

Telegram from Archibald Edward Nye to the Commonwealth Relations Office on the Asian Conference in New Delhi (New Delhi, 31 January 1949)


Caption: In a telegram to the Commonwealth Relations Office on 31 January 1949, Archibald Edward Nye, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in India, outlines the conclusions of the Asian Conference on Indonesia, which took place from 20 to 23 January in New Delhi. He considers the conference to be one of the most important events in the post-war period and believes that it demonstrates the emergence of Asian unity. In view of Asia's new position in the world, Archibald Edward Nye advises the colonial powers to review their policies.

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*Sf. This seems most important. Should be c/o 1st
the initiative. Please*

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*U.S.O.S. We have taken the initiative over
Bumma - 9 with success. Can we*

Inward Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office

ALLOTTED TO NINE & FAR EASTERN DEPARTMENT

D.II.

CYPER (22X)

FROM: U.K. HIGH COMMISSIONER IN INDIA

D. NEW DELHI, 17.40 hours, 31st January, 1949
R. 14.00 hours, 31st January, 1949

*do so on any
other subject,
cf. Malaya?
I rather doubt
it; but if you
have ideas, let
us talk about
them.*

MNB

2.2.49

IMPORTANT

No. X197.

SECRET.

(22) Your telegram 327.

I am sending by bag a despatch summarising the proceedings of the Asian Conference on Indonesia and the events leading up to it. Copies will be sent to all H.M. Missions concerned. The following are the conclusions

(I) the Conference is undoubtedly one of the most important events in the history of the post-war years. Together with the transfer of power to India and Pakistan, it certainly represents the most important development in Asia in this period. It has demonstrated an incipient Asian unity and a joint Asian consciousness which all must recognise as a potent new factor in the world situation.

(II) These events present both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge lies in the dangers which the future actions of any Asian regional group may have on the Western Colonial powers. Whether the countries represented at the Delhi Conference feel that they have won or lost over Indonesia, it is possible that they may next decide to tackle in a similar way the problem of Indo-China or perhaps the French Settlements in India or Malaya or Hong Kong or even Mauritius. It behoves therefore the Government of France and the U.K. to be ready betimes either to forestall or deal with any such possible challenge in a manner which will lead

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to a peaceful settlement and avoid any possibility of a disastrous rift between the West and East. The main opportunity following from this new development is the hope that provided moderate statesmanship prevails and the Western powers including America show appreciative understanding of Asia's new position, the countries represented at the Conference may come to realise that the dangers of increasing Communist pressure all over the East are far more serious than those resulting from colonialism which even where it persists is losing much of its former character in its evolution towards responsible rule. It is surprising indeed that the Russians through their official news agency should have done anything to promote this realisation by criticising the Delhi Conference. (cf. your telegram No.319 of the 28th January) as an attempt to form a counterpart of the Western European bloc. There is also the further hope that any kind of regional grouping might lead to greater economic co-operation between the countries concerned with a view to raising the standard of living of the masses and thus indirectly offering the best possible buttress to the spirit of communism.

(III) In the future it is more necessary than ever before for H.M. Government in the U.K. when formulating their policy on any matter affecting Asia directly or indirectly to take most carefully into account exactly what view the Asian countries hold about it and how they are likely to react to any decision taken by U.K. I consider this aspect of the new situation to be of paramount importance.

Copy to:-

C.R.O. (A)
Foreign Office
" "(S.E.A. Dept.)(3)
Colonial Office

Mr. Wakely.
P.S. to S. of S.
Mr. M.E. Dening
Mr. A.N. Galaworthy

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