russia, as well as for the non-Western world as a whole. It points to the importance of solidarity and mutually beneficial cooperation between countries belonging to the Global Non-West and South under the extremely critical modern conditions.

The Bandung anniversary is of special importance for the activities pursued by BRICS, a group that reflects the interests and values shared by the Global Non-West and South. It is also important to recall the principles and role of Bandung in connection with BRICS's decision to accept Indonesia to full membership as of January 2025.

This report reflects the positioning of the historical memory about Bandung for today's young people in Indonesia and other countries. It also offers recommendations on more effective ways of popularizing the ideas of Bandung through projects in education and arts.

The report considers separately how the Bandung Spirit of solidarity could help the Global Non-West and South to evolve a position with regard to the "war for rare-earth metals" unleashed by the United States.

Introduction

Seven decades ago, the city of Bandung, Indonesia, hosted an international conference that became an important landmark on the way towards the Global South countries, only recently colonies, acquiring an international identity. At that time, it was hard to imagine that those countries, so dissimilar and involved in a strenuous process of national consolidation superimposed upon their decolonisation drive, would be able to take a joint stance internationally and moreover make an important contribution to developing international law.

The participants in the 1955 Bandung Conference can be described as a prototype of what we know today as the Global Majority. Its key ideas and general attitude that were later identified as the Bandung Spirit were an important signal to the leading world players, primarily the USA and the USSR, to the effect that the rest of the world would not be a mere recipient of impulses coming from the bipolar system. At the same time, the global confrontation between the USA and the USSR, as well as complicated relations between the non-Western countries themselves prevented them from implementing the principles developed during the Bandung Conference in full measure.

The current international situation is certainly different from what it was in the mid-20th century. Since then, many non-Western countries have become much stronger and entirely important players in their own right. The international system today is much more complex and multidimensional. At the same time, it is still relevant for the Global South to look for grounds for its consolidation that would enable the international system to transition to a truly post-Western state (a state characterized by equal participation of both Western and non-Western countries) in a non-confrontational and constructive manner. An expanded BRICS that includes many attendees of the 1955 Bandung Conference is making its important contribution to this process. In this context, the Bandung ideas are due to prove their relevance again.

Chapter 1.

Bandung Spirit & Indonesia Effort: Pursuing World Peace & Stability

The 1955 Bandung Conference was an important landmark in the history of the Global South countries' struggle for independence and self-determination. In the Cold War environment, where the world was divided into two blocs, socialist and capitalist, the conference enabled the developing countries to state their own position with regard to shaping the post-war and post-colonial world order.

The conference participants that had only recently thrown off the colonial yoke spent years in fostering their national liberation movements and fighting for independence. Research works indicate that the national self-consciousness of Asian and African peoples began to take shape towards the late 19th century. What inspired these processes was the growing number of educated (including at European universities) members of the "indigenous" elites, who became aware of the downtroddenness of their people. The realization of the deep-seated historical injustice lying at the core of colonial exploitation led liberation movement leaders to launch political and armed struggle for the rights and self-determination of Asian and African peoples. In many countries, this struggle induced the evolution of national languages, emergence of national identities

(that fused numerous formerly self-reliant ethnoses), and discussions on the future paths of development for the post-colonial independent states.

Indonesia, where the famous conference took place, presented an example of a long and consistent liberation struggle. After independence, Indonesia, like many Global South countries, had to adjust to the existence of national states based on the Westphalian system that had originated in Europe and spread to all continents of the world in the wake of colonialism and subsequent decolonization processes in the latter half of the 20th century.

In 1945, when Sukarno proclaimed Indonesian independence, he also formulated the doctrine of Pancasila, or the Five Principles, which would underlie the effort to administer the Indonesian state. These are as follows: 1) the belief in one God; 2) Indonesian unity; 3) just and civilized humanity; 4) democracy under the wise guidance of representative consultations; 5) social justice for all the peoples of Indonesia. These principles were put at the base of the current Indonesian Constitution (still in effect with changes and amendments), which came into force on August 18, 1945. But it was only in 1949, after a bloody war with the Netherlands, that Indonesia finally gained independence. The war was brought to an end by the heroism of Indonesians and owing to the support from the USSR and a number of other states at the United Nations.

Indonesia, under its first President Sukarno, contributed a key role in hosting the conference and promoting the Bandung Spirit. The conference's outcomes included the adoption of a declaration emphasizing the sovereignty of nations, non-interference in internal affairs, and the importance of peaceful co-existence. The Bandung Spirit, in summary, emphasized independence, solidarity, and non-alignment, advocating for peace and unity, with a clear opposition to colonialism and foreign domination.

The Asian-African Conference (AAC), held on April 18 to 24, 1955, in Bandung, has great relevance today, although its context has changed. The conference originally aimed to enhance cooperation between Asian and African countries in confronting colonialism and imperialism, and in fighting for independence and equality. Therefore, the relevance of the AAC today can be seen in several aspects, i.e.:

First, developing South-South cooperation. The AAC continues to be a symbol of cooperation between developing countries on both continents to address common challenges, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, global warming, and sustainable economic development.

Second, optimizing the role in global issues. Asian and African countries have an important role to contribute in global issues such as international

trade, climate change, and security. Therefore, with the boosting influence of developing countries, this forum can serve as the foundation for consequent fight for their interests in the international arena.

Third, participating in global political and economic changes. The world is currently undergoing major changes, including a shift in economic power to Asia and Africa. These countries are increasingly involved in global economic dynamics, such as China's Belt and Road initiative, as well as development policies that focus more on sustainable progress.

Fourth, solving geopolitical issues. Tensions in the Middle East, the South China Sea or conflicts in Africa make the experience of this forum relevant to strengthen multilateral diplomacy and build cooperation in maintaining regional and global stability.

Fifth, growing representation in international organisations. The Bandung Conference, which empowered 29 nations to assert their stance, has enabled non-aligned countries outside major blocs such as the G7 or G20 to effectively voice their interests in global forums.

Bandung Spirit is considered to have given birth to a chapter in the history of contemporary world development. This is often called the "Era of Bandung." Although this era is now considered over, Bandung Spirit as the goal of values to realize world stability and peace, or call it virtue, certainly has not ended yet.

The conference was the first international event facilitated by Indonesia, and was recorded as a success movement of developing countries against international colonialism.

This remarkable forum aimed to promote world peace and cooperation between countries continuously, as well as freedom from colonialism and imperialism. The five countries that initiated it and were also members of the organizing committee of the Asian-African Conference were Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Burma/Myanmar, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka. The following countries also participated in that conference: Afghanistan, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Yemen, and still colonial Cyprus, Ghana, and Sudan.

That power-raising activity sought to develop solidarity and advance the agenda of universal humanism amidst the global situation at that time. The post-World War II era indeed was marked by the emergence of sharp political polarization between the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc. Therefore, that international conference moment clearly has significant meaning in a historical context. In addition to producing a joint communique of Asian-African countries, that forum was also a form of implementation of Indonesia's foreign policy based on the free-active spirit for the first time echoed.

