

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

WWU - 17

INDONESIA: Non-alignment - still some doubts

Tjikini Raya, 95 (pav.)
Djakarta
June 5, 1959Mr. Walter S. Rogers.
Institute of Current World Affairs.
366 Madison Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The American Embassy here is understandably happy over the improved relations between Indonesia and the West, specifically between Indonesia and the U.S. However, I've found that all is still not nectar and ambrosia.



PRIME MINISTER, CIGAR AND REPORTER

I had a long talk with Prime Minister Djuanda Kartawidjaja, civil engineer, economist and teacher who was drafted into Government as a political independent and whose Cabinet, now two years old, holds the record for Indonesian Government longevity. Djuanda, who looks to be in his fifties, is a charming, kindly gentleman. He generally is considered to be a friend of the West. And he is a personal friend of U.S. Ambassador Howard Jones. They used to travel together in the villages when Djuanda was Indonesia's planning chief and Jones was head of the U.S. foreign aid program here. Yet even with this pronounced leaning toward the West and the U.S. agreement to provide Indonesia with small arms and now airplanes, Djuanda had little hesitancy in declaring with a coy smile, "To tell you the truth, I am still not 100 per cent sure" that the U.S. really means to be friendly this time. He noted that the U.S. is holding back on its foreign investment and further foreign aid "to see what we do about nationalization." (The Indonesians last year were forced to relinquish their seizure of the Dutch KPM inter-island fleet after Lloyds of London, the insurer, sent its chief to Djakarta to tell Soekarno that if he didn't return the ships to their rightful owners no more foreign ships would enter Indonesian waters. They wouldn't get the insurance. And currently the owners of the siezed Dutch tobacco plantations are suing for restitution. The oil companies -- the Dutch-owned Shell, the Dutch-registered Stanvac and the U.S. Caltex -- feel relatively safe in the knowledge that the foreign exchange they bring into the Indonesian Government is too precious to tinker with.)

The Prime Minister volunteered that his Government was "moderate Socialist" and would continue to be "for at least 20 to 30 years." He said he wanted to emphasize this because he knew Indonesia "was once thought to be communist" by America, and even the late Mr. Dulles had made a statement

"favoring the Rebels." And then without being irreverent, just matter-of-fact, Djuanda said he thought Mr. Dulles "represented the last word in inflexibility toward non-alignment. So improvement has to come." And then he went back to the military aid theme: "Two years ago we bought planes from private people in the U.S. and paid for them and then couldn't get the export licenses. However, it's definitely a plus now. But this doesn't mean that Indonesia wants a Military Advisory Group (MAG) as requested by the U.S. That would be one way to be swayed from non-alignment. We would rather do it through the Embassy military attaches, even if it means a temporary enlargement of their staff. Anyway, " Djuanda concluded, "the planes we are getting now are old and better for our current needs since we don't have the fields for fast planes. And we don't need any advisers for these World War II planes. We already know how to use them ourselves."

(I should note that my interview with the Prime Minister almost was calamitous. I discovered that I had been granted a joint appointment with the visiting correspondent of Blitz, Bombay's communist daily. I raised hell with Djuanda's aide and asked him how I could expect the Prime Minister to tell me anything in such a gathering. He got the point and I had my interview solo.)

I've found other Indonesians less willing to believe in any fast romance between President Soekarno-Foreign Minister Subandrio, etc. and the U.S.

Take "Koko" Soedjatmoko, the highly Westernized 37-year-old son of a Central Javanese surgeon. Koko started to be a doctor himself until the Japanese forced him out of college for "political action." Later he joined his new Government's Foreign Service and became one of the heads of its UN team. Then he quit that, spent his savings on a nine-month tour of the U.S. and Europe ("including the satellites and getting the communist 'allusion' out of my system."). Now he is one of the PSI (Socialist Party) delegates to the Constituent Assembly, considered to be one of the brightest lights of Indonesia's brightest (albeit now politically impotent) political faction, and runs a publishing house and book store to keep solvent. Koko and his colleagues are so avowedly pro-West that an order was passed among U.S. officialdom (and even U.S. foundations) a few years ago for personnel to stop socializing with the Socialists and concentrate on the Indonesians who really counted.



"what they asked for.."

