

CHAPTER FOUR

UNTEA 1963

The New Year and the Issue of Flags

UNTEA's main cause for concern during the New Year period remained the growing tension between Papuan nationalists, including those in the police and PVK, and the Indonesian military, along with their pro-Indonesian Papuan allies. Much of this tension centred around the issue of flags, in particular the official raising of the Indonesian flag alongside the UN's on 1 January. This symbolic act, which coincided with the final lowering of the Dutch flag, was a concession to Jakarta by U Thant and allowed Sukarno to fulfil his pledge that the Indonesian flag would fly over West Irian before the "cock crowed" on New Year's day 1963.¹

Jakarta was determined to mark the New Year with an orchestrated campaign of Indonesian flag-raising throughout the territory, despite initial opposition from UNTEA. The campaign in Fak Fak was described by Divisional Commissioner Harold Luckham following the arrival of the Indonesian liaison officer and his assistant at the end of 1962:

My instructions had been and were to discourage the erection of flag poles and the flying of flags other than those at a limited number of official buildings...The liaison officer knew of this, but continued to

organise flag raising, although I reminded him forcefully of his duty to help me. However, the Administrator [Abdoh] gave way about the matter in the end just in time for me to be able to authorise the flag flying by official instructions.

It was [...] clear from this campaign that the Indonesian liaison officer had instructions to work against the UNTEA, establishing to some extent an alternative administration and using force to compel obedience: the people who did not fly flags were threatened and Indonesian soldiers were sent round to talk to them.²

UNTEA's inability to prevent Indonesian flag raisings, despite their concern at Papuan nationalist reaction, illustrates Abdoh's lack of authority over Indonesian UNTEA officials. In the event, there were various clashes over the New Year period but they were not as serious as some in UNTEA had expected.³

Nonetheless, some pro-Indonesian Papuan marches took place without prior permission from UNTEA. There were also several incidents of Indonesian flags being ripped down and of Papuans stoning the Indonesian military. The Indonesian army's response was to step in and illegally arrest 53 Papuans who were released soon afterwards following police intervention. Most of those arrested were students from the Agricultural College in Hollandia, two of whom had been involved in stoning vehicles bearing Indonesian flags. Others were arrested for leading anti-Indonesian demonstrations and flying the Papuan flag. In the village of Sere, 14 houses were allegedly attacked, resulting in the destruction of some Indonesian flags and a portrait of Sukarno. These flags and portraits of Sukarno had been handed out by the Indonesians in time for the New Year, although in some cases their tactic backfired.

In one case, the Indonesians gave Hendrik Joku 125 flags to distribute. He was a curious choice, particularly as he had already openly distributed Papuan nationalist leaflets at Sentani airport the previous November. On 3 January, however, Joku was placed under illegal arrest by the Indonesian military, following his arrival at their camp at Ifar to enquire about the students in their custody. Under "Reason for Arrest", the Indonesians had written:

Although he expressed his willingness to pacify the people yet in the background he instigates and plays the people off against each other. He is responsible for 125 Indonesian flags which he received not all of which were issued and many of them have been torn into pieces.⁴

Over the next few days, further incidents of vandalism to Indonesian flags occurred and all Divisional Police Commandants were instructed to take vigorous measures against "Flag offenders."⁵ Robertson discussed recent events with Hartono, his Indonesian Deputy. His report of the discussion sheds some light on the thinking behind Indonesian actions at the time.

the Indonesian attitude towards these events is that the Indonesian troops regard themselves as a conquering army, and having fought for possession of this Territory they do not intend to stand by idly and watch Papuans insult their National Flag. The troops feel very strongly on this point, and are very emotional, which results in the immediate beating of offenders...They also feel that the police are being inactive concerning insults to the Indonesian flag.⁶

While the clashes and illegal arrests further entrenched hostile Papuan opinion towards the Indonesian military, the prestige of the Police went up in the public's eyes. They had been active in securing the release of those illegally detained and were generally seen to be a force constraining the Indonesian military from taking the law

into their own hands.⁷ Unfortunately, this popularity would count against them as complete Indonesian control of the territory drew nearer.