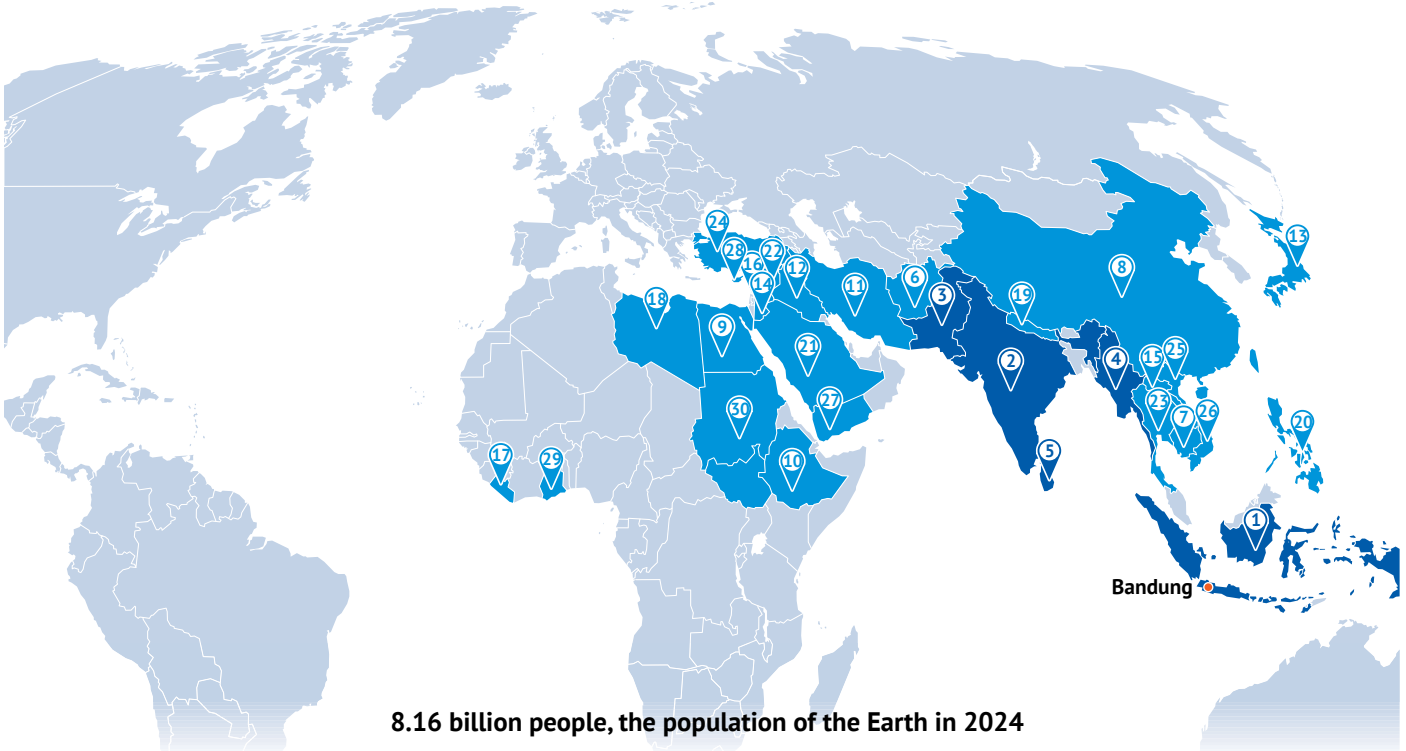
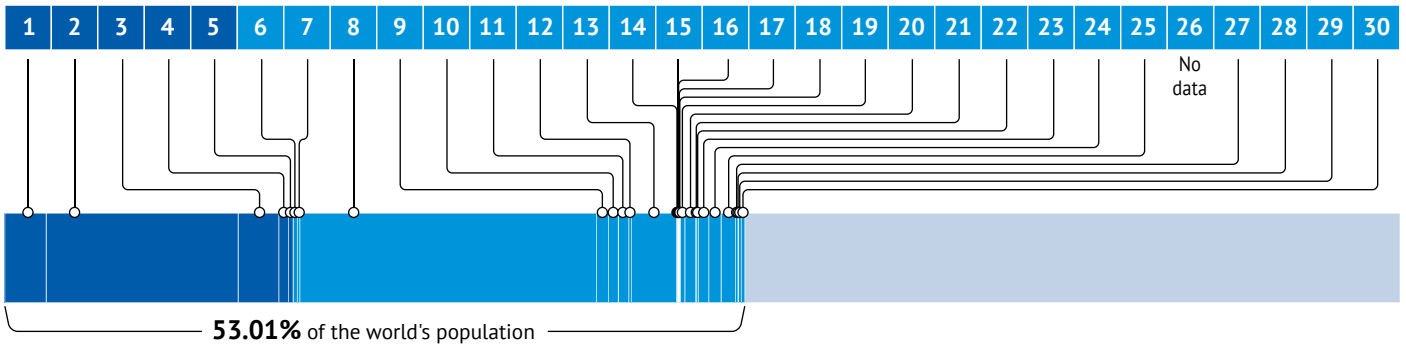
BANDUNG CONFERENCE*

Initiators of the conference

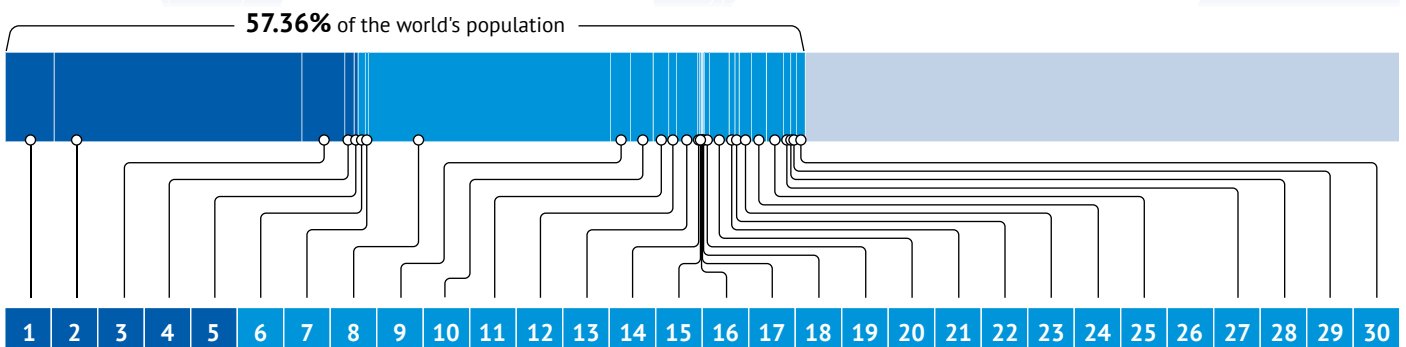
In addition to the initiators, the following countries participated

1 Indonesia	6 Afghanistan	11 Iran	16 Lebanon	21 Saudi Arabia	26 South Vietnam
2 India	7 Cambodia	12 Iraq	17 Liberia	22 Syria	27 Yemen
3 Pakistan	8 China	13 Japan	18 Libya	23 Thailand	28 Cyprus
4 Burma/Myanmar	9 Egypt	14 Jordan	19 Nepal	24 Türkiye	29 Ghana
5 Ceylon/Sri Lanka	10 Ethiopia	15 Laos	20 The Philippines	25 North Vietnam	30 Sudan

2.74 billion people, the population of the Earth in the mid-1950s



8.16 billion people, the population of the Earth in 2024



* UN Population Division Data Portal. URL: <https://population.un.org/dataportal/home?df=a695aac8-bf96-4cb6-8b2c-892757fd5e97>

Bandung Spirit

The term Bandung Spirit is also often used as a reference for socio-political movements at the people's level or at the state level. It has the connotation of progressive revolutionary, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialist, for independence, for national sovereignty, for social justice, for solidarity with oppressed people, and for peace between countries in the world.

The 70th anniversary of the AAC coincided with a period of drastic and profound changes taking place in various parts of the world. The Bandung Spirit, which upholds the principles of solidarity, friendship and cooperation, still plays an important role for a number of Asian and African countries and the international community as a whole.

After the AAC held in 1955, the Bandung Spirit became an important foundation for building and maintaining a new, just and equitable international political and economic order, and provided a guide for developing countries to seek strength through unity and sustainable cooperation.

