

COPY

En route to Manila  
Feb. 6, 1962

✓ # 2B 86  
1206  
West Irian  
M. N. B.

*Rockefeller  
to Risk*

Dear Dean:

Forgive my writing paper. Blanchette and I are en route from Djakarta to Manila for the opening of the International Rice Research Institute tomorrow morning.

We were in Djakarta for 5 days and I was fortunate in being able to talk with a number of the leaders. I am writing this letter as I am much concerned the way the West Irian peace talks are developing. As I see it time is of the essence.

As you know there is a delicate balance in Indonesia between the Army and the P. K. I. - the only two bodies that have strong national organizations. As you also know the country's economy has been gradually deteriorating until it is now approaching the point of crisis with food prices sky-rocketing - particularly rice. The leaders are not giving attention to these problems but to the settlement of the West Irian question which seems all important.

I was fortunate in having a good talk with Gen Nasution and I came away feeling the highest regard for him. He said that it was not possible for martial law to be continued indefinitely; that the only really effective way to deal with the P. K. I. was to build up the economy. He ended by saying "this is our last chance".

The P. K. I. are doing everything they can to bring about fighting. The Indian Ambassador indicated that the communists were prepared to make available unlimited military support. Fighting of any protracted character would of course be devastating to the economy. As our Stan Vac Oil man said if real fighting breaks out all of us are finished in Indonesia. With the somewhat tenuous position the oil companies are already in, if the P. K. I. position was to be materially strengthened the odds would become too heavy.

Dr. Subandrio stated that his government was prepared to honor the Dutch pledge to the Papuans as to self-determination provided, he told me, the Dutch would honor their pre-1950 pledge to the Indonesians as to sovereignty. He went on to say that if the Dutch would only be

magnanimous in this final settlement diplomatic relations would be restored and the two countries could build back a friendly, mutually advantageous relationship. (At this point in our conversation Amb. Jones called the Foreign Minister to report that the American Embassy was under attack so I left hastily).

As I see it the present West Irian situation is only good for the P. K. I. while a quick peaceful settlement would be of major value to all parties concerned except P. K. I. - particularly the Dutch. In my opinion unless a settlement is reached soon we are gambling with the future of Indonesia in a way which to me is needless and tragic. The Indonesians want to be friendly with us but the combination of the deteriorating economy and the focus on West Irian on the one hand and P. K. I. and Sukarno's erratic emotional leadership on the other is just too much.

My purpose in writing is to urge that our government lay the situation on the line with the Dutch almost to the point of an ultimatum. Sometimes I think one is justified in going very far with one's friends if one feels that they are doing themselves (and the world) irreparable harm. My impression is that there is very strong sentiment in Holland to resolve the West Irian crisis if face can be saved but that the Foreign Minister, Mr. Luns, is the stumbling block. Would it be possible for you to make a special trip to The Hague to talk with the Prime Minister or their Cabinet to present some message from the President which would be infinitely stronger than has seemed wise so far. This is just an idea which I realize may raise protocol or other questions.

Before going to Indonesia we stopped in Burma and Thailand. The repercussions of Laos are not too happy in either of those two countries. What we are doing in South Vietnam is reassuring but we cannot afford another major setback in Indonesia.

Forgive me for speaking so strongly but that is the way I feel. To me sometimes it is a greater risk not to act really boldly recognizing the consequences than to take a middle course. I realize that this is a tough problem and that it is much on your mind. If this letter should be in any way helpful I would be very pleased.

With warmest best wishes, I am,

Very sincerely,

John  
(JDRockefeller 3rd)