The issue of flags was taken up by those Papuan 'leaders' who had declared support for Indonesia during their visit to the Republic in October 1962. Although previously an advocate of Papuan independence and the Papuan flag, Herman Wajoi, leader of the moderate nationalist Papuan party, Parna, returned from Jakarta a firm supporter of the unitarist Indonesian state.⁸

These Papuans also now rejected use of the Papuan flag, denouncing it as a propaganda 'timebomb' left behind by the Dutch.⁹ While Jakarta was encouraging its visitors to denounce the Papuan flag, there is some evidence that they also considered a more conciliatory approach for dealing with this issue. In late November 1962, Police Chief Robertson received a report that Bonay, one of the Papuan visitors to Indonesia, had been told by Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio, that Jakarta would allow the Papuans to keep their flag as a provincial flag. Robertson felt that this would do more than anything else to ease tension and suggested that if the report was true, an immediate official announcement on the offer was advisable.¹⁰

However, no further mention of this alleged offer appears in UNTEA's records. On the contrary Vickers, UNTEA's legal adviser, noted on 17 November 1962 that the Indonesian representatives in the territory were calling for UNTEA to prohibit the sale or hoisting of the Papuan flag under any circumstances. He

commented that UNTEA would need to pass new legislation to do this, or justify it on the grounds of averting serious disorder - actions that would certainly not be within the spirit of the Agreement. He did, however, state that steps should be taken to ensure that the Papuan flag was not shown or displayed by anyone or at any place officially associated with UNTEA.¹¹

As the New Year period ended, there were continuing minor incidents of disorder in the territory. In Biak, two separate incidents were reported of Indonesian flags being torn down, one by a Papuan and another by a Dutch employee of the Postal Service.¹² In another, more bizarre incident, a Papuan government cook wearing a Papuan flag entered the Government's hotel in Hollandia while a number of UNTEA officials were eating their midday meal. He walked up to their table and stuck a knife in it, then began shouting that the Indonesians were all poor and should go home. He was immediately arrested by de Hass, a Police Inspector, who was present.¹³

A UNTEA report on the incident stated that the cook would be charged under Article 154 of the existing Dutch law for the territory. This law was quoted in the report as stating that it was an offence to give public expression to feelings of enmity, hate or disdain against the Government of the Netherlands or Indonesia, and carried a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment.¹⁴ All UNTEA Police Commanders were instructed to take "vigorous action" against individuals committing offences under Articles 154 and Articles 156 and 207, all of which made it a serious offence

during the UNTEA period to publicly speak out against Indonesia or Indonesians in general.¹⁵

UNTEA did have the authority under Article XI of the Agreement to introduce new laws or adapt existing ones, “To the extent that they are consistent with the letter and spirit of the present Agreement.”¹⁶ However, it is hard to see how UNTEA’s adaptation of Articles 154, 156 and 207 from the existing Dutch legal code was in any way consistent with the letter and spirit of the Agreement’s commitment to free speech in the territory as laid down in its Article XXII.¹⁷ Nor was it consistent with U Thant’s advice to Abdoh, following his acceptance of the post of UNTEA Administrator, in which he wrote that “Article XXII of the Agreement contains the guarantee of human rights to which I have already referred. As this is a United Nations operation, it will of course be of particular concern to you to see that these rights are scrupulously observed.”¹⁸

Pro-Indonesian Demonstrations

In the middle of January, there was a more serious challenge to UNTEA’s authority when a series of co-ordinated pro-Indonesian demonstrations took place, accompanied by robust retaliation from the Indonesian military to counter any anti-Indonesian activity. UNTEA does not appear to have had any forewarning about these marches, which suggests that the authorities were less successful in recruiting informers from the pro-Indonesian side than they had been from amongst the Papuan nationalists.

One of the first of these demonstrations occurred in Hollandia on 14 January, led by the now pro-Indonesian Wajoi. On the morning of the march, he had arrived at the Hollandia Police Commander's office to inform him that the procession was about to begin and to ask for a permit. He was informed that a permit would be given as the march seemed about to depart, but was told that this request should have been made earlier. The procession of about 1000 mainly unemployed men from the surrounding area then headed to the Administrator's residence where a pro-Indonesian petition was delivered. The marchers then dispersed peacefully.¹⁹ On the same day as the Hollandia march, other pro-Indonesian demonstrations took place in different parts of the territory including one of about 800 civilians in Manokwari and a 200-strong march in Biak.

Elsewhere in Hollandia, there were several violent incidents involving Indonesian paratroops after one of them was spat at by a man from Biak. In retaliation, a group of paratroops went into Hollandia and beat up any Biak civilians that they came across, including a policeman. One civilian was also abducted before being released following the intervention of the Divisional Police Commander. The Police Commander then had to confine his men to barracks in order to prevent them retaliating against the Paratroops.²⁰

The following day, another pro-Indonesian demonstration took place, this time in Merauke. Again, there was little or no warning and no permit had been asked for

beforehand. Commissioner Wilson's first learned of the planned march at 7.15 a.m. on the day. This information came from concerned villagers who had sent their children home from school as a precaution. On arrival at Merauke police station, Wilson faced a 200-strong crowd shouting and waving Indonesian flags and banners. The crowd, led by Martin Indey, was asked to withdraw to a nearby football pitch where Wilson intended to address them. However, Indey's supporters did not withdraw but instead halted in front of the Commissioner where they continued to shout and wave their banners.