The Bandung Spirit, which comprises the Principles on handling of relations between countries and peaceful coexistence, has become a widely recognized set of norms for international relations. These Principles are a just call for the independence, dignity and equality of oppressed peoples, serving as guiding principles for countries with the same or different social systems to establish and foster friendly relations. Furthermore, they point out an effective way to seek peaceful solutions to the world's lingering historical problems and disputes, and making a historical contribution to sustainable solidarity and closer cooperation among Asian and African countries.

Seventy years after the Bandung Conference, the world leaders once again find themselves at a historical crossroads in advancing the international peace and stability amidst the sustained dynamic changes in the international system.

Interdependence among countries, multipolarity and globalization are gaining momentum. Most countries are indeed becoming increasingly interdependent with a stronger sense of togetherness to achieve common goals. In Asia and Africa today, developing countries are emerging as a group. The two continents are leading the world in terms of development potential and dynamism. This is due to the united efforts of the peoples of the two continents, and also under the guidance of the Bandung Spirit. This spirit is still needed today as Asian and African countries are faced with the difficult task of upholding national security and social stability, accelerating economic growth, and fair social development, and raising people's living standards.

Therefore, for the world in general, a series of geopolitical new challenges have also emerged. Traditional and non-traditional security threats

are intertwined, the North-South gap has yet to be narrowed, and the balance between economic development and environmental protection needs to be better addressed. Thereafter, to face these challenges, the Bandung Spirit can be the most relevant and effective guideline.

Indonesia Effort in Pursuing International Peace and Stability

The Bandung Conference was actually a turning point in the history of world international relations. Representatives of former colonial countries united and proposed alternatives for a new world order for the first time in the face of domination by the superpowers.

The conference was the birth of the so-called Third World, a term indicating a desire to take a position outside the two superpower blocs. The conference resulted in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) between the two superpower blocs.

The conference enabled the presence of representatives of African and Asian countries at the UN, and the recognition of the voice of colonized peoples in the world order. The conference accelerated the re-conquest of independence for Africa and Asia as a whole.

The conference enabled the newly independent countries to lead development based on their national interests, peoples, and sovereignty. The conference made a huge contribution to preventing the possibility of a third world war and to the evolution of humanity towards a more just and peaceful world.

Indonesia in 2024 successfully held two international events simultaneously. The High-Level Forum on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (HLF MSP) and the 2nd Indonesia-Africa Forum (IAF) took place on September 1-3, 2024, in Nusa Dua, Bali. This activity resulted in 32 business and cooperation agreements with a total value of US\$ 3.5 billion. There are many achievements that the Indonesian government has made in the 2nd HLF MSP and IAF forums. The HLF MSP meeting with the theme “Strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Towards a Transformative Change” successfully brought together various stakeholders from the government, private sector, international organizations, and civil society. Crucial issues were discussed, including climate change, socio-economic inequality, and digital transformation.

Meanwhile, the 2nd IAF raised the theme “Bandung Spirit for Africa’s Agenda 2063.” This theme revives the spirit of the AAC, which was the starting point for solidarity of developing countries. The relationship between Indonesia and Africa is certainly expected to be even closer.

In fact, Indonesia has been trusted to host various international events since President Joko Widodo leadership (2014-2024). This certainly has a positive impact and branding country image on Indonesia.

In 2022, Indonesia held the presidency position in the G20, followed by the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2023, as a form of Indonesian leadership in the regional scope of Southeast Asia.

In the age of a new polycentric global order, the Bandung Conference reminds us of the spirit of diplomacy by third-world countries. The AAC was the realization of solidarity between Asian-African countries against colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism. The AAC formally brought together the political movement of solidarity¹ across nations with varied cultures to respond to the unstable global situation – the tension between the West and the East in the Cold War era. In terms of social, economic, and political issues, the Bandung Spirit brought Asian-African solidarity to fight for some issues, such as apartheid in Africa and the Israeli occupation of Palestine. It is a milestone in the history of global diplomacy.

The traditional subject of diplomacy has consisted of economic and political relations among state actors. To this view, there is a need to bring a new concept of international diplomacy into the modern diplomatic agenda. In the middle of new global governance challenges, the conference and its significance have regrettably proven less interesting to younger generations than other recent interstate initiatives such as BRICS, G20, and OECD. The Bandung Spirit served as a foundational force for the younger generations of Indonesians. Hence, new and modern diplomacy should contain the spirit of non-state actors. Young generations play an important role in this phase.

Amid all the global issues such as international conflicts, climate change, and technology, in the agenda of promoting multilateral and global diplomacy, it is important to learn from Bandung's Spirit of Cooperation. The conference established the framework for international collaboration among the independent nations to emphasize equality, respect for one another, and non-interference. The importance of global diplomacy and its relevance continues in the connected world of today and might be emphasized to younger generations. In terms of geo-economics, Asia has grown increasingly strategic. The emergence of China and India and a new economy like Indonesia has put Asia in a strong position to support global expansion and to encourage collaboration with African nations. The most recent development is the growing possibility of South-South cooperation

¹ The Asian-African Peoples' Solidarity Movement emerged in the 1950s as the peoples of these continents recognized that through joint efforts they could more effectively achieve equality for all nations and peoples – in politics, economics, trade, finance, and social spheres. One of the movement's most prominent organizations, the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), was established in Cairo in late December 1957 under the name Council for Asian-African Solidarity. It was later reorganized as AAPSO during the second conference in Conakry in April 1960.

through diplomacy in the spirit of the Bandung Conference. The engagement of younger generations will provide innovation and new perspectives. Through this collaboration, countries have a big chance to gain innovative answers to problems like economic development, poverty, and climate change. In general, the younger generation will be more tech-savvy, linked worldwide, and capable of working across cultural boundaries easily.

The Archive of Bandung Conference in Education

The AAC stores 565 sheets of photo archives, 7 reels of film archives, and 37 textual archive files, totalling 1778 sheets in thickness. This archive collection is nicely organized in the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI). To ensure its continued existence and sustainability, the Indonesian government registered the AAC Archives as UNESCO's Collective Memory of the World in 2014, and UNESCO successfully inscribed it in 2015.

Although the Bandung conference had no direct impact on the development of Indonesia's education system, the event's archives were included within the school's educational program. This conference's archives were taught to students as part of the "Indonesian History" curricula. Historical events are interwoven into Indonesian education from the ground up. Elementary, middle, and high school students have all learned about Indonesian history and other political events. Illustrated textbooks with visual content and animations on the AAC's history were also implemented. Since then, the Bandung Spirit archive has created a sense of battle in Indonesian youth. The students were reminded of how the Bandung Spirit applies in the age of globalization, as the concept of being "free and active" was discussed at the AAC.

It should be recognized that Indonesia has a lengthy history. Cabinets and government structures in Indonesia have changed by the period. Each journey had a special milestone. As a newly independent country that was once colonized by three nations (the Netherlands, Japan, and Portugal), the archives of this independence must be preserved. The AAC is covered in depth in the Indonesian foreign policy course at the university level. Students must understand the history of how Indonesia adopted a non-aligned movement and an active free foreign policy path after meeting with these newly independent countries in between the two blocs (USSR and USA).

By the spirit of patriotism, the archives of the AAC can be a source of learning in civic education that illuminates the struggle of Asian and African countries to achieve independence. The AAC archives can be utilized in civic education (Pendidikan Kewarganeraan) to better comprehend the struggle of Asian and African nations for independence. As President Sukarno stated, Asia and Africa are together, free of colonialism and imperialism. This spirit must be nurtured from an early age, particularly through education. Young people will be reminded of the Bandung Conference to gain a better grasp of the genuine purpose of the battle for independence. A good nation has educated citizens who remember history. By educating students and youngsters on the purpose of the AAC, it may create positive and impactful memories.

