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Research Memorandum
RFE-37, August 30, 1962

TO : The Secretary

FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman

SUBJECT: UN Administration in West New Guinea Faces Potential Difficulties

The signing of the Dutch-Indonesian agreement has not removed all likelihood of trouble in West New Guinea. This paper examines the possible form which disturbances may take during the transfer of administration from the Dutch through the UN to the Indonesians.

ABSTRACT

As the threat of military action in West New Guinea recedes, political problems emerge which may disrupt the smoothness of transition from Dutch to UN, and eventually to Indonesian, rule. When the UN moves in on October 1, it faces the loss of experienced Dutch administrators, the activity of discontented Papuan leaders, and possibly continued attempts by Djakarta to infiltrate Indonesian troops into the territory. To the degree that these dangers prove serious, the UN will be confronted on the one hand with a restive Papuan population, and on the other with Indonesian attempts to exercise de facto administration in several areas. Soviet bloc exploitation of the resulting difficulties could jeopardize much of the US prestige won through our role as mediator in the peaceful settlement of the West New Guinea controversy.

Dutch withdrawal:

The UN administration faces several difficulties when it replaces Dutch rule in West New Guinea on October 1, 1962. The Dutch have stated there would be no obstacles to an orderly transfer to UN administration on October 1, 1962. Governor General Plateel has ordered Dutch patrols to avoid combat with Indonesian forces on the island, and wherever possible, to inform those Indonesians cut off from contact with their home base of the cease fire. The Dutch are apparently reconciled to ending their rule, and do not see themselves as playing an active role during the UN period. By the terms of the agreement, the top level administrators must leave before the beginning of UN administration. Evacuation of Dutch dependents continues, an action started during the last four weeks when authorities came to regard the threat of Indonesian invasion as a distinct possibility. Furthermore, the Dutch government has announced that civil servants are

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not obliged to work for the UN, and it is apparently not encouraging them to do so. As a result these persons are booking air and sea accommodations for the period immediately after October 1, although the agreement states that the UN will employ those Dutch administrators, below the top level, who wish to remain. Control over the Papuans has largely rested on the prestige and experience of the Dutch administrators. Even with complete Dutch cooperation there is a chance that the UN, and later the Indonesians, will lose contact with the local populace.

Papuan Attitudes

The Papuans, in general, have tended to cooperate with Dutch rule. Djakarta's propaganda even failed to halt their cooperation with the Dutch in capturing Indonesian infiltrators. While the larger part of the population neither comprehends nor has an opinion about transfer to Indonesian rule, at least two small groups have definite views on the future of WNG. The smaller of these two groups is pro-Indonesian, with strength mainly on Japen island, near Biak, and in various areas along the West coast. Although it views Djakarta as a partner in expelling the Dutch, it wants no Indonesian interference in Papuan affairs. The larger group of informed Papuans advocates independence or unity with Australian New Guinea. Centered in Hollandia (Kota Baru), it has support throughout the principal towns and cities of the territory. Since the aims of this group suited the Dutch policy of eventual self determination, it won active support from the Hague. Jouwe, one of the prominent leaders of the dominant faction, became Vice President of the Papuan Legislative Council. So long as the Dutch supported self-determination, his views could give Dutch policy the apparent sanction of the native population. However, when the Dutch shifted their stand with the July 31 preliminary accord with Indonesia, Jouwe's faction did not. Before final negotiations began, Jouwe and other leaders threatened to establish a government in exile if the Dutch abandoned the Papuans to Indonesia. After the agreement was signed they petitioned the UN, listing those parts of the agreement unacceptable to them. They also threatened violence when pro-Indonesian elements attempted to raise an Indonesian flag in Hollandia. Most recently, demonstrators raised the slogan, "West New Guinea belongs to the Papuans" against the UN military team which arrived to supervise the cease-fire.

These disillusioned Papuan leaders could obstruct UN administration should they intensify their campaign and refuse to cooperate with the transition. The evacuation of Dutch personnel and the lack of Indonesian familiarity with the populace could permit the dissidents to spread their campaign. While these prominent Papuans may yet become reconciled to Indonesian rule, at present they pose a threat to security during both the UN and the Indonesian administrations.

Indonesian Activities

There have been no clashes between Dutch and Indonesian forces since August 18 when the cease fire went into effect. A small number of Indonesians have reported their presence to local authorities as agreed but the remainder of the infiltrators have not yet made contact, possibly because of poor communications with their home base in Indonesia. Djakarta now has between 500 and 700 troops in WNG, primarily on the West Coast near the towns of Merauke, Sorong, Teminabuan, Kaimana and Fak-fak. These troops may be used as security units at the time of UN takeover if the Papuan police and the UN forces prove inadequate. Sukarno has stated that more Indonesian troops are prepared to enter WNG to aid in preserving security if necessary. In addition the Dutch hold another 500 Indonesian infiltrators as prisoners. While the status of this group has not been determined, Djakarta will probably ask that they remain in WNG as part of its other forces there.

A full-scale military venture is no longer probable, but the Indonesians may continue covert infiltration onto the island. Future efforts may focus on areas where Indonesian forces are not now operating, as in the two attempts to land forces by submarine in the Hollandia area shortly after the cease fire went into effect. Aside from covert infiltration, the Indonesians may increase their strength in WNG by more open means. Djakarta plans to resupply its forces there before October 1. Should troops accompany the supply drops, the Indonesians could increase their strength by over a hundred men. Sukarno has also indicated his intention to send civilian cadres to West Irian during the UN administration, as permitted by the agreement. While many of these would be bona fide civilians, military personnel could enter in disguise.

Several factors underlie the Indonesian desire to establish a position in WNG as soon as possible, even if legal agreements are broken in the process. First, the Indonesians are impatient. The struggle for West Irian has lasted over ten years, and the population has been kept in a highly emotional state since last December. Now that Djakarta has been promised control of the territory, its leaders want to take an active role immediately. Secondly, many Indonesians, both the military and civilians, fear hostile actions by the Dutch between now and the beginning of their takeover. As a basis for their fears, they point to hostile Dutch actions after the agreements of 1948 and 1950. Sukarno and others have expressed concern that the Dutch may be preparing disruptive action, particularly among the Papuan population, so that an explosive situation will develop later when the Indonesians have control. An early takeover could thwart such a plot. Third, Indonesian military leaders, notably Nasution and Jani, have stated that one of the Army's primary tasks in WNG will be to keep the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) from gaining a foothold in the territory. An early control of local administration or the achieving of a potential for immediate takeover when the Indonesian period begins would

facilitate preparations against later Communist moves. Finally, it cannot be forgotten that Djakarta's military equipment provides a costly and tempting inducement to plant the flag forcibly on West Irian, regardless of the negotiated victory. Low-risk actions may hold high emotional promise in this respect.

Possible Soviet Action

Should these problems cause serious difficulty for UN administrators, the Soviet bloc could exacerbate the situation by appealing to anti-Dutch sentiment in the General Assembly and attacking the "neo-colonialist" motivations of those who called for Djakarta's observation of its written agreement. As a Dutch ally and as mediator in arranging the agreement, the US could face a dilemma in which much of the gain won by its promotion of a peaceful settlement in West New Guinea would be threatened.