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INDONESIA: Non-alignment or Doubly Burned

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Dear Mr. Rogers:



PICTURE POSTCARD INDONESIA: A Bali bellhop and the sinuous, barefoot dancers

I decided to invest two months out of my 13-month global tour here in Indonesia because this land of 86 million people is not only one of the world's leading non-aligned nations, it is one of the least publicized and least explained. As a matter of fact, before I left Washington in November my editor at The Washington Post suggested that if I go nowhere else I should at least go to Indonesia.

First off, since I am fresh from two months in India, I can't help but notice a big difference in how these two countries espouse non-alignment (or an "independent and active foreign policy," as they prefer to call it here). India, with its history of Gandhian non-violence, not only shuns military pacts but is most fastidious of the conditions under which it buys arms for its own police needs. Moreover, it remains aloof from pact nations and moralizes. Indonesia, with its history of guerilla fighting for Independence from the Dutch and its current harassment by civil war, will take arms from just about wherever and however it can. It concludes cultural and trade agreements with pact nations and so far seems to be too engrossed in its own problems to have much energy left for setting the pace of world moral leadership. Moreover,

where India sought a non-alignment policy by choice -- in order to concentrate on its internal development -- Indonesia's non-alignment decision came only partly by choice. It also was forced into non-alignment by bitter experience with both East and West.

Indonesia's non-alignment policy was first enunciated by former Vice President Mohammad Hatta in 1948 when Dr. Hatta, at that time Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, spoke before the provisional Parliament in Jogjakarta. "The Communists at that time had asked why we didn't join the Russian bloc. It was then that I declared that our objective should be to pursue an independent policy and to promote world peace," Hatta told me. Later, he said, "Yugoslavia wanted us to help create a Third Bloc. But if you create a bloc, it's always against someone else. It could only be a moral bloc, a moral union to promote world peace and understanding, such as our Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955." He also explained that a new nation, such as Indonesia, thought it had best concentrate on its internal development. (More of Hatta in WWU-19).

But this involves Indonesia's choice of non-alignment; it does not explain the bitter experience which later made that choice mandatory.

I had a talk with Roeslan Abdulgani, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, former Minister of Information and now Vice Chairman (under President Soekarno) of the all-important National Advisory Council. Abdulgani is generally considered to be the President's closest adviser and perhaps Soekarno's anointed successor -- if that unpleasant duty should ever confront him. Abdulgani is a highly controversial figure in Indonesia. While Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1956, he was arrested by the Army for violating the currency regulations in an attempt to import an American car. He was brought back into political grace by Soekarno personally. Now he seems to be providing the philosophical rationale for the Return to the 1945 Constitution (WWU-18) as well as the rationale for Indonesia's foreign policy. Abdulgani received me in his home at 7 o'clock one evening (tea rather than cocktails) and for a few moments I was distracted by the wealth of books lining his shelves and by the two fingers missing from his badly scarred right hand. This last, I was told later, was caused by a Japanese bomb early in the war. But back to Abdulgani and non-alignment:



SOEKARNO'S SUCCESSOR?

"We have had two extremes. In 1948, when Dr. Hatta said we were against colonialism and imperialism -- but that didn't mean we were for communism, the Communists didn't accept this. They proclaimed the Madiun Revolt of September 1948. (It got only far enough to give the Communists a bad name in Indonesia for a good time to come.) Then the Dutch attacked us, instead of the Communists. The other extreme was in 1952 when there was an abortive Mutual Security agreement between your Ambassador (Merle J.) Cochran and our Minister (of Foreign Affairs) Subardjo. There was an exchange of letters in which arms were promised Indonesia in exchange for all Indonesia's resources being put at the disposal of the Free World." (Cochran exceeded his instructions from Washington and the action brought down the Cabinet.)