The Significance of Bandung for Indonesia

Exploring another agenda in global politics, the Bandung Conference was a pivotal moment for Indonesia in its role on the global stage. The NAM continued in the model of international diplomacy by being a “free and active” foreign policy. By emphasizing Indonesia’s leadership in this conference, young people can learn the importance of their nation’s role in shaping global diplomacy. As an ASEAN country, Indonesia has big potential to become a leader in this region, supported by the level of population in Indonesia, known well as a “demographic bonus”. The younger generation could investigate how these ideas relate to contemporary global concerns like cybersecurity, economic inequalities, and global warming, where developing nations must band together to safeguard their interests. By establishing online forums, where young people might exchange ideas, discuss global issues, and work together to ensure that the Bandung Spirit remains important in the twenty-first century, Indonesia may promote youth diplomacy in the age of digitalization, and social media as tools for addressing it.

On the international dialogue front, the Bandung Conference emphasized the importance of peace and the promotion of diplomacy over military intervention to actualize global peace and conflict resolution. In 1989, through the Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM), Indonesia was involved in peace talks surrounding the Cambodian and Vietnam conflict to realize the resolution by the Paris Peace Agreement. To add, in 2011, Indonesia served as a mediator in the border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia. Meanwhile, based on these experiences, it is time to get down to non-state actors’ actions. These non-state actors can demonstrate their commitment to achieving conflict resolution through young diplomacy by their participation in the international forums. The continuation of peaceful diplomacy depends on cooperation and active involvement in international institutions. The younger generation of Indonesia should be more active in standing for a peace resolution to the current international problems. Indonesia has the potential to become the focal point for achieving global peace through the Bandung Spirit.

The Bandung Conference holds significant importance as it strengthens Indonesia's diplomatic ties with both Africa and Asia. Indonesia and South Africa have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost trade and food security – Indonesia imports soybeans from South Africa, and South Africa exports products such as ferroalloys, chromium ore, and chemical pulp to Indonesia. Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar, Algeria, Gabon, Nigeria, Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique are partner countries for Indonesia in the energy sector. All of this aims to strengthen economic relations and strategic partnerships, as well as to improve people's welfare.

Indonesia continues to strengthen cooperation with Asian countries, such as China and Japan. In the environmental sector, carbon credit trading cooperation through the Mutual Recognition Arrangement by Indonesia and Japan goes on. With China, especially since Indonesia joined BRICS as a permanent member, greater cooperation opportunities for both countries are emerging. Through China's rapid economic growth, it is hoped that it can continue to provide investors for Indonesia, especially in the fields of infrastructure and technology, such as the development of the Nusantara, the nation's new capital. In addition, Indonesia also collaborates with a number of developing countries in ASEAN, such as Vietnam and Laos, in the fields of public and health services, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices.

The Bandung values can be the foundation for building a better future, especially amidst various global challenges. In a world that is increasingly forming multipolarity, it is important to continue to sustain good relations with global nations, including both developed and developing countries.

The term JASMERAH (*jangan sekali-kali lupakan sejarah* / never leave history) was firmly stated by President Sukarno in his speech on August 17, 1966, which was the 21st anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia. By becoming one of the world's cultural heritages, the AAC continues to provide a lasting memory for Indonesia, especially for the youth. The young Indonesian can use the commemoration and energy generated by numerous aspects to inspire others in domains like politics, art, and culture. It is imperative that Asian-African nations continue to foster brotherhood and unity in order to achieve world peace. It is time for Asia and Africa to rekindle interest in today's multipolar world. Diplomacy in Asian and African countries has once again added a new dimension to international relations.

Recall the Bandung Spirit Through Art

To honour the spirit of the Bandung Conference, Indonesia attempted to capitalize on the opportunity by presenting the world to a variety of centuries-old customs indigenous to Indonesia. One of these was the construction of the Asia-Africa Conference Museum in 1980. The Asia-Africa Conference Museum's mission is to educate future generations and the public at large on historical events. This museum has various artefacts, photos, documents, and historical objects related to the archive of the conference.

Indonesia, as a young country, was not well known in the international community at the time. The world community's convening in Bandung was unquestionably worthwhile. When the conference was held, many cultures were shown to refresh the minds and chill the atmosphere of the delegates, who were undoubtedly exhausted from the session focused on the future of the Asian-African nation. Along with the constructed museum, the Asia-Africa road ran parallel to the museum. This spirit allows young Indonesians to recall the greatness of their country's fight to become a great, independent nation in the world.

Diplomacy attaches the spirit of the Bandung Conference to music. The angklung is a traditional Indonesian musical instrument performed at the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference. The angklung is a multi-tonal musical instrument that originated among the Sundanese, one of Indonesia's ethnicities. Historically, the angklung in Kidung Sunda suggests that this musical instrument was used to boost soldiers' morale during wartime. The choosing of angklung as a kind of musical diplomacy has the concept that the spirit of the leaders of the newly independent Asia and Africa countries also reflects the spirit of the soldiers on the battlefield. This was the first traditional angklung performance on the international stage. The angklung has become well-known as an Indonesian traditional instrument. The angklung became a symbol of the countries' unity during the Asia-Africa Conference. To this day, the angklung has come to represent historical events and is recognised as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. In 2024, it was exhibited at the Asian African Festival. In the current period, the angklung was played during a dinner and music performance at the G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) meeting in Yogyakarta in 2022. The angklung was performed as a symbol of harmony, inspiring the G20 delegation to develop digital policies. The angklung continues to serve as a source of inspiration for Indonesia's cultural diplomacy.

The film industry, notably short films (documentaries), was another medium through which Asian-African figures' spirit of fight was expressed. The inaugural Asian African Film Festival, which took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 1958, was an expression of this spirit. Cinema became the primary instrument of independence through film diplomacy. At the Tashkent premiere in late August 1958, the Soviets highlighted Asian Film Week and Bandung's ethos as sources of inspiration. In 1957, there was a month-long Asian African Writers' Conference that took place prior to the film festival.

Chapter 2. We Will Continue to Meet. What is Chinese in the Bandung Spirit?

Seventy years ago, the People's Republic of China was one of the leading protagonists in the event that marked the history of the struggles of Asian and African peoples for their national sovereignty. In 1955, Beijing played one of the central roles in creating the political and diplomatic conditions for the realization of the “first intercontinental conference of people of colour in the history of mankind,” as described by the Indonesian president and host, Sukarno². In the previous year, under the leadership of Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, China had led two complex diplomatic negotiations: one with India and another at the Geneva Conference with the four major powers of that time – the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France.

In the first negotiation, faced with an impasse at the border between the world's most populous nations – in the region of Tibet – Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai not only reached a bilateral trade and border agreement but also formulated the “Panchsheel Agreement,” also known as the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” which would later become the basis for the ten principles agreed upon in Bandung. The name “Panchsheel,” like Sukarno's “Pancasila,” is the Sanskrit for “Five Principles” and a reference to the Five Precepts and Five Virtues of Buddhism. The difference in spelling and pronunciation is of importance only for differentiating these notions in practice. At the same time, like the Indonesian “Pancasila,” “Panchsheel” proposed a number of principles for an ideal regional order to the community of states assembled at the Bandung Conference. These are mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence proper.

In the second, even more complex, China played a central role in the negotiations over the conflicts in Korea and, then, French Indochina. While

² UTAMA, Wildan Usema. *Vision for the Future: an intellectual history of the 1955 Bandung Conference*. Leftword, 2025, p. 22.

