

Turkey at the Bandung Conference: A fully-aligned among the non-aligned

Gürol Baba*

Senem Ertan**

Abstract

This paper focuses on Turkey's participation at the Bandung Conference (1955) from an historical perspective. Turkey with its peculiar "anti-imperialist" Independence War (1919-1923) experience could have found a privileged spot at the Conference. Yet, Ankara did not only abstain from using this experience but also detached itself from the development of the non-aligned movement. Its participation to Bandung was even with Washington's manhandling. As a result Turkey was marginalized at the conference. This paper investigates Turkish-American interactions in terms of their expectations from the Conference. The paper argues that these expectations were discordant due to the asymmetrical (superpower and middle power) nature of Turkish-American alliance. Turkey, attended the Conference, with almost no preparation, propagated against the Soviet bloc, which made it seem like an American "Trojan horse". With this attitude Ankara aimed to show Washington that it is an "indispensible" and staunch ally. Washington, on the other hand, aimed to know the level of anti-Americanism within the non-aligned movement and Turkey's spokespersonship could reveal that. Moreover, the Conference increased Turkey's distance from the non-aligned countries, which made it even more dependent to the US. The paper aims to prove these with the archival material from American, Turkish, and British archives.

Key words: Bandung Conference, Turkey, United States, Asymmetrical Alliance

Introduction

Bandung Conference was one of the most significant events of the Cold War period. That was the first time in world politics that the free states of Asia and Africa congregated to discuss common problems and to establish a united approach particularly in terms of anti-colonialism and Afro-Asian solidarity. Therefore the Conference was like a "monkey wrench" in the solidification of bipolar world. The Spirit of Bandung, emphasized by the most prominent figures of the Third World –also known as neutralists i.e. Zhou Enlai, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Ahmed Sukarno- was one of the most significant elements of the Conference, which unearthed the non-Alignment movement.

The Conference aims to materialize a new group (non-aligned movement) in world politics, which made the US uneasy. Washington initially decided to discard/ignore the whole event but later tried to use it as a platform to grind down the anti-American tendencies of the attendees. For this, the US

* Assistant Professor, Social Sciences University of Ankara, Department of International Relations, e-mail: gurol.baba@asbu.edu.tr

** Assistant Professor, Social Sciences University of Ankara, Department of Political Science, senem.ertan@asbu.edu.tr

administration utilized a covert strategy to “motivate its friends” attending the Conference to prevent the formation of a radical anti-Western output. One of these “friends” was unquestionably Turkey.

As a new NATO ally, in 1952, Turkey had been enjoying the deepening of its relations with the US. Turkey until the mid-1950s had received a substantial amount of military and financial aid from the US. The major reason of this inflow was Turkey’s significance in Washington’s eyes, regarding its geo-strategic location and potential to protect NATO’s interests militarily. Ankara wanted to use every opportunity for keeping it in that way.

This paper aims to uncover the asymmetries and commonalities in American and Turkish outlook within the framework of the Bandung Conference. The asymmetries were firstly how Turkey and the US see and value each other as allies and secondly their level of preparedness about the conference. The commonalities were basically their Soviet and Communist anxieties. From this perspective, the paper argues that Turkey’s participation to the Conference was not because of its individual initiative but American expectation and motivation. Therefore at the Conference, Turkey could not, and may be not even want to, create an independent image but had to act as an envoy of the US.

The paper narrates this argument under three sections. Firstly it gives the main mottos of the Bandung Conference spiritually and practically, secondly it examines the US’ concerns about the Conference and how they evolved into a strategy to influence its friendly attendees, and thirdly, it elaborates Turkey’s participation, representation, influence, and image at the conference.

Spirit and Practice

The Conference was organized by Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), India, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the Philippines. On 18 April 1955, the leaders of twenty nine formerly colonized nations of Asian and Africa were attendees. In this sense, it had a vast representational spectrum by covering almost of all Asia and independent Africa totaling 1.4 billion people.¹ Congregating that many new nations on the same platform not only consolidated their mutual recognition but also signified the emergence of a new “grouping” in international politics. This was labelled as the Non-Aligned Movement, with an assertion to emphasize their economic, political, and ideological identity separate from the two superpower blocs.