Abdulgani continued: "The contradiction for us is not between Moscow and Washington, but between Western Europe and Southeast Asia. Suffering, in the reality, came from the Dutch and from the Japanese. We are more inclined to consider Japan more aggressive than China. In the way of Indonesian people, when you ask, 'From which country will come the danger from the North?', the impulse is to say Japan. (I've run into a few impulses which don't jump that way). However, Indonesia cannot stand alone, because isolation means suicide. But non-alignment does not mean standing alone. Our first Colombo Conference in 1954, after the French Indo China War when the fire was near our door, gave the content that non-alignment should be positive. There we discussed the problem of what is more dangerous, colonialism or communism? We are of the opinion that we are against colonialism. We still believe in the old conception of non-alignment. Military alliance is not the solution for preventing and lessening tension. On the contrary, military alignment will result in an arms race. But we differ with India in the presentation and the execution. Nehru is always attacking military alliances. We are more passive, but we don't like them. We make always treaties of friendship with all these countries -- the Philippines, Iraq -- and then cultural agreements. And their military alliances do not interfere."

And how does Indonesia look at Tibet? "We are not interfering. We consider that a domestic problem because of the 1951 agreement between Tibet and China. But we cannot turn our backs to something between two giants, between India and China. Personally, I think Nehru right. He had no choice. The statement of the Dalai Lama was quite clear. India may be quiet on positive non-alignment now, but Indonesia may be speaking out more. We are in between. But give China more room for movement and for space. Then they will be more independent, even from the Soviet Union. Where? In the UN."

And how does non-alignment affect Indonesia internally? "Our Communist party here is not yet mature. They don't know who to follow, Moscow or Peking. Maybe Peking. But surely not Tito. And they are led by too young people (Communist boss Aidit is 35). We look at the Communist party because of the Madiun Affair, not because of China. And generally there is an ill feeling against Chinese in general, but it is economic."

I did not ask Abdulgani, nor did he volunteer any mention of the frequent charges of Western aid last year to Indonesia's PRRI-Permesta (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, or Revolutionary Government) in Sumatra and Sulawesi (Celebes). But from what everyone else here in Indonesia has told me, I am sure that Abdulgani would be including this under his "bitter experience" category.

Officially, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has limited itself to four "statements":

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1. New equipment was found/the Rebel area and it was of American manufacture.
 2. Planes carrying the equipment to the Rebels were of American manufacture.
 3. Equipment and food supplies parachuted into the Rebel areas were dropped in parachutes containing Formosan markings, and Formosa is a close ally of the U.S.
 4. Allan Pope, a U.S. Air Force officer (on leave), was forced down and captured by the Central Government forces (and saved from being

ripped apart by the angry mobs) after he had bombed a group of civilians on the Island of Ambon as they were leaving Church one Sunday morning.

All this occurred last year and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took foreign correspondents to the scene to judge for themselves.

Beyond these four statements, the Indonesian press, with stories which may well have been "inspired" by the Government (the Indonesian press is highly subject to Government inspiration), has come right out and charged the U.S. with backing the Rebels during 1958 in an attempt to overthrow what the U.S. considered to be a "Communist" government in Djakarta. Of course some of the papers making these charges were communistic organs, but by no means all of them. And the papers have involved the Philippines, as well as the U.S., by charging that Clark Field, north of Manila, has been the air base for many of the planes flying aid to the Rebels.

As a matter of fact, and not charge, the U.S. did move its forces into Singapore and then request the Central Government for permission for U.S. warships to land in Sumatra in order to come to the rescue of American nationals. A friend of mine was present when the U.S. Chargé called on Foreign Minister Subandrio with the request. It seems the Chargé not only pulled out a cigarette and started smoking in the Foreign Minister's face, but proceeded to get chummy by putting his feet up on the table. Subandrio flew into a fury, ordered the man out of his office, told him he was too young to conduct foreign relations and to send back his Ambassador, even if he had just arrived and not yet been officially accredited. The Ministry has been polite enough to have never discussed this publicly. It has also been discreet enough to have never disclosed that as soon as the American move came, Red China volunteered her "assistance" to the Central Government in putting down the Rebellion. My Indonesian friends tell me acceptance of such an offer would have brought the instant end of Indonesia's desired non-alignment.