THE BASIC IDEAS OF THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE

In 1954, China and India signed an agreement that regulated their relations after the conflict in Tibet, which proclaimed five principles of peaceful coexistence ("Pancha Shila")



A declaration was adopted as a result of the Bandung Conference, developing initiatives to promote universal peace and cooperation, including 10 principles



the desired reunification of Korea failed (resulting in the establishment of the "38th parallel" and the division between South and North Korea), the deadlock between France and the Viet Minh (Vietnamese forces led by Ho Chi Minh) was resolved, leading to the end of the war and the withdrawal of French colonial troops, at the cost of dividing Vietnam into north and south.

These two historic agreements not only helped to temporarily stabilize the Asian continent (Vietnam would later be invaded by the USA), thereby improving the political conditions for the Bandung meeting, but also reinforced Nehru's regional leadership – he was one of Bandung's key architects – and, above all, revealed to the world the diplomatic sophistication of the communist Zhou Enlai. So much so that Zhou's success even raised concerns in Washington. The United States feared that the charisma and eloquence of the Chinese diplomat might help propagate communist positions and convince other Asian leaders to support motions contrary to American interests in the region. Coincidentally – or perhaps not – seven days before the conference in Indonesia, the Kashmir Princess airplane carrying the Chinese delegation from Hong Kong to Jakarta crashed, killing 11 passengers (only three crew members survived). Fortunately, Zhou Enlai was not on the plane and thus escaped an assassination attempt by the Kuomintang – a US-allied force – targeting his life.

For Beijing, Bandung marked a crucial step in breaking out of the relative isolation in which it had found itself following the 1949 revolution led by the CPC, its participation in the Korean War, and the embargo imposed by Western powers. Burma (Myanmar since 1989) was the first country to recognize the five principles of peaceful coexistence after the PRC and India reached an agreement. The same year (1954), these principles were reflected in the Burma-China Declaration on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. In April 1955, an informal meeting was convened in Rangoon to prepare for the Bandung Conference.

After the AAC, Beijing began to establish direct relations with numerous countries in Asia and Africa, many of which still regarded China as a major “red threat.” Some heads of state were instructed by Washington at the conference to attack the Chinese and the Soviets. In his opening speech, which was reformulated after criticisms from other countries, Zhou made it clear that China had come to Bandung “to seek unity and not quarrel...to seek common ground and not to create divergence.”

With eloquence, China condemned the colonialism of the European powers that, through plunder and oppression, had relegated “brilliant ancient civilizations” of Asia and Africa – civilizations that “made tremendous contributions to humanity” – to a “state of poverty and backwardness.”

Echoing the call of the so-called “non-aligned” countries – India, Indonesia, Egypt, Burma – the Chinese speech denounced the threats of new wars and recalled that the peace movements in various countries demanded an end to the arms race and the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

According to Zhou, countries on both continents had an “urgent need for an international environment of peace for the development of our independent and sovereign economy” in order to overcome the backwardness imposed by colonialism. To achieve this, economic cooperation among them should be based on “equality and mutual benefit,” so that no country would become merely “a producer of raw materials and a market for consumer goods.”

Finally, he reinforced support for the ongoing national liberation struggles (as in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria), for the resolution of the issue of “Arab refugees in Palestine,” for Egyptian sovereignty over the Suez Canal, for India in Goa, and for Indonesia in Western Irian, as well as, of course, for the defence of the liberation of its own territory, Taiwan.

Beyond the eloquent opening speech, what truly made Zhou Enlai one of the stars of the conference was his humble and moderate tone and his impressive ability to handle divergent positions, helping to build unlikely consensus. For example, in the controversy regarding the participation of countries from both continents in military alliances with the USA (SEATO and CENTO) – involving Turkey, the Philippines, Thailand, Iran, and Iraq – or in the debate on the concept of “peaceful coexistence.” Both issues, which were indeed interconnected, were accommodated in the ten points of the final declaration after intense debates and active moderation by the Chinese. The premier and the Chinese delegation received numerous public accolades. The London Broadcasting Station stated, “a man with political foresight may see clearly that the achievement scored by the Communist Party of China in the Bandung Conference is immeasurable,” while some delegates in Bandung remarked that Zhou was “reasonable, conciliatory, and sincerely anxious to establish the genuineness of China’s peaceful inclination.” Roeslan Abdulgani, the Indonesian conference’s secretary-general, recalled that Zhou was “moderate and engaging” and had impressed other delegates who had previously been suspicious of him. According to Abdulgani, “The People’s Republic of China no longer appeared in their eyes as a dangerous ‘Giant Dragon.’”

The success of China’s participation in Bandung enabled Beijing to expand its diplomatic relations with numerous countries – which would be decisive after the break with the USSR in 1960’s – stimulated Beijing’s support for the national liberation struggles of both African and Asian countries, and helped establish the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” as the pillars of Chinese diplomacy to this day, as reflected in initiatives such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Belt and Road Initiative. However, seventy years after the historic conference in Indonesia, it is concerning to note that most of the urgent challenges pointed out by the countries of the then “Third World” remain

unresolved in what is now called the “Global South” or “Global Majority:” the economic backwardness resulting from the exploitative mechanisms of imperialism and neo-colonialism, the destruction and suffering caused by wars instigated by the USA and its military alliances, the nuclear threat, the profound injustices committed against the Palestinian people by Zionism, and the unresolved issue of Taiwan. All of this reminds us of the emotional speech given by the Syrian delegate, Khaled al-Azam, in April 1955: “We declare to the world that we will continue to meet . . . until we see every degree of colonialism and imperialism washed away and destroyed forever and ever.” The insistence on continuing to meet is the greatest legacy of the Bandung Spirit.

Chapter 3.

The Bandung Conference: Charting the Future Course. Prospects for BRICS and the Non-Aligned Movement

The Bandung Conference of 1955 set a transformative precedent in international relations by emphasizing solidarity among newly independent nations and advocating for non-alignment. This legacy later evolved into the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), wherein countries strove to preserve their sovereignty amidst Cold War pressures. In recent decades, as emerging economies have grown, multilateral blocs such as BRICS have redefined global power structures. With the inclusion of additional countries in the expanded BRICS (BRICS+), the group now functions not only as an economic forum but also as a strategic counterweight to Western hegemony, particularly in managing critical resources such as rare earth minerals.

NAM countries, many of which have historically followed non-aligned policies, face new challenges as they navigate an increasingly multipolar world. They must balance traditional diplomatic principles with the economic incentives offered by bloc membership. We explore how non-aligned countries, within the framework of BRICS, can leverage their position to mitigate North-South disparities, especially in the strategic arena of rare earth mineral cartelization, which has profound implications for energy security, industry-leading and technological innovation.

The concept of mineral cartelization has gained traction as emerging blocs like BRICS+ use coordinated export policies to influence global markets and strategic industries. Recent analyses indicate that while membership in BRICS may offer alternative financing and trade benefits, it also carries risks.

Historical Context and the Non-Alignment Legacy

While NAM was primarily political, BRICS has evolved to serve an economic and strategic function. Early academic analyses highlighted the transformative potential of BRICS in recalibrating global power by harnessing the growth trajectories of emerging economies. The integration of resource-rich nations into BRICS+ further underscores the need for alternative systems that address global inequities in resource distribution and economic influence.

Today, rare earth elements (REE) – a group of 17 elements essential for modern technology – have become emblematic of strategic resource cartelization. Although abundant in the Earth's crust, their extraction and refinement are complex, environmentally taxing, and technologically challenging. As a result, production is highly concentrated, particularly in China. For NAM countries, engaging with BRICS provides an opportunity to build alternative supply chains that challenge this monopoly while retaining their core principles of non-alignment.