At this point, one policeman, described in the UNTEA reports as 'mentally retarded,' opened fire over the heads of the demonstrators causing panic. Seven of his colleagues also then began firing into the air and continued to do so for about five minutes, despite being ordered by Wilson to stop. Wilson called for Pakistani troops to restrain the crowd and the eight policemen. While these events were taking place, a second group of pro-Indonesian civilians began advancing on the Police Station from a different direction but were halted by Indonesian police officers. Both groups of demonstrators were finally diverted to the football pitch where they were addressed by Wilson who received a petition from them.²¹ Robertson's report into the incident praised Wilson for preventing any bloodshed and established that no order to fire had been given to the police. However, both Wilson and himself accepted that the Police understandably felt very threatened by the two noisy demonstrations, and this had contributed to the panicked reaction of seven of them, following the initial firing by the first policeman.²²

The Indonesians reacted swiftly to the events in Merauke. On 17 January, Colonel Soedarto, Commander of Indonesian military forces in the territory, sent a strong protest to Wilson:

I deeply regret and am shocked to receive reports from my contingent in Merauke that you have allowed the use of force to break the democratic demonstration conducted by the local people... the use of arms to break the demonstration, as practised by your territorial authority, is evidently against the very principles of human rights. I, therefore, as the Commander of the Indonesian contingent in West Irian, cannot tolerate such an inhuman action and will in no way be responsible for any eventual consequences.²³

Abdoh protested to the Indonesian Mission in the Territory about Colonel Soedarto's threats and warned that he would urge U Thant to take the matter up with the government in Jakarta. He also reminded the Indonesians that their military contingent remained under his authority. Soedarto then agreed to withdraw his threat and Abdoh declared the matter closed.²⁴

The incident at Merauke provoked a strong response from Antara, the official Indonesian news agency. Wilson was condemned as an apologist for "irresponsible" Papuan police action. The report then went on to criticise the general attitude of several other senior UNTEA officials from British Commonwealth countries, including Robertson and Rawlings but, interestingly, not Luckham. They were described as being most unsympathetic towards Indonesia, which was certainly true, and accused of trying to "obstruct the progress made by Indonesia in the territory." Finally Abdoh himself was criticised for being "indecisive."²⁵

On 22 January, Abdoh reported to Narasimhan that he believed it was Indonesian policy to crush all opposition, and added that he was in no doubt that they were behind the organised demonstrations and attacks on Papuan civilians by pro-Indonesian Papuans.²⁶ It is also clear also that the UN Secretariat shared this view. In a report in late January Plimsoll, of the Australian mission to the UN, informed Canberra of a conversation between himself, Narasimhan and U Thant:

Narasimhan said that the UN had had to keep constantly in mind the fact that it needed Indonesian co-operation if it was to get through the UNTEA period without serious incident. He said the UN did not want big disturbances if it could avoid it, and it was quite clear from the information they had that in West New Guinea the Indonesians could turn demonstrations on and off like a tap. U Thant said that he had no doubt at all that demonstrations or representations by Papuans were Indonesian inspired and were not spontaneous.²⁷

Further details of these Indonesian tactics are revealed in Luckham's subsequent report to the Foreign Office. Describing the actions of his Indonesian Police Commissioner in Fak Fak, he wrote:

The Commissioner of Police received instructions to organise anti-UNTEA and anti-plebiscite activities in early January. He went on a visit to Kokonao, the HQ of the Mimika district, together with the Indonesian who had been appointed as my deputy, and my Indonesian Public Works Engineer in middle January, and as soon as they got there, there was an anti-UNTEA demonstration. I expected this to happen in view of the instructions and it was a good place to start as they were 300 miles away and well out of my reach. They were joined on the latter part of their journey by air by another Indonesian official carrying a large bag, which must have contained a collection of anti-UNTEA and plebiscite banners, as those in the procession were written in Indonesian language with many words quite unfamiliar to the Papuans....Most of the local people would know nothing about the outer World: those who did for the most part were anti-Indonesian. We also intercepted a message by radio

instructing one of my officers to organise demonstrations. On a previous occasion I had discovered a radio message to one of the Assistant District Officers from the commander of the Indonesian troops [Soedarto] telling him to report on the movements of Dutch people in the area.²⁸

Luckham's antipathy towards the Indonesians was to bring him into conflict with Abdoh following another incident in his area on 13 January. The violence on this occasion seemed to have occurred because a Papuan policeman removed an Indonesian flag in Kaimana which had been raised by a local civilian. Unarmed skirmishes broke out between pro and anti-Indonesian Papuans, but when night fell the Indonesian Military commander in the area threatened to escalate the conflict by bringing 60 troops into the town. Luckham reported to Abdoh that the Indonesian Ccommander had contemplated direct armed action against the Police but had been prevented by a Pakistani UNSF patrol.²⁹ Robertson's police report of the incident comments that "The Indonesian army is in town, and the police in their barracks fear for their lives."³⁰ In Luckham's opinion, the presence of the Indonesian troops in Kaimana was a threat to the peace and he asked Major Oentong, the local Indonesian Military commander, to withdraw them. Oentong refused, and Luckham reported to Abdoh that peace could not be guaranteed until Oentong and his unit departed. In the same report Luckham stated:

[Oentong] is quite unreliable and still set on trouble...Flag raising Sunday intended provocation [by] pro-Indonesians but incident settled without fuss until Para. Command intervened about 8 hours later. Continued interference by Paratroopers makes administration impossible.³¹

Reporting on the incident later, Luckham described how a demonstration was “ordered for my benefit” as soon as he arrived in the town:

They already had the nucleus of a procession, because the people living round the mosque at Kaimana were muslims, pro-Indonesian and anti-Dutch; but, as there were not enough for a reasonable sized procession, the organisers pushed anybody they could find into it and beat up those who refused. It was not however, a very enthusiastic procession, and stopped and dispersed when met by a Pakistani Officer, before they reached the police barracks where there might have been trouble. Armed Indonesian soldiers had been urging them on from behind up to this point. The procession carried no banners and most of them did not know what it was about.³²

Abdoh’s reaction to Luckham’s telegram suggests that he had little time for the commissioner’s frustration with the Indonesians. His overriding priority was to prevent a breakdown of the territory’s administration while UNTEA was still responsible and, as Narasimhan had commented in New York, this required Indonesian co-operation. Consequently, Abdoh refused to support Luckham’s call for the troops to leave Kaimana. Instead he appointed two Indonesian officers to command the local police unit and instructed the Indonesian Divisional commander to remain in Kaimana “in the hope that Indonesian troops will be more friendly to police commanded by brother Indonesian police officers.”³³ It was then made clear to Luckham that his priority was to prevent anti-Indonesian activity rather than allow himself to be distracted by Indonesian provocation and violence. With regard to the removal of the Indonesian flag by the Papuan policeman, Abdoh enquired:

Why was he not aware of policy, namely that any private person can fly any flag he likes, especially the Indonesian flag, on his private property without let or hindrance? Please ensure police unit thoroughly lectured on policy concerning flags and importance of not insulting in any way to Indonesia. Ensure also civil

administration personnel thoroughly briefed on policy re: flags and importance of not giving insult in any way or form to Indonesia...Must emphasise your duty as resident is to maintain law and order despite presence of Indonesian troops. Please confirm you feel competent to ensure this.³⁴

Luckham resented Abdoh's decisions with regard to the incident at Kaimana. He supported his Papuan district officer in the town who he felt was doing his best to be loyal to UNTEA in very difficult circumstances. He described in his letter to the Foreign Office how Indonesian officials and army officers bullied the district officer and often walked into his office to read whatever correspondence was on his desk. Luckham's dissatisfaction with Abdoh's position finally resulted in him ignoring instructions from Hollandia:

During the affair at Kaimana the Indonesian commander was in communication with the [Indonesian] Mission in Hollandia and I was getting instructions to dismiss the police concerned in the incident and the district officer, although the police concerned were only responsible in so far as they had done their duty in the wrong way and the district officer was not in the very least to blame and had tried to get things settled. It was clear that my HQ were accepting what the Indonesians said and were not waiting for me to complete my enquiries. I protested strongly and did not take the disciplinary action suggested as it was quite wrong and might well have provoked the further trouble which I was trying to avoid. I could not complete the clearing up at Kaimana as a demonstration was threatened in Fak Fak; and so I had to return.³⁵

The serious dispute between Abdoh and one of his senior officials over UNTEA policy in dealing with the Indonesian military further illustrates the difficulties faced by Abdoh as he attempted to maintain an appearance of UN control in West New Guinea during the last months of UNTEA.

Attacks on Papuan Nationalists and Pressure on the Papuan Police

During mid to late January, the Indonesians and their Papuan supporters also carried out a number of attacks on Papuans considered to be hostile. On 17 January, several pro-Indonesian Papuans entered the Government's School of Administration in Hollandia and began searching for Papuan flags. They found none but a Papuan student was beaten up.³⁶ On the same day, Indonesian Paratroops attacked several Papuan nurses at Hollandia hospital. The paratroops had apparently been told by Indonesian nurses at the same hospital that their Papuan colleagues were inciting other Papuans to cross over into PNG. It is not clear whether the Papuans knew that their Indonesian colleagues were responsible for the attack, but it illustrates how even Indonesians who were not involved in the military, or UNTEA mission, were still sometimes active participants in Jakarta's campaign in the territory.³⁷