The Conference was initiated, congregated and announced by Asian and African countries. Although the attendees had several levels of discordant views, they

¹ The conference attendees from Asia were Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, China (People’s Republic), India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, North and South Vietnam, and Yemen; from Africa were Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, Liberia, Libya, and the Sudan. See: Carlos P. Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1956, p. 35.

managed to announce 'The Spirit of Bandung'² to both American and Soviet Blocs. This "spirit" operated on three levels.³ The first level was the celebration of dismantling colonial pressures and underlining the solidarity against colonial, or more appropriately, super powers. Secondly the discursive disputes were between the non-aligned (India, Burma, Indonesia), anti-Semitic West Africans, and attendees allied with the US. Thirdly, the Spirit intended to establish a platform for Asian powers to realign their forces.

In practice, the Conference managed to formulate ten principles, which were transformed into the final communiqué on 24 April 1955.⁴ The communiqué put forward idealistic principles for promoting economic cooperation (technical assistance, formation of a Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development, and several cooperative measures on export-import, banking and taxation, and nuclear energy), cultural cooperation (by denying and condemning colonialism and its cultural repercussions, racialism and emphasizing the importance of developing cultural contacts), human rights and self-determination, promotion of world peace and cooperation, and dealing with the problems of dependent peoples. Yet these principles could not be transformed into practice particularly because the Conference did not establish a new international or regional institution.

The point here is that Conference's conveners did not really aim to formulate a regional institution. What they, consciously or unconsciously, did was a normative understanding of inter-regional affairs, which 'provided important foundations for Asian regional order'.⁵ In other words, the Bandung Conference was a bit of a testing ground for setting up a dialogue venue for several newly independent countries.

Although throughout the discussions at the Conference, it was difficult to bring up solid common points among the attendees, anti-super power or anti-imperialistic attitude was clearly exposed⁶ even if the conveners did not intend to create an anti-Western bloc. One major point here was the concept of non-intervention. Bandung Conference rejected the Western conceptualization of permitting great powers' intervention for peace and balance of power. The other important point was the major conveners', i.e. India, Indonesia, Ceylon, Burma and Egypt, negative attitude to the Great Power oriented regional groupings. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru labelled North Atlantic Treaty

² Chen Jian, "China and the Bandung Conference: Changing Perceptions and Representations" p. 132 in See Seng Tan & Amitav Acharya, *Bandung Revisited The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, Nus Press, Singapore, 2008

³ A. W. Stargardt, *The Emergence of the Asian System of Powers*, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1989), pp. 561-595, P.593

⁴ For the text see: *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia (Ed.). Asia-Africa speak from Bandung*, Djakarta: 1955, pp. 161-169.

⁵ Amitav Acharya & Seng Tan, *The Normative Relevance of the Bandung Conference for Contemporary Asian and International Order*, in See Seng Tan & Amitav Acharya, *Bandung Revisited The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, Nus Press, Singapore, 2008, P.2

⁶ Public Record Office (PRO), 'Asian Conferences, 1947-1955', 8 December 1955, FO 371/116987.

Organization (NATO) as 'one of the most powerful protectors of colonialism'. Nehru added that Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) type 'military alliances ... do not provide any solution [but] do more harm' ⁷. These structures were criticized as Great Powers' means for regional influence and domination. The negative views at the Conference not only separated Western oriented/allied attendees, i.e. Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, the Philippines, from the non-aligned, but also casted a light on a posture against the US' regional and international aims and interests. Therefore it is important to examine, as the flip side of the coin, the US' anxieties about the Bandung Conference.

The US' Concerns

The US', concerns surfaced due to the conflict between American and the neutralists' outlook towards international politics. In 1950s neutralists began to wield influence on the United Nations. Moreover in practice these countries do not accept the US' attitude of intervention for consolidating its control over lesser powers and various regions, as it was seen at the Korean War. This conflict was aggravated by the expansion of American influence on several countries via bilateral military alliances, regional pacts, military/financial aid, i.e. the US-Japan Security Treaty of 1951, the Philippine-American Pact of 1951, the ANZUS Treaty of 1952, the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty of 1954, bilateral defense agreement with Taiwan of 1954.