Metal Cartelization and Rare Earth Resources

Rare earth materials have rapidly become the cornerstone of high-tech industries from renewable energy technologies and electric vehicles to advanced military systems. Cartelization in this sector occurs when a group of countries, or a bloc like BRICS+, coordinates export policies, restricts supply, and influences global prices to serve collective strategic interests. China's position producing over 60% of mined REE and processing roughly 90% of global output has enabled it to effectively also "cartelize" the market.

For the Non-Aligned Movement countries, the implications of such cartelization are twofold.

First, they face the risk of supply disruptions and price volatility, which can adversely affect domestic industries and national security.

CHEMICAL ELEMENTS IN INDUSTRIES

1	Metallurgy,	10	Thermoelectric materials,	19	Magnetic materials
2	Microelectronics,	11	Photo and cinematographic equipment	20	Nuclear-hydrogen power engineering
3	Nuclear power,	12	Chemical current source	21	Luminophores
4	Medicine,	13	Catalyst	22	Magnetic storage media
5	Rocketry	14	Measuring ultra-low temperatures	23	Obtaining ultra-low temperatures
6	Refractory materials	15	Fuel elements	24	Optical materials
7	Superconductors	16	Laser technologies	25	Laser materials
8	Electronics	17	Agriculture	26	Microwave equipment
9	Laboratory glassware	18	Radioisotope current source		

Scandium	Sc	1	2	3	4	5			
Yttrium	Y	1	4	6	7				
Lanthanum	La	3	4	8	9	10	11	12	
Cerium	Ce	1	4	6	10	12	13	14	15
Praseodymium	Pr	1	4	7	8	10	16		
Neodymium	Nd	1	10	16	17				
Promethium	Pm	18							
Samarium	Sm	3	6	10	19				
Europium	Eu	3	4	8	16	20	21		
Gadolinium	Gd	3	4	7	8	10	16	22	23
Terbium	Tb	8	10	19	24				
Dysprosium	Dy	1	3	8	10	16	19		
Holmium	Ho	1	3	10	16				
Erbium	Er	1	3	16	24				
Thulium	Tm	10	25	26					
Ytterbium	Yb	3	8	10	19	25			
Lutetium	Lu	1	3	16	19				

**Geopolitical and
Geo-economic interests
of BRICS and NAM
countries in rare
earth materials**

Preventing rare earth materials war

South-South cooperation

Fair trade and access to technology

Reforming global trade institutions

Preventing exploitation by Western powers

Promoting sustainable mining

Strengthening regional economic partnerships

Second, these countries have the potential to join or even form alternative cartels that can counterbalance BRICS+ dominance.

By pooling resources and coordinating policies, NAM countries inside BRICS+ can collectively negotiate better terms in international markets, develop domestic processing capacities, and reduce dependency on unilateral export controls. This strategic coordination of rare earth and critical mineral policies represents a modern form of resource nationalism, a tool that NAM and BRICS+ countries can utilize to secure sustainable economic growth while preserving their sovereignty.

BRICS+ Strategic Metals & Geo-Economic Implications for NAM Countries

The expansion of BRICS has significantly altered the global balance of power. With a larger combined share of the world's population and GDP, BRICS now exerts considerable influence over the production and reserves of strategic metals.

The strategic significance of metals such as platinum, palladium, copper, and rare earth elements cannot be overstated. They form the backbone of modern technology and defence systems. BRICS+ countries are actively pursuing policies to consolidate their positions in these markets, including investment in domestic mining and processing capabilities, export control measures, and the formation of new financial instruments that favour local currencies over the US dollar. This approach creates a formidable counterbalance for NAM countries, which see participation in such blocs as a means to secure alternative sources of critical materials.

The control over rare earth minerals has far-reaching implications for global geopolitics and the economy. For NAM countries, rare earths are not just a resource; they are a symbol of economic empowerment and a means to achieve technological self-reliance. Through participation in BRICS+, non-aligned countries can work collectively to develop alternative supply chains and invest in R&D for efficient extraction and processing technologies. This approach helps reduce the risk of resource monopolies, diversify supply, and ultimately weaken the pricing power of dominant producers. Furthermore, by implementing strategic policies, such as establishing national reserves and investing in recycling technologies,

GLOBAL RARE EARTH MATERIALS WAR

BRICS & NON-ALIGNED NATIONS

Geopolitical strategy

- Resource rationalism
- Economic self-reliance
- Expansion of South-South trade

Rare earth policies

- South-South cooperation
- Preventing exploitation by Western powers
- Fair trade and access to technology

Western-aligned & non-NAM nations (US, EU, Japan, Australia, Canada)

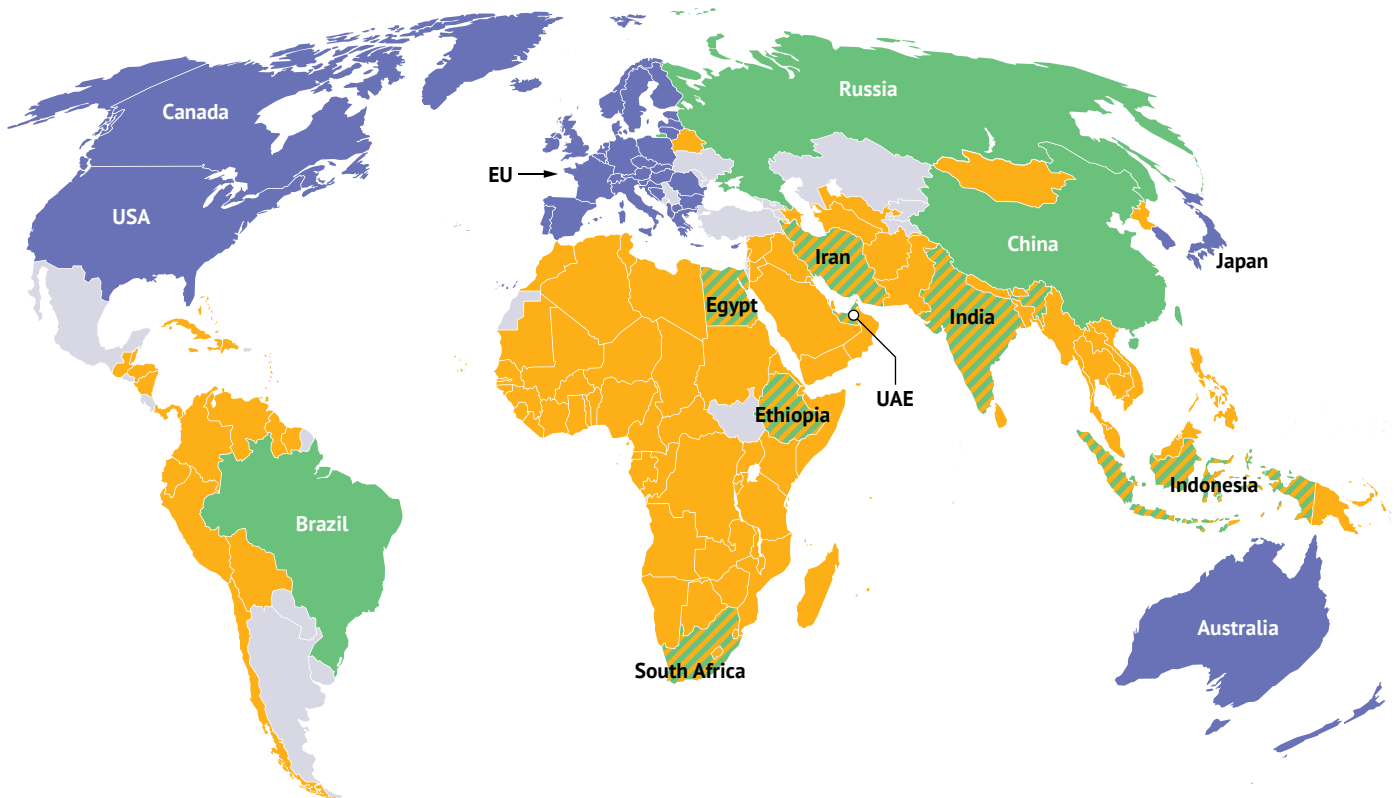
Geopolitical strategy

- Cartelization potential
- Sanctions and trade restrictions
- Investments in non-BRICS sources