A more serious incident involving pro-Indonesian Papuans took place in January following the return home from PNG of 44 Papuan students who were then based at Hollandia's Administration College and Teacher College, and Kota Baru Junior High School. Their return was necessitated by Australia's refusal to allow them to remain. This refusal was based upon a 1962 Australian decision to grant residence only to refugees whose motivation for flight derived from political activities undertaken before the Dutch withdrawal. The reasoning behind this was that:

To allow permanent entry...to those motivated by general discontent with the Indonesian Administration could lead to mass migration

which PNG couldn't handle, could create ill will with the Indonesians and a breakdown of respect for the border.³⁸

The students arrived back in Hollandia on 21 January aboard an Australian launch. UNTEA organised a short ceremony welcoming them back and assurances were made for their safety. However, that evening the students from the Administration College and the Teacher's College were attacked in their dormitories by around 30 pro-Indonesian Papuans, some armed with large knives. Papuan students at a nearby junior high school were also attacked and two needed hospital treatment before the police and some Indonesian teachers intervened.³⁹

Jakarta supported its campaign of intimidation by increasing its troop presence in the territory, despite opposition from UNTEA, which supposedly had the authority to determine their numbers. On 22 January, Abdoh and UNSF Commander Said cabled Narasimhan:

Indonesians have been trying to increase strength of troops in the territory surreptitiously with excuses that they need sufficient supply and logistics support for troops. This being reasonable, we gave ceiling figure 1500 but they tend to exceed permitted numbers....Present strength of troops as given on 12 January, 1101 and according to Soedarto by end of month will be 1150 combat troops, 173 staff, 270 naval logistic group and technicians and 40 airforce logistics group and technicians...We are trying to persuade them to keep down influx of troops but have no means of verifying or stopping.⁴⁰

Abdoh and Said concluded that the increase was partly to prepare the ground for a large Indonesian military influx following 1 May, but also in the short term to ensure that they outnumbered the police. Understandably, the Indonesians considered

the police to be hostile to them, despite Abdoh and Said's efforts to convince them otherwise. On this issue, the Indonesians made their position very clear to Said. He was warned that if there was further police harassment of pro-Indonesian groups, they would take the law in to their own hands and bring in even more troops if necessary.⁴¹ It is clear from Abdoh's firm stand with Luckham over the incidents at Kaimana that these threats had the desired effect.

Despite supporting Abdoh's attempts to reassure Indonesia about the police, Said's opinion of them had evidently not altered since he and Rolz-Bennett dismissed them at the start of UNTEA as helpless and ineffective.⁴² In the 22 January cable to Narasimhan, Abdoh wrote:

Said feels that every incident resulting in use of firearms has been triggered off by Papuan police. He feels convinced that Indonesian apprehensions were largely justified....Said questions discipline and dependability of Papuan police and feels that disorders if any would most probably be started by police.⁴³

The UNSF Commander's assessment of the police contrasted starkly with his attitude towards the Indonesian troops. From a report on them that he sent to Abdoh, it appears that his main concern was to explain, or even justify their habitual disregard of UNTEA's authority, and play down the severity of the problem. Commenting accurately upon the problem of Indonesian involvement in UNSF he wrote:

The loyalty of Indonesian troops in the territory will naturally be more towards their high command at Jakarta though, superficially, they may be carrying out the orders of the Administrator or the Commander, UNSF. In cases where the policy of UNTEA is in conflict with that of Jakarta they will naturally look towards their own high command.⁴⁴

Said then went on to explain how the political nature of the Indonesian army meant that they were bound to get involved in pro- and anti-Indonesian disputes among the Papuans. “the Indonesian troops feel it to be their moral duty to protect the life and property of their friends.”⁴⁵

Having played down the seriousness of both Indonesian disobedience of UNSF, and their active involvement in intimidation and inciting disorder, Said concluded:

I feel the Indonesian troops in the territory have conducted themselves creditably...They have not openly defied the authority of the UNSF or the Administrator. It is hoped that payment of allowances and issue of a directive will bring about a slight change in their behaviour, but it should not be expected that they will completely change themselves into an impartial United Nations Force.⁴⁶