The existence and more importantly organization potential of the neutralists fueled Washington's anxieties about a possible link between Bandung and "the Communists". On 25 January State Department in a circular telegram to certain diplomatic missions, including Ankara, stated that:⁸

(a) Communists will attempt "rig" Conference (b) Main Communist purpose at Conference will be divide free Asian countries from their Western friends (c) Conference will be used by Communists as vehicle for propaganda purposes throughout area (d) Unless non-Communist countries exercise utmost caution and alertness they will find themselves joining in adoption of resolutions suggesting common purposes with Communist bloc and which could only be misunderstood by non-Communist nations not participating in Conference.

The other important US concern was about the evolution of such political gathering. The US Information agency stated that, the American administration is 'concerned with the uncommitted, the wavering, the confused, the apathetic, or

⁷ Speech in the closed session of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, 22 April 1955. File No. SI/162/9/64-MEA in Nehru, Jawaharlal. Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (Volume 28, Reference on Bandung Conference), Edited by Ravinder Kumar and H.Y. Sharada Prasad. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund; Oxford University Press, 2001.

⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, Washington, January 25, 1955, , 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Volume XXI, p. 23.

the doubtful within' these newly independent countries.⁹ On the same issue, the US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles commented that 'such a loose regional association' of African and Asian countries 'with meetings from time to time better acquainted with each other'. The Secretary added that such a loose regional association with meetings from time to time could become a very effective forum, and that the idea of such regional groupings approximated the Soviet line advanced at the Berlin Conference in favor of continental groupings from with the U.S. would be excluded'.¹⁰

Regardless of such concerns, the initial reaction of American administration was to ignore the Conference by labeling it as 'immoral and short sighted'.¹¹ Accordingly, American policy makers tried to convince its allies for not to attend. The Philippines, Japan and Cambodia hesitated about attending due to the strong American pressure, but they felt like they had to be there. Thailand on the other hand proposed to send an observer as opposed to be an active participant, but would still attend.¹² In other words, the US could not inhibit its allies' attendance.

Regarding the regional policy requirements of its Asian allies, the US administration realized that a flexible outlook towards the Conference would be more appropriate.¹³ Washington firstly ceased its reactions against the Conference and its allies' participation. The State Department informed the relevant missions that 'it would be preferable for friendly Asian countries to accept the invitation' to the Conference.¹⁴ These were; Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, South Vietnam, Ceylon, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey, which were either staunch allies or firm sympathizers of the Western bloc.

This flexibility in Washington's outlook did not mean that the US completely welcomed the conference or not going to interfere. In a memorandum from the Acting Chief of the Reports and Operations Staff to the Secretary of State, the US objectives at the Bandung Conference are stated as 'should be (1) successful rebuttal of Communist charges, and (2) encouragement of an affirmative attitude by the Conference toward Free World and U.S. achievements and goals'. Therefore the US authorities planned 'to keep in close touch with' the above mentioned pro-Western attendees 'through normal diplomatic channels giving

⁹ Kenneth A. Osgood, 'Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World', in Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns (eds), *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006p. 7

¹⁰ FRUS, Minutes of a Meeting, Secretary's Office, Department of State, Washington, January 7, 1955, 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Volume XXI, p.4.

¹¹ Evelyn Colbert, *Southeast Asia in International Politics 1941-1956*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977, p. 331.

¹² Kweku Ampiah, *The Political And Moral Imperatives Of The Bandung Conference Of 1955 The Reactions Of the US, UK and Japan*, Kent: Global Oriental, 2007, p. 36-38

¹³ H.W. Brands, *The Specter of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World, 1947-1960*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989 p.5

¹⁴ Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, Washington, January 25, 1955, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, East Asian Security; Cambodia; Laos, Volume XXI*, p. 23.

advice as appropriate'.¹⁵ In a circular telegram from the State Department to several diplomatic missions stated that US allies 'should be fully prepared stand up to Communists and give as good as and better than they receive, they would be well-advised avoid onus initiating acrimonious exchanges and instead take constructive and non-provocative positions in which uncommitted elements could join them and would find it difficult not join'. The State Department was also 'hopeful that with planning and cooperation non-Communist nations will be able not only prevent effective Communist exploitation Conference to detriment non-Communist world but also to turn Conference to positive benefit'.¹⁶