At the lowest point of Indonesian-U.S. relations in the Spring of 1958, the Indonesians went in for a big anti-SEATO campaign and crowds demonstrated in front of the residence of U.S. Ambassador Howard Jones every night for two weeks solid.

Then came rapprochement -- from both sides. The U.S., specifically Washington, decided it had been a mistake to appraise the Rebel cause as one of anti-communism vs. Central Government communism since Army Chief of Staff Nasution, the leader of the fight against the Rebels, is himself one of Indonesia's leading anti-communists. This decision actually preceded the arrival of Ambassador Jones. Ironically, Jones' predecessor, Ambassador John Allison, had been recalled even though he had been pleading with Washington to change its policy. Anyway, after Jones was here for a while and there were indications of an American change of heart the Indonesian Government began to show it could meet the Americans half way.

The first indication was when Ambassador Jones, anticipating physical assault on the Embassy, made a personal request to the Army regarding the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia) May Day demonstration in which 500,000 persons, loudspeakers, et al, were prepared to gather in Medan Merdeka (Freedom Square) right outside the Embassy's front door. The Army, risking great popular disapproval, issued a regulation at 9:30 a.m. on May 1, just as the show was about to begin. It declared there could be no demonstrations against foreign delegations. (This April, I saw for myself how the Ministry of Communications issued

a public apology after the Railroad Workers Union violated regulations by tacking a "Stamp Out American Intervention" banner onto a celebration train advertising the Return to the 1945 Constitution. And when May Day itself arrived this year, the Army was so specific on what could and could not be "demonstrated" all observances were above reproach.)

The next step toward improved relations came from the U.S. with the announcement, last August 13, of a token military assistance agreement to provide small arms to 20 police battalions. The response was immediate. President Soekarno, in his traditional August 17 Independence Day speech, four days later, dropped the "Western" out of his traditional denunciation of "Western Imperialism." And whereas previous Independence Day parades had always been festooned with hundreds of PKI banners, just one was spotted in last year's three to four-hour march-past. Commented one American official: "This was the Indonesian Government telling us we appreciate your change of heart."

After this, the Government made its first Parliamentary attack against the Communists in years by pushing through a Foreign Investment Law, under discussion since 1954. And it most certainly required pushing: the PKI introduced more than 100 crippling amendments in an attempt to kill it. Economically, the bill is not considered to be so hot. But politically, it is looked upon as a tremendous victory for the West and a sign of encouragement for foreign capital.

More recently, the Government has pushed through a continuance of the martial law emergency regulations which, among other things, forbid strikes. And the Government, fearing a Communist victory at the polls, has postponed the long promised December, 1959 elections for at least another year.

American officials here also seem to be welcoming President Soekarno's latest effort to Return to the 1945 Constitution and institute "Guided Democracy." (WWU-18 & 19). They think it will mean the possibility of a stable Government through the creation of an American-type Chief Executive with a five-year term of office. And they would like to think that President Soekarno has engineered this move as a clever way to curb the growing strength of the Communist Party. Under his "Guided Democracy," the number of political parties will be greatly reduced and those which remain will have their strength greatly diluted. Also, the Army will greatly gain in political strength and American officialdom feels Army Chief of Staff Nasution is the one element in Indonesia fully aware of the communist menace. As one proof of this, they cite the fact that the Army was turning down Communist offers of military assistance even before the U.S. finally came through with it last August. And now, just during my visit here, the U.S. has announced an agreement to sell 60 planes -- World War II bombers and fighters and some newer jet transports -- to the Indonesian Air Force. Up to now, Indonesia's Air Force has been depending upon some 100 Russian MIGs and bombers furnished it through Czechoslovakia.