While the vast majority of Pakistan’s UNSF troops tried to remain neutral, it is obvious from the record that their commander was more sympathetic to the Indonesian position than his UN role should have allowed. By necessity, Abdoh was intolerant of anti-Indonesian bias from Luckham or any of his subordinates, but it should have been a matter of concern to him that his senior military official considered police ill-discipline as more of a threat to stability than the intimidatory, and systematic undermining by Indonesia of UNTEA’s authority. Nonetheless, UNTEA’s priority of preserving stability meant appeasing Indonesia at the expense of the Papuans. Any concerns about freedom of expression and self-determination were quickly set aside by UNTEA when it became clear that Jakarta had no interest in maintaining the rather

transparent illusion, created by the Agreement, that such rights were guaranteed to the Papuans.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Chief of Police Robertson did not share Said's opinion of his own force. In his view, Indonesian suspicions about the police were based on two facts. Firstly, they were the only organised body of Papuans who possessed modern fire arms and were trained in how to use them (it is unclear why he omitted to mention the Papuan Volunteer Corps [PVK]) and, secondly, he believed that they had retained much more of the Dutch "indoctrination," because of their "above average intelligence" in relation to the general Papuan population.⁴⁷ He also saw a link between the Indonesian-organised campaign of intimidation against Papuan nationalists, particularly the students, and the "campaign of belittling and undermining the police, except that with the Police direct assault could not be attempted."⁴⁸

Furthermore, Robertson's assessment of where the blame for the violence lay contrasted starkly with Said's. Whereas the UNSF Commander blamed the police for every incident involving firearms that they were party to, Robertson only accepted their culpability on one occasion, and that was the incident in Sorong on 13 December which had resulted in one policeman being killed.⁴⁹ While he accepted that this clash was initiated by a policeman, he remarked that the subsequent attack on the police station by Indonesian troops using mortars was completely unjustified and unwarranted.⁵⁰

Unlike Said, Robertson believed that the Indonesians bore much of the responsibility for the violence. He reported to Abdoh that the incidents started by the Indonesian army or civilians, “which were effectively and efficiently either prevented or brought under control by the police”, were too numerous to mention.⁵¹ However, he supported his argument by mentioning two examples, the first being the incident on 15 November when Indonesian troops took over a public road near Sorong and beat up some Papuan policemen.⁵² The second example concerned an incident, apparently started by the Indonesian army, which Robertson said resulted in two villages in the coastal area of Engross (in the Hollandia district) going to war with each other. This had then been quickly resolved by one unarmed platoon of police.⁵³ In defence of the police, Robertson went on to state:

the Police Service has proved that it can be relied upon to maintain, or restore, law and order under the most difficult conditions, with a modern army, heavily armed and antagonistic to them at all times. And it is wrong to generalise to the point of stating that the loyalty or discipline of the Police could not be depended upon when only 69 policemen out of a strength of over 1,600 have defaulted.⁵⁴

He concluded with the rather over-optimistic assessment that discipline was improving daily with the influx of Indonesian police officers, and loyalty towards the Dutch was swinging rapidly towards Indonesia.⁵⁵

Robertson obviously resented Said’s severe criticism of the police force and his apparent alignment with the Indonesian position on this issue. Part of his resentment would have derived from the view that a criticism of them was a criticism of him as Police Chief. It was also true, as Indonesia claimed, that UNTEA officials from the

Commonwealth countries were much more inclined to sympathise with the Papuans rather than with the anti-Western regime in Jakarta.

This dispute between UNTEA's Chief of Police and Head of Security also reveals a division within the UNTEA leadership in its final months, a division which pitted Commonwealth officials, against their colleagues from Asia and the Middle East. The perception that the latter were more sympathetic to Jakarta apparently encouraged Sukarno to make direct pleas to Narasimhan "as a fellow Asian." In early February, a British Embassy official in Jakarta reported being told by Narasimhan that the Indonesian President had made an unsuccessful private appeal to him:

President Sukarno had tried to get him to support the Indonesian campaign for the administration of West Irian to be transferred to this country before the agreed date of May 1. Narasimhan replied that this was not possible...Sukarno then said that surely he and Narasimhan, as fellow Asians, could come to some little arrangement about it: after all, "the others are constantly fixing things among themselves."⁵⁶

Indonesian Acceptance of the 1 May Hand-over Date

By the end of January, though, the Indonesians appeared to abandon their campaign to shorten UNTEA's term. Luckham reported another 'anti-UNTEA' and 'anti-plebiscite' demonstration in Kaimana in early February which was made up of local Indonesian settlers and Papuan Moslems, but after that the campaign "petered out."⁵⁷ Jeffrey Peterson at the British Embassy in Jakarta also sensed a change of mood by the end of January, noting that the Indonesians "seem to have lost some of their crusading fervour." He suspected that they had "seized the Sec-Gen's promise, to

accelerate the 'Indonesianisation' of the West Irian administration...as a welcome face-saving device."⁵⁸

Finally, on 6 February, Subandrio stated that, following recent discussions with Narasimhan, Indonesia accepted 1 May as the date of transfer. He added, however, that both sides had agreed informally that authority would be transferred to Indonesia prior to this date.⁵⁹ To facilitate this informal transfer, it was agreed to accelerate the phasing in of Indonesian officials into the Administration. Soon afterwards J D Legge observed:

The campaign for the cutting down of the interim UNTEA period seems particularly odd. The New York agreement would appear to have given Indonesia all that it had asked for....the interim period is so short that, in any case, it could hardly leave time for the principals to negotiate an alteration of the New York agreement....At the very least the campaign was a piece of bad public relations and one wonders what sort of purpose could have been served by it.⁶⁰

The UN leadership itself was still unclear as to why Indonesia had launched this campaign. Like Rolz-Bennett, U Thant and Narasimhan initially suspected that Jakarta's motivation had been financial. By shortening the UNTEA period, they perhaps hoped to reduce their financial contribution to the administration. This theory however, was abandoned by late January and the two men informed the Australian UN Mission diplomat Plimsoll that they simply did not know the reason.⁶¹

Van der Veur concluded that it was "a political balloon" to test the UN. It was part of the overall Indonesian tactic of undermining the Agreement in order to achieve

more realistic concessions, in particular the official abandonment by UNTEA of any plans for a second phase of administration after 1 May.⁶² This was a view also shared by Henderson, but it is very doubtful that an abandonment of the second phase was the motivation since this had been privately agreed to by the Dutch in July 1962.⁶³ The campaign was certainly part of Jakarta's efforts to undermine the Agreement. As Legge observed, the Agreement had given Indonesia virtually everything that they had asked for. The fact that they then tried to undermine it seems in retrospect to have been policy characteristic of Sukarno. Like many charismatic leaders, his attitude towards international relations had more to do with grand gestures and maintaining an atmosphere of crisis, than sober diplomacy and negotiation. While attempts to shorten UNTEA's period were unreasonable, illogical and unlikely to succeed, this was not important to Sukarno. It was not reason and logic that had won him West New Guinea, it was brinkmanship and an illogical preparedness to risk more for the territory, in terms of national stability, military expense and Cold War bargaining, than was prudent at the time. With this attitude and a belief in his own propaganda about "West Irian", there was no reason to abide by the Agreement. On the contrary, Indonesia was in a powerful position and with enough threats against the UN, Jakarta thought that anything might have succeeded.

Coinciding with the failure of their campaign to hasten UNTEA's departure, there is evidence that at least some Indonesians were beginning to lose interest in the territory now that the initial euphoria was over. On 30 January, Peterson of the British

Embassy in Jakarta noted that civilian and military officials were already expressing reluctance to serve in the territory:

The President has scarcely uttered a public word on the subject of West Irian since his threat [reported 21 December 1962] to use force if there was the least delay in the hand over by the United Nations and it would be entirely in character if his interest was rapidly fading.⁶⁴

Despite a possible loss of interest by Jakarta, and an acceptance that UNTEA would remain until 1 May, the general Indonesian effort to undermine UNTEA continued to achieve noticeable results. In the same communication, Peterson declared:

I have little doubt that the degree of control exercised by Dr. Abdoh and his handful of non-Indonesian helpers is by now nominal. Their sole preoccupation must be to avoid a complete breakdown of the economy and the social services, such as they are, in the next three months.⁶⁵

On the same subject, Warner at the Foreign Office commented a few days later that “The task of UNTEA...has been exceptionally hard. They have lacked adequate staff and have only been able to administer the more civilised fringes of this immense and jungly territory.”⁶⁶

Narasimhan’s February Visit to West New Guinea

Following his discussions with Subandrio in Jakarta, Narasimhan paid a three day visit to West New Guinea beginning 9 February. During his stay he had discussions with Dutch and Indonesian UNTEA officials as well as members of UNSF, but only one meeting was planned with the Papuans. This was scheduled to take place

on the last day of his visit at the Administrator's residence in Hollandia. Members of Regional Councils from villages around the capital were supposed to have been invited but none turned up. The reason for this was given in a hand-written note in the margin of an UNTEA file outlining Narasimhan's programme of engagements; "Did not show up as they were scared of the Indonesians."⁶⁷

Van der Veur, however, gives a more detailed explanation for Narasimhan's failure to meet any Papuan representatives. According to him, three members of a regional council from the Hollandia area asked Benedictus Sarwom, a Papuan UNTEA official, to relay a request to his superiors for a meeting with Narasimhan. This request was passed to Aly Khalil (the head of UNTEA's Information Section), who discussed it with his Indonesian deputy. The next evening, an Indonesian intelligence officer visited Sarwom and informed him that:

...a discussion about the status of West Irian was now 'an internal matter which should not be discussed with foreigners.' A request such as the regional council members made was 'very unwise' and could have repercussions after May 1. The three members of the regional council's executive committee did not receive an official response to their request and did not meet the United Nations dignitary.⁶⁸

