

BK050639  
FILE SUBJ.  
DATE 1985  
SUBJECT INDONESIA

PAPER COMMENTS ON DEPARTING U.S. AMBASSADOR

BK050639 Jakarta MERDEKA in Indonesian 27 Dec 85 p 5

Editorial: "The Completion of Ambassador Holdridge's 'Assignment'"

Text U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia John Holdridge, who has completed his tour of duty of about 3 years in Indonesia, will leave for home immediately.

While serving in Indonesia, Ambassador Holdridge showed great interest in the domestic political and economic developments. He was a foreign ambassador actively visiting regions to observe various aspects of the people's life and national development and to see for himself the difficulties and challenges faced by Indonesia.

The appointment of Holdridge as ambassador to Indonesia was unprecedented in U.S. diplomatic tradition. President Reagan announced his appointment at a state banquet in honor of President Suharto 3 years ago. Holdridge was given a difficult duty to restore Indonesian-U.S. relations affected by the absence of a U.S. ambassador for 1½ years and Indonesia's rejection of two candidates to fill the post. Holdridge was recalled from his post as a deputy secretary of state and posted in Jakarta not only as ambassador but also as "special envoy" of President Reagan. He represented not only the U.S. State Department but also the U.S. national leadership to maintain friendship between the two nations.

Thus the assignment of Holdridge, a talented U.S. career diplomat, to Indonesia has made a special imprint on the Indonesian people on the one hand and has a special significance for the United States on the other. Holdridge's assignment was significant in that he was instructed to explore all possible means to persuade Indonesia to normalize diplomatic relations with the PRC.

Holdridge failed. Indonesia has in fact moved ahead to normalize trade relations with the PRC. However, the key to the Indonesian step was not Mr Holdridge but rather the Indonesian press urging the Indonesian Government and businessmen to conduct direct trade with Beijing with whom we had been dealing through third parties as well as other marginal factors.

Nevertheless, Ambassador Holdridge has basically succeeded in restoring Indonesia's confidence in the United States and normalizing bilateral friendship

and cooperation in various sectors. We hope that Holdridge will use his capability as a prominent diplomat to maintain friendship between the Indonesian and American peoples. We give due respects to Ambassador Holdridge for his efforts to achieve these goals.

In the history of Indonesian-U.S. diplomatic relations, we have noted the roles of several U.S. ambassadors accredited to Indonesia. Merle Cochran, who was ambassador in the early 1950's was not only a capable diplomat but also intelligent in several aspects. He was not only helpful but also harmful to Indonesian interests. Howard P. Jones, who wrote the book entitled "Indonesia, An Impossible Dream" and who posed with Bung Karno in a traditional Indonesian cap, was a sociable, kind, and intimate personality. Earlier, he served as a U.S. aid officer in Indonesia. But, he was also a diplomat who spied on every move Bung Karno took. We also remember Marshall Green, a strategist in organizing demonstrations and coups, who served as ambassador in Indonesia in the early and mid-1960's. Green was the most suspicious ambassador with an unpopular reputation among the Indonesian people in view of his experience in South Korea. We are relieved that John Holdridge left a good and positive imprint on the Indonesian people during his 3-year term of office. He had tried to restore strained Indonesian-U.S. relations. His efforts are satisfactory if not good. The lesson from the Indonesian-U.S. diplomatic "crisis" has prompted Indonesia to return to its historical free, active, and nonaligned foreign policy.

/12228

CSO: 4213/68