Yet despite his pronounced love for the West, Koko, with a little provoking, came out with this: "Americans are getting what they asked for in monkeying around in the Rebellion. Now you have lost all moral standing and we'll take what we can get. We Socialists sent a special emissary to one of the Rebel Colonels before it happened. We said, 'Go up to outright Rebellion if you like, but not beyond it, and do not pin your hopes on foreign assistance because then it all will be doomed as soon as the people find out.' The Colonel said he agreed with us, but he could do nothing about it because he already had made a 'commitment.' He didn't say to whom."

Koko also discussed the relationship between Indonesia's internal problems and her external non-alignment policy: "Basically, Soekarno

is not interested in a well-run Government. To him, 'stability' is a reactionary word. He is not really interested in whether Indonesia goes communist. But he is interested in an emotional state of permanent nationalist exaltation. He is essentially a romanticist interested in the 'Asian Revolution' — a change in the basic world power setup. What shape it takes is unimportant." Koko said Indonesians are "sincere" when they declare that they hope to achieve peace through an independent foreign policy — for they fear war. The Japanese experience and the Rebellion have given them a feeling of impotence with regard to any war. Further, Koko declared, "If we were to align with one bloc, then the other bloc would interfere domestically to prevent the consolidation of that alignment. But this whole view collapses here because of the polarization of forces in Indonesia. Staying out of the outside world is impossible because by staying out there is polarization all right — but in favor of the Communists. This has destroyed the real possibility of an independent foreign policy. And what is left is a kind of graying foreign policy: How to get the most by eating out of two plates. This Government is prolonging its life by begging to both sides in the name of an independent foreign policy. This is ok with the Communists since Neutrality prevents consolidation with the Western powers. It is not the same as India's independent foreign policy because Nehru is fighting the Communists internally even though he allows international Communism."

I also had a talk with Koko's political mentor, Soetan Sjahrir, the head of the Socialist Party and Prime Minister of three Cabinets between 1945 and 1947, in the pre-Independence Revolutionary Government. Sjahrir, now 50, has become a sort of philosopher-recluse and while his wisdom is revered by the local eggheads, his political leadership days are considered over.

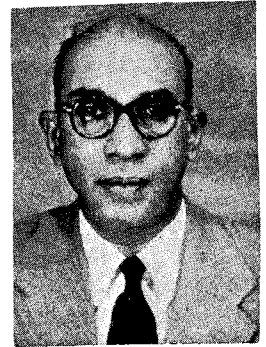
Said Sjahrir during two successive interviews in his Djakarta home: "I was one of the architects of non-alignment. I thought it was a good thing to concentrate and add to our stability. I thought we had no choice. We thought it was a jest, a joke for such a new Nation to imagine that it could contribute to the trend of world politics. I thought we should have really concentrated objectives and do away with the basic causes of our being so exceptionally different and backward from other people of the world — and not by agitating about the unfairness of other people in the world, but by working as hard as possible.



"just politics..."

"Nothing like that has happened. All of our international actions are just politics. It is all right to be aloof to prove we are reliable. But not if we are going on being so noisy and attracting the world because there is always unrest and there is always something that can happen in this country. The most important thing for this country is to really believe — and make people believe — that we would be independent. But all the time we are avoiding any unfriendly word toward the Iron Curtain. And there is a rising disappointment and grudge against the U.S. because of its failing to support us against the Dutch. And also, the thought that if we get more aid and support from the Communist countries, maybe the U.S. would be more worried and would do something about it."

I am somewhat hesitant about giving you the views of Charlie Tambu, managing editor and owner of The Times of Indonesia (one of Djakarta's two English language dailies) because this gentleman is so inconsistent he editorializes "unanimous relish" over the fact that cancer has forced the resignation of Secretary Dulles and then deplores the great loss of a "great American" when he finally dies. But, for what it is worth, Tambu told me in his office one Sunday morning:



"Soekarno is here to stay so you might as well play ball with him. Your country needs friends and you can't afford to say, 'Indonesia doesn't matter.' And Indonesia today is Soekarno. I told this to Secretary Dulles and Assistant Secretary Robertson. I said, 'Say five kind words at your press conference or some place -- have one of the reporters ask you the question -- and appeal to his vanity. It's never been done by the U.S.' But they didn't pay any attention. You see, Soekarno never mixed with a white man until after 1945. The Dutch sentenced him to jail. The Americans here, and all the Europeans, are just as arrogant as the Dutch. Yes the U.S. reception for Soekarno in 1956 was warm, but it was wiped out by the huge receptions he got in Russia and China. And Russia did something the U.S. refused to do -- supplied him with women. Soekarno needs a woman every three minutes. It's done at your conventions. Why are you so moral about State visits? When he visited your country he didn't get what he wanted: Adoration of the crowds; and women to sleep with. Then he went to Russia and came back with a girl." (I'm told that she later returned to Russia -- in an "interesting condition.")

