

The West New Guinea settlement in 1962

Frankly, there is very little information about West New Guinea even from official version, except that West New Guinea was a part of the Netherlands East Indies and was retained by the Dutch after the transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia on 27th December 1949. After the constant agitation by the Republic of Indonesia to acquire West New Guinea, the Netherlands was forced to turning it over to the control of the United Nations on 15 August 1962. On 1st May 1963, the United Nations turned it over to the Republic of Indonesia, which created it the province of West Irian.

Although the official version of West New Guinea is somewhat "with nothing to say", the US/CIA documents tell a lot. Before we have further discussion, please remember two things:

1. on 5 March 1960 President Sukarno dissolved Parliament ('DPR') which was the result of an election on 29th September 1955 and created a new parliament ('DPRGR'). More importantly, Masyumi, a non-communist party which held 21% seats in 'DPR', was banned because of its involvement during the PRRI/Permesta Rebellion; and PKI gained more political strength in Indonesian politics.
2. President Sukarno launched a military campaign against the Dutch over West New Guinea on 18th December 1961

Now, let's look at what was the US reaction after President Sukarno launched the military campaign. On the same day, Mr. Robert H. Johnson (the National Security Council Staff) wrote a letter to Mr. Bundy (President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs) and his letter reads as follows (see ref. [4]):

Attachment (Secret)

Washington, December 18, 1961

Some Fundamentals With Respect to West New Guinea

1. "The U.S. Interest." The U.S. has a general interest in eliminating this irritant in international relations involving two free world countries. But its more basic interest are two:
 - (a). to eliminate this issue from Indonesian politics where it has diverted the country from constructive tasks, has been used by Sukarno as a means of frustrating opposition to himself, and has been exploited by the large local Communist Party (PKI - phs) and by the USSR,
 - (b). to avoid a military clash ... (deleted by phs).. because such a clash would probably strengthen Communist forces within Indonesia. The loss of Indonesia could be as significant as the loss of mainland Southeast Asia and would make defence of the latter considerably more difficult.

... (deleted by phs)... If the above analysis is correct, we must conclude that it is in our interests that a solution be devised which will lead to accession of West New Guinea to Indonesia. ... (deleted by phs)... As the State paper says somewhat more cautiously - "basically, we recognize that for historical, geographical and political reasons West New Guinea probably will tend to closer, if not complete, association with Indonesia and our role in seeking a settlement will be to facilitate this evolution."

2. "The Validity of the Self-Determination Principle for West New Guinea" (deleted by phs)....
3. "The Current Situation".... (deleted by phs)...
4. "The Value of Negotiations" Negotiations will serve very little purpose if we approach them in the same spirit that has motivated some of our current diplomatic activity on the subject;... (deleted by phs)... Our role must be grounded in the conclusion that the only solution that will be lasting and that will serve

U.S. interests will be one that gives Indonesia a clear prospect of acquiring early control over the territory..... (deleted by phs).....

In order to accomplish this objective we must make very clear to the Dutch that we are not taken in by the idea that self- determination principle has any reality when applied to West New Guinea. We must also talk very frankly with them (and with the Australians) about the danger of the loss of Indonesia to Communism by the West New Guinea issue and the damage that much loss would cause to the free world position in Southeast Asia.... (deleted by phs)....

2 (two) weeks before negotiations between the Dutch and Indonesian government started on 20th March 1962 for the West New Guinea settlement, another secret US document prepared by CIA, the Departments of State, Defence, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Joint Staff, and NSA, reads as follows (see ref. [5]):

NIE 55-62

Washington, March 7, 1962

The Prospects for Indonesia

The Problem

To analyze the major trends in Indonesia and to estimate probable developments over the next year or so with special reference to Indonesia's international orientation and to the West New Guinea dispute.

Conclusions

1. Until a settlement satisfactory to Sukarno is reached with the Netherlands, the West New Guinea dispute will continue to overshadow and strongly influence all other foreign and domestic issues in Indonesia. Sukarno will probably even closer to the (communist) Bloc position on major international issues as Indonesia continues to rely heavily on Soviet military aid and political support for the prosecution of the West New Guinea campaign. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) will continue to exploit the issue and to obstruct a negotiated settlement. The diversion of army energies into the West New Guinea campaign will continue to hamper its efforts to reduce PKI strength and influence.. .. (deleted by phs)...
2. ... (deleted by phs)... In the event of a settlement, the army would probably give greater attention to countering PKI influence in the country. ... (deleted by phs)....

As it can be seen above, the West New Guinea settlement had been made in advance by the USA as early as 1961 and even before the negotiations between the Dutch and Indonesian governments began on 20th March 1963. The US settlement was that West New Guinea should be a part of the Republic of Indonesia because:

1. the PKI could not gain strength in Indonesia by exploiting West New Guinea dispute anymore,
2. the Indonesian army would concentrate its energy more on reducing the PKI's strength (note: it was better than the previous situation where the Indonesian army had to divide its attention between PKI and West New Guinea).

It is also not surprising that the US representatives were very active in the West New Guinea settlement and sponsored the negotiations between the Dutch and Indonesian representatives carried out in Middleburg, Virginia, on 20th March 1962. The talks were formally under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General (U Thant), but required the third party as a mediator. It is also not surprising with the previously

mentioned US foreign policy, that the mediator was chosen to be Mr. Ellsworth Bunker, a then-retired American diplomat (see ref. [6]).

It can be noticed a telegram from the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, to the US Embassy in Indonesia on March 6, 1962. The telegram reads as follows (see ref. [7]):

Washington, March 6, 1962, 8:57pm

.... Secretary (of State, Dean Rusk) has asked Dutch consider following individuals for third party role: Ellsworth Bunker, Frederic Boland, Ernest Gross, Eugene Black, Walt Rostow, John McCloy, Hamilton Fish Armstrong. In our view Bunker would be particularly outstanding candidate.

Request you see Sukarno or Subandrio soonest and pass on substance this message including list of names suggested to Dutch. You should stress Secretary's view that Bunker would be absolutely first class. Believe with favorable Indo reaction this message we should be able firm up arrangements for secret talks get under way.

Now, we know that from the beginning USA had insisted Ellsworth Bunker to be the mediator. And, we know that the main task of Ellsworth Bunker during the West New Guinea negotiations was that he had to hand over West New Guinea to the Republic of Indonesia as soon as possible, regardless of Holland's position or even West New Guinea's position.

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