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FROM : Amembassy DJAKARTA DATE: October 22, 1965

SUBJECT : The September 30 Affair

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Introduction

1. The history and interpretation of the attempted coup in Indonesia which has become known as the September 30 Affair will probably be the subject of study and speculation for years to come. The present paper is designed to present within the short perspective of only three weeks, the story of this extraordinary Affair in the light of the Embassy's best current information, while the recollection of it is fresh and its effects are critical though not fully clear factors in current political life.

2. As the world now knows, the coup struck in the early morning hours of October 1 with raids on the homes of seven members of the Army's general staff in Djakarta, six of whom were murdered. One, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces General Nasution, escaped, and together with his deputy General Suharto managed during the following critical day to recapture the city and turn the tide. Instigator of the coup, insofar as the public was told, was an obscure officer in the President's palace guard, Colonel Untung, who announced the formation of a Revolutionary Council to govern the country and save the President from alleged usurpation of authority by a "Generals Council."

3. As the story unwinds facts become tangled and, as is evident in the attached paper, there are important gaps in confirmed information. Many questions are unanswered, including the extent of participation of the Indonesian Air Force in the coup, the complicity of such an influential member of the government as Subandrio and the full influence and roles of the PKI and the Chinese Communists. Over all, perhaps forming the biggest question mark of all, is the role of President Sukarno in the whole Affair.

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From Djakarta

4. The present paper takes a look at the background of the Affair, traces what is known of its facts, and offers considered speculation concerning some of the gaps mentioned above and the prospects for the future now offered by the amazing events which will continue to be felt and assessed for a long time to come.

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