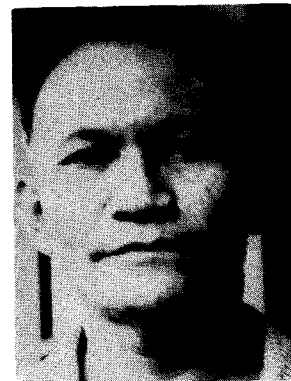
Well, maybe Soekarno was better attended to during his two-night stop in Hollywood this week.

Back to the mundane. Just while I have been here, U.S. aid (and conceivably the impartiality of Indonesia's non-alignment) has suffered two rebuffs:

1. American Architect Eero Saarinen was personally summoned here by Soekarno (the President was very impressed with Saarinen's General Motors research center during his 1956 visit) to look over the site and design plans for a new stadium for Djakarta's 1962 Asian Games. He also was brought here to look over possible sites for a new capital city which might become physically isolated from the business (and graft) proximity of Djakarta. After arriving here, Saarinen disagreed with Soekarno's own selection of a stadium site (picked from a helicopter because it was near the most impressive residential neighborhoods), suggested another here in Djakarta and then took off for Central Java to look over prospective sites for the new capital. During this time, the U.S. International Cooperation Administration was vaguely considering Indonesian hints that \$17 million would be a nice contribution toward building the new stadium. Obviously, ICA thought Djakarta had more pressing needs than a second stadium. Well, the moment Saarinen was out of town, Russia flew in an economic team, called a press conference, introduced her own architect and said Russia would be happy to finance the stadium -- with the Russian architect's designs, of course. Soekarno, apparently forgetting that Saarinen had been summoned here only at his own request (with Saarinen volunteering his own time and paying his own traveling expenses), saw to it that the Russian proposal was signed, sealed and delivered within 24 hours. Saarinen returned to Djakarta right after that and nobly said he was glad that at least both the Russians and

he agreed on changing the stadium site. Then he left for the U.S. determined to submit his capital site report anyway, and to send back an assistant to work out details. There are two versions to this story since Saarinen apparently detailed only part of his experience to the U.S. Embassy. He was more voluble in discussing the matter with the Indonesian and UN planning officials concerned with the project.

2. M. Hutasoit, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education and generally considered to be the most able of the men occupying this top career position, was let go at the expiration of his five-year term this April. Minister of Education Prijono, a recipient of the Stalin Peace Prize with a son currently studying in Russia, made no secret of the reason: He publicly announced he couldn't stand people who were "one-sided." By this, he meant Hutasoit was pro-West. He most definitely is and Hutasoit himself is the last to deny it. He is alarmed that his old boss, Prijono, and President Ewa of Padjadjaran University in Bandung are now touring Russia and the satellites looking over prospects to staff Indonesian universities, specifically Padjadjaran's medical faculty. (Although there now are some 100 American faculty members of Indonesian universities, a number of Germans, British, Swiss, French and Swedes, there so far is only one Russian.) Hutasoit is also alarmed at the "naivete" with which Prijono accepted a recent Russian offer of \$5 million in educational aid. Once Prijono said "sure," the Russians specified that all the money should be concentrated in the far away (and most strategically situated) Island of Ambon. Prijono apparently sees nothing strange about this. Hutasoit and other people around here do. Says Hutasoit: "We will be paying back the Russians the \$5 million loan for their teachers; and we'll be paying twice -- for their indoctrination as well. From my standpoint, I want to know how to serve Indonesia better. I've been getting American teachers free, and without a burden to my people. But it is very expensive for this country to have really an independent policy. Our underdevelopment is so weak we have to always rely on the outside."



"paying twice..."

Another word on this subject of aid and non-alignment. Those Indonesians who try to give the U.S. the benefit of the doubt have told me they are disappointed with our failure to support their country in its West Irian (New Guinea) claim against the Dutch at the UN, and (in the past, at least) in our failure to supply military equipment. They say they realize that Holland is our NATO ally and hence we can't afford to antagonize Holland by sending arms to Indonesia which the Dutch could claim were to be used against them in the battle for West Irian.