The US administration's main concern in terms of the Communists was about the People's Republic of China (PRC), particularly on a speculative role that the PRC could play in Asia, not that much about the Soviet Union. In the mid-1950s, Moscow was not in a struggle with China for leading the new nations. Moreover, the Soviets did not have economic leverage in Asia and Africa compared to the US. More importantly, in an anti-super power and anti-Cold War protagonists conference, Soviet Union would not be welcomed.¹⁷

The US was concerned about the possibility that China could stimulate 'the growth of neutralism in Asia' and could motivate 'neutralists and other non-communist countries that "peaceful coexistence" with China is not only feasible but desirable'.¹⁸ Regarding the Conference the State Department considered that 'Chinese Communists may be expected exert disproportionate influence and make every effort utilize Conference enhance own prestige and discredit U.S. and its allies in eyes Asian-African nations'. Chinese could also 'seek lull other Asian nations into false sense security re "peaceful" nature their own intentions ... while placing blame for continuing World tensions on "aggressive" and "imperialistic" motives of U.S.' and 'discredit various mutually beneficial cooperative arrangements in area to which U.S. is party and create psychology which would make it difficult for Asian-African countries, particularly those under Communist threat, accept essential aid from U.S'.¹⁹

Against such anxiety and frustration the US administration asked its diplomatic missions to motivate "friendly delegations" to be prepared to dictate US' position against the Communists. Accordingly the "friendly delegations" should assert:

- a. U.N. commission finding of unmistakable Communist aggression Korea.
- b. Mass exodus invariable accompaniment extension Communist rule, in Korea and Vietnam no less than

¹⁵ Memorandum From the Acting Chief of the Reports and Operations Staff (Gilman) to the Secretary of State, February 8, 1955, Department of State, Central Files, 670.901/2-866. Secret.

¹⁶ Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, Washington, February 25, 1955, Department of State, Central Files, 670.901/2-2555. Secret

¹⁷ Guy J. Pauker, *The Rise and Fall of Afro-Asian Solidarity*, Asian Survey, Vol. 5, No. 9 (Sep., 1965), pp. 425-432, P. 427

¹⁸ John Foster Dulles Conversation with French Ambassador Maurice Couve de Murville, February 8, 1955, Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199, R.W. Rinden, 'Nationalism in the Far East', Eisenhower Library, File Folder No.9, Bandung, Box 2, p.18

¹⁹ Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions, Washington, February 25, 1955, Department of State, Central Files, 670.901/2-2555. Secret

East Germany. c. Communist fear of truth exemplified by iron curtain suppression civil political religious liberties. d. Slave labor in Communist China and USSR. e. Contrast Chinese Communist peace talk with their rejection UN invitation discuss termination offshore island hostilities and repeated declarations intent seize Formosa by armed force. f. Fact so-called Five Principles and others equally important to cause of freedom, including principles UN Charter, have long been observed as standards of conduct by democracies. Necessity for NATO and Manila Pact to safeguard Western Europe and Southeast Asia from threatened Communist violation such principles. g. Demonstrated value economic aid, technical assistance to underdeveloped countries from more industrialized nations and desirability such aid continue. Also contrast between U.S. and Soviet records this regard. h. Questions likely be raised in atomic field—e.g. nuclear moratorium, disarmament, peaceful uses—will be subject separate guidance.

The State Department's frustrated aims show that Washington's above mentioned flexibility about conference had a major reason; to motivate the Western oriented allies to be the envoys of US interests and, hence, to organize a counterweighing grouping against the anti-American posture at the Conference. Turkey with its heavily American stance back then would seriously be useful for this course

Turkey: A volunteer envoy?

