

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

May 14, 1956

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Attitudes of President Sukarno  
of Indonesia

President Sukarno, who has great personal charm and a keen sense of domestic politics, has been the leader of his country for 10 years. He refers constantly to "colonialism" and nationalism where Indonesian foreign relations are concerned. Dutch continued control of West New Guinea (West Irian to the Indonesians) is the focal point of his charge that colonialism persists in Indonesia. It in turn provides the fulcrum for nationalistic tendencies in domestic politics and economic attitudes.

We have maintained an attitude of neutrality on the substance of the New Guinea issue while we encourage the interested parties themselves to get together on it. I believe we must maintain this attitude. However, I noted to President Sukarno in Djakarta that we have an understanding of the problems of newly-independent countries, having fought for our own independence and assisted, since that time, other peoples who could achieve and maintain their independence. We have done that in the case of 18 nations since World War II.

There have been continuing irritants in Dutch-Indonesian relations since Indonesia declared its independence on August 17, 1945 and since it finally gained it on December 27, 1949. Most recently these have involved delayed and lengthy trials of Dutch nationals charged with subversion. Also following an abortive meeting to revise the Round Table Conference Agreement (the Agreement which was to have guided Indonesian-Dutch relations after independence), the Indonesians unilaterally abrogated that Agreement.

The Indonesian

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*shall*  
The Indonesian Government has not made a final decision as to that part of the Agreement dealing with debts assumed on taking over sovereignty. The Dutch fear they will renounce these debts. Ambassador Gunning believes that eventually the moderates will win out and that resumption of payments will take place. I should use this opportunity with Sukarno to attempt to ameliorate the differences between the Dutch and the Indonesians.

President Sukarno, as you noted to the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 21, referred to Paul Revere to dramatize the community of feeling about independence on the occasion of opening the Asian-African Conference at Bandung on April 18, 1955. He will undoubtedly make further mention to you of his admiration of the principles of American leaders for he has often, at home, cited Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and others. To encourage moderation in Indonesian attitudes on colonialism and nationalism, I suggest that you might also describe the accomplishments of our earlier statesmen who exercised their influence to bring about a moderate attitude, and ultimately most friendly relations, with the British.



John Foster Dulles

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