Rare earth policies

- Diversification of supplies
- Strategic stockpiling
- Decoupling from BRICS supply chains

■ BRICS Nations
 ■ BRICS & NON-ALIGNED NATIONS
 ■ NON-ALIGNED NATIONS
 ■ Countries of the political West



Non-BRICS Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries

Geopolitical positions

- Seeking neutral trade policies
- Balancing between BRICS & Global North
- Rejection of economic coercion

Rare earth approach

- Negotiating fair trade access
- Encouraging multilateral agreements
- Preventing exploitation by Western powers

NAM and BRICS+ countries can mitigate risks associated with cartelized supply and enhance energy security.

The potential to use rare earth cartelization as a tool of geopolitical influence means that non-aligned countries can, in theory, shift global power balances. If all these countries successfully integrate into BRICS+ and collectively assert control over critical mineral markets, they may redefine international trade norms in favour of a more balanced, multipolar world order.

Energy Cooperation and Industrial Transformation

Energy security is closely linked to the availability of critical minerals. NAM countries, particularly those with abundant natural resources, have increasingly recognized that stable energy supplies are fundamental to economic independence. For example, Indonesia's efforts to secure energy partnerships with Russia and China are complemented by its pursuit of alternative supply chains through BRICS membership.

By diversifying energy sources and investing in domestic mining and refining capacities for rare earths, these countries can reduce vulnerabilities associated with monopolistic supply chains.

In an industrial context, rare earths are critical to the manufacturing of permanent magnets, batteries, and other components essential for renewable energy technologies. Industrial policies that promote domestic production and value-chain integration not only boost national competitiveness but also serve as a countermeasure against potential supply disruptions caused by resource cartelization. For NAM countries, aligning industrial policies with energy strategies creates a synergistic effect that strengthens overall economic security and resilience.

The control of strategic minerals directly influences the trajectory of industrial modernization and technological innovation. BRICS+ countries, through their dominance in rare earth markets, are well positioned to drive advancements in high-tech industries such as semiconductors, electric vehicles, and advanced defence systems. For non-aligned nations inside BRICS+, this presents an opportunity to integrate into global supply chains while advancing domestic technological capabilities.

Security Cooperation

The intense global competition over rare earth minerals has given rise to what some analysts term a “Global Rare Earth War,” wherein resource control becomes a central element of geopolitical strategy. As BRICS+ countries consolidate their dominance, this scenario poses a balancing way for global industrial supply chains.

Security cooperation has become intertwined with economic and industrial policies. For NAM countries, joining a bloc like BRICS+ is not solely about economic gain – it is also about enhancing national and regional security.

The coordinated control over critical minerals provides a strategic advantage that extends into defence and military modernization. For instance, the same rare earth elements vital for renewable energy technologies are also critical for advanced defence systems, including missile guidance and electronic warfare equipment.

Recent joint military exercises, such as Indonesia’s first bilateral drills with Russia, exemplify the shift toward a more integrated approach to security among emerging economies. Yet, these moves are not without controversy. For NAM countries such as Indonesia, the challenge is to maintain a balanced approach that allows for enhanced security cooperation without abandoning the principles of non-alignment.

Strategic Autonomy and Policy Balancing for NAM Countries

The evolution of BRICS+ and the strategic importance of rare earth minerals underscore a critical policy dilemma for NAM countries: how to participate in emerging economic and security alliances without compromising long-standing principles of non-alignment. Indonesia, for example, is actively pursuing membership in both BRICS and the OECD as part of a broader “partial multi-alignment” strategy that aims to harness economic opportunities while preserving political autonomy.

Key policy strategies include:

- **Diversification of International Engagements:** Engaging with multiple economic blocs to prevent overreliance on any single group.

- **Domestic Capacity Building:** Investing in local mining, processing, and R&D to reduce dependence on external supply chains.
- **Balanced Diplomacy:** Maintaining robust ties with Western nations while actively participating in South-South cooperation initiatives.

Chapter 4. Bandung Conference: Position of the USSR and Significance for Russia Today

In 1948, as the Cold War gained momentum, Vice President of Indonesia Mohammad Hatta formulated the idea that Indonesia should not be fully aligned with any side, be it the United States or the Soviet Union. His speech and later book was called “Rowing Between Two Rocks” (*Mendayung Antara Dua Karang*). In his opinion, Indonesia had got into a turbulent whirlpool and had to skilfully negotiate the foul waters to survive in the contemporary international situation. According to Hatta’s vision, Indonesia sought peace and stability and was not prepared for confrontation. A stronger superpower influence, he believed, was damaging for his country and the region as a whole, because their ideological concepts were a far cry from the ideas of Indonesian nationalism.

Based on these constructs, Hatta later formulated the “Independent and Active” doctrine (*Politik Luar Negeri Bebas-Aktif*), which he presented as part of his remarks at the Bandung Conference. “Independence” was essentially about being free from influence of either superpower and able to conduct a national foreign policy without any outside pressure. Being “active” meant seeking to strengthen regional cooperation, settle conflicts with neighbouring countries, and acquire an important role internationally.

Under these circumstances, the USSR’s position was two-pronged. On the one hand, the Soviet Union gave an all-out support to anti-colonial struggle and rendered aid to young newly-free countries. On the other, it sought to promote its interests as a superpower and leader of the socialist bloc by including the Global South and other regions in its sphere of influence. The Soviet aid to Indonesia, India, and African countries was truly invaluable, enabling many of them to launch industries of their own, ensure

personnel training by sending students to Soviet universities, and supply their national armies with advanced weapons and military equipment. The USSR also gave Indonesia direct diplomatic support, as it did at the UN in 1946. Occasionally, the case in point was massive military assistance, such as in Indonesian Navy's Operation Trikora undertaken to bring West Irian back to Indonesia in 1961-1962.

At early stages in the development of Soviet Russia, many communists from Asian countries were educated in the USSR and maintained close contacts with Soviet leaders through the Comintern. Given that nationalist leaders were in conflict with the communists in their countries, many of them regarded the USSR as a promising partner and simultaneously as a source of threat on a par with the United States.

The US also sought to include the newly free countries in the sphere of its influence but it was unable to support Bandung in full measure, since its criticism of colonialism was affecting European countries, the key Western allies of the United States. Though present at the conference, non-diplomatic representatives of both superpowers were aware that they could not influence to any extent the rhetoric of its participants.

In a broader international context, the meeting between Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong that preceded Bandung and the subsequent collaboration between the two powers in the period from December 16, 1949, to February 14, 1950, was of key importance for the coming into being of the post-war socialist world. The two countries were on the threshold of major changes: the People's Republic of China was proclaimed somewhat earlier, while the USSR was seeking to strengthen its leadership of the world socialist movement. The mounting threat of Western imperialist expansion had brought the two countries closer together, something that led to a strategic alliance that could rehash the political map of Asia in a dramatic way.

The signing of the Soviet-Chinese Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance on February 14, 1950, served to consolidate the formal alliance between the USSR and the PRC. This document became a crucial symbol of socialist solidarity. The Soviet Union recognized China's importance as a new socialist centre and rendered it considerable financial and technical assistance for reconstruction and development. For its part, China committed to support the Soviet interests in Asia.