Turkey's attendance at the Conference should be interpreted within the framework of developed and deepened relations since the Truman Doctrine of 1947. In order to prevent Turkey's possible fall into the Communist bloc Truman Doctrine²⁰ signified the official announcement of Turkish-American alliance. The bilateral relations were strengthened by the Marshall Plan agreement signed on 4 July 1948.²¹ The relations unquestionably deepened with Turkey's NATO membership on 18 February 1952²² after Turkey's successful assist in Korea.²³

Naming Turkey as a "friendly country" before the Bandung Conference mostly depended on the US' strategic requirements in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey's geostrategic positioning was expected to help the defence of a great deal of NATO's eastern fronts skirting from the Dardanelles to the Black Sea and

²⁰ For details see: H.S. Truman, *Memoirs Years of Trial and Hope*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1956 pp.100-101

²¹ For the full text of the Agreement see :

<http://turkey.usembassy.gov/uploads/images/wvKSFrTPBr97ulkwAYao4g/11be1166.pdf>
accessed on

06.06.2016. For Turkey's inclusion to the Marshall Plan see: Turkish Prime Ministerial Archives (TPMA), Folder: 400-1118 Fon Code: 30..10.0.0 Place No: 219.476..18., Ankara, 26/6/1948.

²² FRUS, 1952-54, Vol 9, 178-84; Turkish Grand National Assembly Proceedings (TGNAP), Vol 13, 313-346, 18 February 1952.

²³ Fusun Turkmen, *Turkey and the Korean War* in H. Tek, —The Decision-Making Process of Turkey Deploying Turkish Troops to Korea. Bilkent University MA, 2005, p. 33; John. M. V. Lippe, *Forgotten Brigade of the Forgotten War: Turkey's Participation in the Korean War*, Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 36(1), 92-102, p. 98.

from the Aegean to Suez and Egypt together with the land transportation to the oil areas in the Middle East.²⁴

After NATO membership, Turkish-American relations continued deepening, via economic and military aid programs. For almost a decade after Turkey's membership, NATO was identified as the US.²⁵ In March 1952 Turkey and the US reached an accord on the transfer of modern military equipment to Turkey.²⁶ In 1954 Turkey received \$ 30 million financial aid from the US.²⁷ The US' increased focus on Turkey in the first half of 1950s was mostly because of an expectation that strong Turkish armed forces might be necessary to hold the Soviets in the event of an unexpected Soviet attack.²⁸ From 1948 to mid-1955 direct economic aid to Turkey totaled around \$ 396 million. In addition, \$ 195 million was given as indirect aid and \$ 9 million as technical aid. From 1948-1956, the total amount of aid was \$ 601 million.²⁹ During the 1950s several American bases and facilities were established in Turkey, i.e. air bases, strategic missile bases, radar and communication facilities and living quarters.³⁰

The deepened relations between the US and Turkey created an inevitable but an unspoken American influence on Turkish foreign policy. Balkan and Baghdad Pacts exemplify this clearly. The Balkan Pact was an American encouragement for linking Yugoslavia indirectly to NATO via Turkey and Greece. Turkey accepted American decision initiated the Balkan Pact as an Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia, which obliged the signatories to consult on matters of common interest and to discuss military matters.³¹ The Balkan Pact was concluded on 28 February 1953. The Baghdad Pact was also Washington's encouragement in order to protect extensive oil resources and to maintain Israel's security via regional powers.³² The US Secretary of State John F. Dulles visited the Near and the Middle East in May 1953 to convey this encouragement.³³ After the visit, Turkey accepted again to initiate the formation of a regional pact, not only as a NATO partner amidst long-lasting relations with the Arab states but also Turkish administration was very keen to follow American oriented projects.³⁴ The Baghdad Pact was formed, in the same year with the Bandung Conference, by the United Kingdom, Turkey,

²⁴ George C. McGhee, *The US-Turkish-NATO Connection*, Londra: Macmillan Press, 1990, p. 88-89.

²⁵ Ferenc A. Vali, *Bridge Across the Bosphorus*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971, p. 125.

²⁶ Turkish Prime Ministerial Bulletins (TPMB), No. 220, March 1952, p. 105.

²⁷ Richard D. Robinson, —Developments Respecting Turkey||, 45 in *American University Field Staff Reports*, Vol 1, July 1953-October 1954.

²⁸ J. S. Raleigh, *The West and the Defence of the Middle East*, *Middle Eastern Affairs*, Vol. 6(6-7), 177-184, p. 180.

²⁹ William Reader Bullard, *The Middle East: A Political and Economic Survey*, London: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 523.

³⁰ Mehmet Gonlubol, *NATO and Turkey an Overall Appraisal*, *Milletlerarasi Munasebetler Yilligi*, Vol. XI, 1-38. pp. 24-25.

³¹ TPMB, No 231, February 1953, 278-85.