I am also told that Foreign Minister Subandrio, a former Ambassador to the USSR who has been regarded as an unpredictable virtuoso, now is said to be convinced that Indonesia's best interests lie with the West. It is reported that Subandrio sees Communist China as Indonesia's biggest danger and looks upon the U.S. hegemony in the Pacific as a convenient way for Indonesia to afford and pursue her "independent and active" foreign policy.

As for the President himself, one of Subandrio's underlings told me: "Soekarno is not necessarily pro-Communist. Indonesia in developing its country has to depend upon the support and on the sympathy of not only its

neighbors, but especially of its powerful neighbors: the U.S. on the one hand, and China and Russia on the other. We are only dealing in self-interest and we cannot afford to be in controversy with either country."

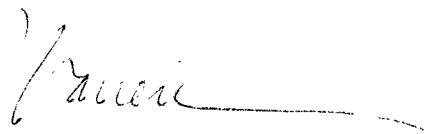
Incidentally, aid from the East here has been estimated at about \$112.5 million from the Soviet Union (\$100 million of this came in one credit package last May), \$16 million from Communist China (plus another \$20 million under negotiation); \$10 million from Czechoslovakia; \$8 million from East Germany; \$2 million from Hungary; and \$40 million from Poland (this last has been in the form of ships and Indonesia reportedly has received a good many Polish patrol boats which it has never announced).

Aid-wise, the U.S. has provided \$525.6 million to Indonesia since the end of World War II (some Marshall Plan, some through Holland) and \$370 million of this has been since Independence in 1950. More than one-third of the post-Independence aid has been under the Public Law 480 program which sells U.S. surplus crops to Indonesia and then leaves the payment (in Rupiahs) in Indonesia banks for loans and grants. Another \$96 million has been earmarked for technical and special assistance. There also has been a \$100 million Development Loan Fund appropriation -- now just about allocated -- which has gone toward building a cement plant in Surabaya (capable of producing one-half of Indonesia's needs), rehabilitating the South Sumatra Railroad and rehabilitating various ports and harbors. Up until now, U.S. technical assistance has been concentrated in the field of education: Helping Indonesia to overcome the tremendous handicap of a Dutch rule which discouraged both schooling and Governmental participation and responsibility. I've already mentioned the recent boost (rather inauguration) of U.S. military aid.

What about future U.S. economic aid? One man close to the scene told me candidly: "I think we are engaged in a holding operation for the next three to five years. Indonesia has rich soil and great rainfall and when people are hungry they simply reach up into the trees or down into the streams. They have never had to go to work here. And it's awfully hard to get enthusiastic about things in this country after the four or five cool morning hours. Indonesia has the wealth to do it. I doubt that Pakistan or India has the wealth to do it. Unquestionably, there is a better investment for our aid elsewhere. But here it is not a question of saving humanity. If Indonesia goes Communist, it would cut off the whole Continent to Australia, permit the Communists to immediately leapfrog Burma, Thailand and the Philippines. And so we are emphasizing the military aspect of aid now. Maybe there is too much emphasis -- when you look at the military's increasing graft and corruption."

Well enough of this dreary statistical meandering. I'll let you ease your eyes a bit on the opposite page with a bit more of pictorial Bali.

Cordially,



Warren W. Unna



The arrival of the gamelan, the sacred village orchestra, with its gongs and reeded xylophones...The "overture" to the dance: American tourists with every conceivable dress, camera and stance, snap first the seated gamelan players, then dash over the ramparts to get the dancers as they warm up...The dance itself: The warriors, representing the forces of Godd, are so frustrated that they can't kill off Old Feathered Face (Evil) they decide to dispatch themselves with their own swords...After the dance, my friend Bier sets up shop. These are his uncle's wood carvings. He also sells the seashells his mother strings together. Now 13, he had to give up school when his father died, sell his bicycle and one of the two family cows to pay for the cremation. During a good day, he makes 25 cents.