This agreement created a complex balance of power in Asia. Despite the formal alliance, there were ideological and strategic differences between Stalin and Mao. The USSR sought to maintain control over the socialist countries in East Europe and remain the dominant force in

Mongolia and Korea. China, in turn, wanted to expand its influence in East and Southeast Asia, as dictated by its own political ideology based on the Chinese revolutionary record and a focus on the ideas of Maoism. Both events exerted a considerable influence on Indonesia, given the important political role played by the Communist Party of Indonesia (CPI) and the socialist forces after gaining independence.

By supporting communist movements across the world, Moscow and Beijing were influencing the Indonesian communists as well. On the one hand, the Soviet-Chinese alliance instilled confidence in the CPI, inspiring it to take a more active political stance. On the other, this cooperation remained hard-going in view of the difficult internal political situation in Indonesia and differences that emerged in the process of collaboration between Moscow and Beijing, for one part, and the CPI, for the other.

One of the main factors in the rapprochement between Jakarta and Beijing was their shared anti-imperialist stand. Both nations sought independent development, freedom from Western influences, and decolonization of Asia and Africa. Sukarno regarded China as both a strong ally and important partner that could help in founding the would-be Non-Aligned Movement. Despite discrepancies in national ideologies, both leaders supported the ideas of the socialist orientation.

Sukarno sympathized with China's ambitious and strong-willed approach to international affairs. The Chinese leaders expressed readiness to promote their interests and render support to anti-colonial movements, as well as cooperate in the economy on beneficial terms. At the same time, the USSR as part of the global socialist system was rather more inclined to regulation and control, something that led to a cooling-off in relations between the two countries at the late stages of Sukarno's presidency.

Generally, it should be noted that the Bandung Conference had strong international repercussions, influencing, among other things, the USSR's foreign policy. The conference approved the Bandung Declaration on the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation, which included ten principles elaborating on the "Panchsheel" (such as: respect for fundamental human rights, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small, abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country, abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers, refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity

or political independence of any country, settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means).

The conference also preceded the official establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at a meeting in Belgrade in 1961. The initiative for it came from President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito, Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah, and President of Indonesia Sukarno.

The emergence of so powerful a format that comprised many non-Western countries (such as India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma/Myanmar, the PRC, Egypt, and others) compelled the USSR to step up its campaign in this sector. At the turn of the 1950s, the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, paid many of his foreign visits to NAM countries (including India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Egypt). The USSR had a vested interest in the further decolonization of Global South countries, while non-aligned nations were keen on receiving Soviet economic aid.

Generally, the Bandung Conference strengthened solidarity between developing countries. Many of them subsequently joined the Non-Aligned Movement and this helped them to preserve their relatively independent foreign policies. The participants in the Bandung Conference discussed general problems, such as colonialism, racism and economic inequality, something that enabled formerly disunited nations influenced by their colonial masters to speak with a single voice.

The Importance of Historical Memory about the Bandung Conference for Present-Day Russia

The countries that participated in the Bandung Conference seven decades ago represented half of the world population. It can be safely stated that this was a historical prototype of the Global Majority, or at least its considerable part. In the present-day environment, where Russia and many other non-Western states are in search of an institutional framework for new global governance formats, the historical memory of the Bandung Conference and the subsequent emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement takes on new significance.

Under the current international conditions, the principles of the Bandung Declaration are again reminding us of respect for sovereignty, equality of all nations, importance of international law, and, in general, the need for an inclusive non-bloc approach to international relations. These

principles largely correlate with the Russian Federation's foreign policy initiatives on creating a non-bloc security system in Europe and Asia and with the principles that Russia has consistently upheld on the international scene after the end of the Cold War. So, the Bandung non-bloc ideas were half a century ahead of their time.

The record of the Bandung Conference as an attempt to ensure Global South solidarity despite the variety of national interests of its members is, in effect, what is being reproduced within the expanded BRICS format. We can draw definite historical parallels between the peace agreement concluded by China and India ahead of the Bandung Conference and China and India opting for a non-confrontational relationship following the BRICS Summit in Kazan in 2024.

Moreover, the principles proposed by the Bandung Conference are important as proving that the Global South countries, now constituting the Global Majority, are quite able to achieve success in international affairs through collective action mechanisms, uphold the need for a more equitable international collaboration, and secure condemnation of the neo-colonial and unfair practices.

The Bandung Conference had an important influence on international relations, formalizing the principle of peaceful coexistence as something to be sought by all countries. The abovementioned Bandung principles, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and recognition of equality of all nations and peoples, have become the basis for peaceful approaches to settling international conflicts. These principles have helped to reduce tensions in global politics and maintain the balance of forces. It is also of no small importance that the Bandung countries really believed in the UN potential and respected the UN Charter as the foundation of the world order. The UN became one of the few venues where their voice could be heard and their right to self-determination protected. In fact, the UN played the key role in defending newly free nations from their former colonial mother countries during the existence of the bipolar system. Today, when the prestige of the United Nations is called into question, this lesson of Bandung should be recalled as well. Despite the cries about the need to dismantle the UN, we think that a much more effective option is to carefully rethink its mechanism with account taken of the current challenges and the corpus of international law developed as part of the effort to adopt the UN Charter. In this regard, the experience available to the Global South countries is definitely invaluable.

Bandung has outlined yet another extremely important principle that postulates flexibility of institution building with simultaneous immutability

of the national sovereignty framework. The record of Bandung and the Non-Aligned Movement, one characterized by the lack of any need to obey certain rules under coercion or comply with the stiff order based on them, can be used to counterbalance pressures coming from Western political and economic organizations, such as NATO or the EU. Sovereignty is still an enduring value for the Global South countries but international interaction is quite possible at the speed and in the formats that suit all of its participants. In this regard, the Bandung principles were later successfully converted to what now inspires the activity of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the leading regional organization.

It is also of no small importance that the ideas of Bandung are universal and non-confrontational. The fact that they are positively perceived in Russia shows that both great powers and smaller actors can act collectively within the framework of these principles, since they effectively complement the striving to build a fair, flexible and multipolar world order.

Conclusion

In 1955, the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, which gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement, then continued to develop until 2025; the Bandung Spirit and the spirit of solidarity became something that is very relevant to the current global geopolitics and geo-economics dynamics.

For the Global Majority, the conference served as both a watershed moment and a guiding light for all those determined to break free from colonial domination. Bandung provides important lessons for the Global Majority on how to face the challenges of a world of nations in creating a new multilateral world. This will indeed be the defining geopolitical project of the remaining three-quarters of the 21st century that should put Africa and Asia at the epicentre of the development of a new international order.

In conclusion, the evolution of BRICS+ represents a critical juncture in the reconfiguration of global power structures. Rooted in the legacy of the Bandung Conference and NAM, non-aligned countries now face a dual challenge: to harness the economic, industrial, and security benefits of emerging alliances while preserving their strategic autonomy.

For NAM countries, the challenge lies in navigating these turbulent dynamics. They must develop resilient supply chains that reduce the risk

of supply disruptions while also contributing to the formation of a fair global trading system. This will require unprecedented levels of international cooperation, technological innovation, and policy coordination. The future outlook suggests that while the potential for economic and security gains is significant, so too are the risks of escalating resource conflicts.

By adopting a “partial multi-alignment” strategy, NAM countries can engage with BRICS+ to diversify economic partnerships and secure alternative financial mechanisms without compromising their independent-active foreign policies. The lessons learned from the evolution of resource control, energy diversification, and industrial modernization will be pivotal in shaping a more equitable multipolar world order.

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