³² National Intelligence Estimate, *Conditions and Trends in the Middle East Affecting US Security*, January 15, 1953, INR-NIE Files, NIE-76 Secret.

³³ FRUS, 1952-54, Vol 9, Part 1, pp. 1-167, the visit of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Mutual Security Administrator Harold Stassen to the Near and Middle East, 9-29 May 1953.

³⁴ Richard D. Robinson, —Turkey Strives for Greater Security at Home and Abroad, pp. 1-2 in *American University Field Staff Reports*, Vol. 3, No. 8, 1954.

Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan. The US was not directly involved. In these two instances, Washington triggered Ankara, which made Turkey not more than a proxy of American interests. From this point of view it is almost unquestionable that Turkey attended the Bandung Conference via American encouragement.

Yet what is important about the year 1955 was that Turkey's importance in the eyes of Washington had begun to fade. Turkey wanted to increase the amount of American financial and military aid but at the same time was aware of the fact that the US' focus on Turkey was a bit distracted. In 1955 'America's continued contribution to the equipment and expansion of the Turkish armed forces and Turkey's military budget, and the presence in Turkey of thousands of Americans engaged in administering it, kept America foremost among foreign countries in Turkish minds'. Therefore 1955 was not year that Turkey could/would say "No" to the US. Turkey was not only bonded to the Americans regarding its military development but also to ease its aggravating economic difficulties. As these difficulties 'grew [Turkey] tended increasingly to exploit her position as the Eastern bastion of NATO in support of her claims for further [economic] help'. Yet Turkey's 'persistent dunning of the American throughout the year, combined, as it was, with a rigid refusal to accept American advice on the measures which she could take to put her economic house in order, lost her a good deal of the abundant good will which she had hitherto enjoyed in America'.³⁵

The US seemed to be aware of that but was not quite sure how to treat Turkey's demands. In 1955 Turkey was in a serious seek for financial, and also military, assistance from the US. The seek for aid was for the 'partial conversion of the Turkish army by 1958 to modified US Tables of Organization and Equipment along lines desired by NATO Planners and the Joint Military Mission for Aid to Turkey'. Such conversion would cost at approximately \$ 800 million.³⁶ President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in January 1955 at the 230th meeting of the National Security Council 'pointed out that ... it was much better and cheaper to assist the Turks to build up their own armed forces than to create additional US divisions'³⁷ in the Middle East. Yet, Turkey's economic situation in 1955 was not very satisfactory. The US view was that 'unless Turkey adopts and implements a policy of greater internal stability and external solvency, the US has no choice but to reexamine its support of Turkish efforts in military and economic build up'.³⁸ In terms of an extra and modern military build up the American officials consider that there was a 'serious lack in the Turkish armed forces of career soldiers, sailors and airmen with sufficient technical skill to make profitable use of many modern weapons for which the Turkish Government was making requests on' the US. Regarding the economy, the American officials consider that 'the Turkish

³⁵ PRO, Telegram from the British Embassy by Selwyn Lloyd to the Foreign Office, January 16, 1956, FO 371/123999.

³⁶ National Security Council Report, Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council, February 28, 1955, Department of State, S/S-NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5510 Series, Top Secret.

³⁷ Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records.

³⁸ Memorandum from the Director of the Executive Secretariat to the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary of State, January 5, 1955, Department of State, Central Files, 882.00/1-555, Secret.

economy was in dire straits'.³⁹ Therefore the US could not cover the above-mentioned \$800 million but only, and may be, less than \$300 million. Moreover by 1955, 'Turkey has increasingly lived beyond its means; with the result that in [1953-54] foreign exchange resources have been exhausted, a burdensome external debt has been accumulated, and inflation has developed internally'. Turkish 'exports [were] no longer competitive in world markets, ... and foreign investors [were] ... unwilling to risk much long-term capital in Turkey'.⁴⁰ Turkey aimed to uplift its armed forces to NATO standards without really paying an attention to its economic condition. Turkey's immediate request from the US by then was \$ 300 million, which was declined by the Americans.⁴¹ Turkey was losing its leverage in Washington. Hence Ankara needed another platform to increase its clout. That was the Bandung Conference.