Well, to pursue this subject a bit more, I decided to call on the Dutch representative here, A.H. Hesselman. I greeted him as "Mr. Ambassador" and then apologized after realizing that was not his title. "That's all right," he explained. "Even I don't know what I am. My predecessor was called High Commissioner, but then no longer recognized. Now I don't know whether I'm supposed to be Minister or Chargé of the Netherlands Diplomatic Mission." But to the point. I remarked that I had read of the restrained Dutch reaction to our announcement of supplying the Indonesian Air Force with planes. I believe the Dutch had said something to the effect that the U.S. would have to be responsible for how the planes were used. Then Hesselman surprised me with an even more restrained reaction. He said he thought the U.S. plane deal was

long underway anyway and now just finalized (not according to Prime Minister Djuanda). Moreover, he doubts that Indonesia would ever use either the planes, or any form of military force, to reclaim West Irian. An incident might provoke an arms clash, yes, but as a conscious means of settling the dispute, no. In other words, the official Dutch representative wasn't nearly as upset as our solicitous Indonesian friends feared. I am not arguing for military aid, however, just observing.

Also on this subject, Hesselman further minimized the whole West Irian issue by declaring that it costs Holland something like \$10 million a year to maintain the colony; that she has been getting nothing in return for this — not even the promise of mineral finds; and that she maintains her claim for West Irian against Indonesia primarily because she looks upon it as her "duty to help backward people."

One more digression. I've skirted around internal communism without mentioning that while the Indonesian Communist Party, the PKI, is always the first to speak out in behalf of President Soekarno, the first to champion his return to the 1945 Constitution and "Guided Democracy" (WWU-18 & 19), the Kremlin is apparently beginning to hedge its bets a little. When Soekarno passed through Italy on his current world tour, the Italian Communist Party came out with a blast declaring he couldn't be trusted by the working class: He had admitted foreign investment to Indonesia; and he had postponed the coming December election which, if held, would have resulted in a Communist Party victory. Then they capped all this by calling him "ungrateful" for the support of the people who had saved him in critical moments. Not since the first days of Indonesian Independence have the Communists so charged into Soekarno. At that time, they called him a tool of the imperialists. However, for domestic consumption, the Kremlin is seeing to it that locally all is still exemplary between the PKI and the President.

Incidentally, I met two of Indonesia's Communist leaders within 24 hours of my arrival here. I was given an invitation to President Soekarno's annual at-home Palace buffet celebrating the end of Lebaran, the Mohammedan fasting month. (Can you imagine a free meal from the Eisenhowers within 24 hours of entering the country? Or within 99 years?) At the Palace, I was introduced to both Aidit, Indonesia's No. 1 Communist, and Nyoto, No. 3 and the party's top representative in Parliament. Aidit had just returned from Moscow (his third trip in the last nine months) and was a bit less than engaging. He immediately sailed into me by declaring: "Your magazine printed my picture with a headline saying, 'Indonesian Communist Boss Rides in American Car!'" I said The Washington Post had no magazine. He insisted. Later, I learned that it was The Saturday Evening Post which had committed the offense. Anyway, Aidit didn't deny the fact; he just complained about the publicity.

Popular reaction to the Communists varies. A PKI voter in Solo, Central Java, a bellhop, told the New York Times' Bernie Kalb he had never heard of Aidit. Yet here in Djakarta political sophistication is such that some Embassy translators won't sign their name in receipt for their pay; and a university dean sent an intermediary to save him from being seen on the Embassy grounds. The fear is that they might be known as pro-West on the day that the PKI takes over.

Well, I am afraid I have been just as cowardly in coming to conclusions on Indonesia's non-alignment as I was when I wrote you from India (WWU-11). And just to confuse you a bit further, here are three views

taken at random:

From former Vice President Mohamad Hatta: "If there had to be a bloc, it would be the West. But I don't think the West would force us to join any bloc and I don't believe that the Western bloc has any aggressive attitude toward Indonesia. Anyway, the Western bloc is now on the defensive. Western economic imperialism is in retreat."

From Lieut. Gen. A.H. Nasution, Army Chief of Staff: "I am optimistic that America is more understanding now, not only with the Army, but with the country as a whole. We are speaking more frankly to your Government and to the Eastern countries that we are only for Indonesia. The U.S. has not urged us to join them, nor has the Eastern orbit."

From a top American official: "Neutrality, or non-alignment, is the best that the Communists could get out of Indonesia so far."

Cordially,

Warren W. Unna

Received New York June 16, 1959