The Conference could be a persuasive platform for Turkey to show how staunch it was to protect "Western" interests. The American administration also believed that at the Conference Turkey could be encouraged to 'put up a firm and well-informed counter to the Communists, to attend'.⁴² In January the US increased its efforts to make sure all potential supporters of American views attend the conference and Turkey was certainly one of them. In a telegram from the State Department to the US Mission in Ankara, it was stated that Turkey's participation to the Conference would 'probably be essential to [American] interests'. The same telegram reiterated that "[i]t seems doubtful that any other [than Turkey] participant would be willing and able to provide a forthright and effective anti-communist leadership.'⁴³ Therefore it was necessary for the US that Turkey should not have a negative position about the conference.⁴⁴

While Turkish officials had been trying to increase the American aid, without much of a success,⁴⁵ during the Conference an interesting development occurred. On 22 April 1955, the Americans decided to sign a loan agreement of \$ 20 million with the Turks.⁴⁶

The agreed sum of money was not really what Turkey asked for but showed Washington's "good faith" in continuing its deepened relations with Ankara. There was no a clear evidence that this agreement had spurred Turkey's pro-American attitudes at the Conference but the date of the agreement does not

³⁹ Memorandum of Discussion at the 238th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, February 24, 1955, Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records, Top Secret.

⁴⁰ National Security Council Report, Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council, February 28, 1955, Department of State, S/S-NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5510 Series, Top Secret.

⁴¹ National Security Council Report, Note by the Executive Secretary to the National Security Council, February 28, 1955, Department of State, S/S-NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5510 Series, Top Secret.

⁴² PRO, Minutes by A.A.W. Landymore, January 26, 1955, FO 371/116976.

⁴³ Dulles to US Embassy (Ankara), January 20, 1955, Central Decimal Files, 1955-1959, Record Group 59.

⁴⁴ Circular Telegram No. 491, February 25, 1955, Central Decimal Files, 1955-1959, Record Group 59.

⁴⁵ Telegram from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, April 21, 1955, Department of State, Central Files, 882.00/4-2155, Secret.

⁴⁶ PRO, Chronological Summary of Events in Turkey during 1955, FO 371/123999

seem like a coincidence either. The US possibly wanted to motivate Turkey at the Conference a little bit more.

Turkey's attendance at the Conference 'exercised a discreetly moderating influence'. Turkey 'became a member of the Afro-Asian group in the United Nations'. Turkey's 'hope [was] ... to exercise a continuous restraining influence on this group [Turkey] also found it necessary to make some concessions to their anti-Western views'.⁴⁷

Turkish delegation members emphasized their anti-Communist posture.⁴⁸ In this posture, the members did not openly use the term/name "the Soviets" but very strongly implied that Europe and Asia is under the threat of the Soviet Union. The Delegation put down the reasons why Turkey became a member of the Western Bloc and even took a step further by implicitly inviting the Conference attendees to join that Bloc. For amplifying its efforts, Turkish Delegation promoted the Western Bloc as the group of "peace-loving countries".

The Delegation focused on three major items: national policies could/should be put forward directly (national self-determination), non-interference in domestic affairs, the Communist take over in Eastern Europe.⁴⁹ In this vein, the head of Turkish Delegation, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, on 21 April, stated that:

The major reason behind the North Atlantic Pact, Balkan Pact, Turkish-Pakistani and Turkish-Iraqi Pacts, and South East Asia Security Pact is the threat of aggression. ... Today we are hopeful that the peace and security could be protected because of the power of peace-loving people showed that this aggression was not and could not be successful. ... After the Second World War one of the saviours and also the founding members of the United Nations, violated international commitments and established its domination over the Eastern Europe, which faded the hopes imputed to the United Nations. ... The aggression and pressure on Asia should be ended immediately and our primary duty is to protect our continent from this aggression. ... Accordingly the remnants of old imperialism and its racist and colonial practices should be wiped out of the world.⁵⁰

Zorlu on the 24th of April emphasized Turkey's emotional attachment to Indonesia, which goes back to Ottoman times. He reiterated the post-Second World War threats and pressure coming from the Soviets. Zorlu said:

Today's world is divided into two blocs. One these blocs mobilized its armed forces for ending the Second World War, and believed in the peaceful settlement of disputes by

⁴⁷ PRO, Telegram from the British Embassy by Selwyn Lloyd to the Foreign Office, January 16, 1956, FO 371/123999

⁴⁸ TPMB, No. 257, April 1955.

⁴⁹ *Zafer* 27.04.1955 in TPMB, No. 257, April 1955, p. 114-115.

⁵⁰ TPMB, No. 257, April 1955.

fully binding itself to the United Nations and Atlantic Charters and furthermore committed all its efforts for mending the deep wounds of the War. ... Yet we, very unfortunately see that, these hopes and intentions could be faded away soon. The Eastern European Countries lost their independence under the auspices of tyrant administrations. ... Even Turkey itself felt these pressures.⁵¹

Zorlu added that the reason for NATO's foundation was to deal with these pressures by a congregation of nations with their right to protect themselves. A similar reason also triggered the Balkan Pact and Turkey-Pakistan Friendship Treaty and Turkish-Iraqi and South East Asia Pact. He added that it is all peace-loving nations' responsibility to congregate under the same course to repel this pressure.⁵²

The Americans appreciated Turkish delegation's endeavor for protecting UN's general principles.⁵³ Moreover, the Turks also believed that one of the most influential delegations at the Conference was themselves, which was not completely wrong. One of the major Turkish theses that regional pacts should be organized in conformity with the UN principles was accepted. Moreover, Zorlu's proposition about a accepting a new form of colonialism, namely Soviet, exerted via influence, defeatism, and aggression was also accepted.⁵⁴

Yet, Turkey could have done more than this. As one of the recent nations established after a spectacular independence war, Turkey could not present an original and an independent argument about newly formed nations. In other words, Turkey could not use its comparative advantage to have an amplified voice at the Conference, as a spokesman of African-Asian new states but of the US.

Conclusion

Although there were serious frustrations and angst about the Conference at the beginning, the US was not completely negative at the end. There was a 'balanced consensus between the extremes of those who think Bandung was an unqualified success for the [US] and those who class it as an unqualified success for Zhou Enlai.'⁵⁵ The US' 'message of greeting to the [Bandung] Conference [had] a propaganda value', and with all the extra pro-American statements of various American allies at the Conference, "International Communism" got in the communiqué.⁵⁶ Moreover, at the end of the Conference no anti-Western organization/institution/scheme had come into being.⁵⁷

⁵¹ TPMB, No. 257, April 1955.

⁵² TPMB, No. 257, April 1955.

⁵³ PRO, Telegram from the British Embassy by Selwyn Lloyd to the Foreign Office, January 16, 1956, FO 371/123999

⁵⁴ *Aksam* 25.04.1955.

⁵⁵ PRO, G.D.L. White to G. Crombie, 'Asian-African Conference': Memorandum for the Secretary of State of External Affairs, Wellington, May 5, 1955, PRO FO 371/116984

⁵⁶ Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Department of State, February 26, 1955, Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 60 D 627, CF 426.

⁵⁷ TPMB, No. 257, April 1955.

From Turkey's side, the Conference was a new platform or even a means to re-show its significance to Washington. Turkey aimed to show its emotional and political bonding with the Western, more specifically American, values. Without referring to the US or to the Soviets, Turkey put forward its positioning in the bipolar world clearly. Since the Turkish delegation was not really prepared for the legal and economic arguments of the Conveners, it did not comment on the newly emerging concept of non-alignment. Therefore the Turkish delegation championed "the ideals" of Western Bloc and, possibly without a comprehensive calculation, invited the newly independent Asian-African countries, which aimed to develop their independent identities in world politics, to these ideals.

Turkey's aimed to show itself as a staunch ally of the US, thus, from the Turkish side of coin its Delegations' efforts were a success. Yet in terms of attracting African and Asian attendees' interest it was not that successful. The lack of above-mentioned preparedness of Turkish delegation reflected in its statements. Even if the Turkish media at that time rejected it⁵⁸ Turkey could not harvest adequate reception from the attendees. In short, Turkish delegation acted more like a "volunteer envoy" of the US.

⁵⁸ For the details see: *Ulus*, 25.04.1955; *Yeni Sabah* 26.04.1955; *Zafer* 26.04.1955; *Cumhuriyet* 27.04.1955.