In another attempt to alert Narasimhan to Papuan nationalist opinion, the DVP, organisers of the failed 1 December march, sent a written statement to him on 10 February. In it they denounced the Agreement and called for Indonesia to leave and UNTEA to remain until the territory was ready for independence. They also complained of attacks by Indonesian-backed groups and specifically called for the

activities of Martin Indyk's 'army' to be restricted. Finally, they requested Dutch involvement in assisting UNTEA, and asked for their rights to be respected.⁶⁹ It is not known whether Narasimhan read the resolution during his stay, but he ended his visit by stating at a reception in his honour:

From the very beginning, although there were so many differences between our Netherlands and Indonesian colleagues, they were agreed on this: that the interests of the Papuan population must come first. This recognition of a common interest is reflected in every clause, every article and sub-article of the Agreement and I have no doubt that when the administration of the Territory passes on to the Republic of Indonesia, they will do all they can to advance the welfare of the people in the letter and in the spirit of the Agreement...I hope that...the United Nations has not been just concerned in this operation like a ship passing through the bay of Hollandia; that we have acquired, by our temporary presence here, a deep interest in the welfare of the people and that it will be our duty, in co-operation with our partners, to serve the population of Irian Barat, so that in the years to come they will remember the United Nations was really and truly interested in their economic development and their continuing welfare.⁷⁰

Even allowing for the fact that official UN statements need to be phrased in diplomatic terms, Narasimhan's comments bore no relation whatsoever to the reality of West New Guinea's situation, a fact that he was only too well aware of. Furthermore, with regard to UNTEA's date of withdrawal, he publicly gave credence to Indonesia's propaganda campaign on the issue:

After 31 December 1962, there was considerable pressure from the people of West Irian, that the period [from 31 December to 1 May] should be shortened...[this was not feasible but] the Secretary-General had decided that we would hand over to the designated representative of the Republic of Indonesia on 1 May at 12.30 p.m....it is in recognition of this public pressure that this date has been set...This second stage [beginning 1 May] we have curtailed to a matter of a few hours. This is our response to the wishes of the people.⁷¹

This declaration, made by such a senior UN official, was remarkable in that it was so obviously untrue. Narasimhan knew this, the UNTEA officials knew it too, as did everyone else who had any knowledge of the situation. To comment upon such dishonesty in international affairs risks the charge of naivety. But it is reasonable to argue that the Papuans had a right to expect a greater degree of honesty from the UN than they did from individual states.

There was, of course, a sound political motive for Narasimhan to lie. He could not reveal that the 1 May hand-over date had already been agreed upon by the Dutch and Indonesians the previous July. He also did not wish the UN to appear weak in the face of Indonesian pressure. But by stating that the decision was made in recognition of the popular wishes of the Papuan people, he could appear flexible and responsive to reason. Furthermore, it is possible that U Thant privately welcomed the Indonesian-orchestrated campaigns against the UN because, fearing an embarrassing breakdown of UNTEA control, he wanted the UN out of the territory as quickly as possible after 1 May.

Narasimhan may have been a skilled diplomat, but at least one senior UNTEA official privately condemned his policies. Commenting to a friend afterwards, Commissioner Wilson described Narasimhan as “a rogue.” He also criticised his “short-term” view of the West New Guinea problem, which treated the UN’s responsibilities for the territory as something to be discharged as rapidly as possible.⁷²

Narasimhan's attitude, however, was no different from that of the UN Secretariat as a whole.

The agreement to speed up the replacement of all other officials and military personnel by Indonesians marked the beginning of the end of UNTEA. The plan included the removal of all remaining Dutch officials by 31 March and the progressive replacement of UNSF by Indonesian troops to be completed by 1 May.⁷³ As the British Ambassador to Jakarta was to comment following UNTEA's withdrawal:

The changeover was apparently effected with little trouble. By 1 May over 1,600 Indonesian officials were already occupying the senior administrative positions in West Irian and some 15,000 Indonesian troops were already present in the territory to maintain order and security - indeed the Indonesian contingent commander and the head of the Indonesian Mission had virtually been running the internal affairs of the territory for several months past.⁷⁴

The Papuan Volunteer Corps (PVK) Mutiny

In Manokwari on 17 February, the last major incident took place of Papuan resistance to the coming hand-over to Indonesia. It was significant because it involved a mutiny of around one quarter of the 450-strong Papuan Volunteer Corps (PVK), the only militarily-trained and -armed group of West Papuans in existence. Although originally led by Dutch officers, these had been totally replaced with Indonesians by 21 January 1963,⁷⁵ partly in the hope that this would instil loyalty within the corps towards Indonesia. However, in the opinion of A. Cameron, Manokwari's Divisional

Commissioner, the Papuan troops felt a deep discontent with the situation in the territory and this was the underlying motive for their revolt.⁷⁶

The mutiny seems to have been initiated by a clash between a small number of PVK troops and Indonesian soldiers from (East Java based) Battalion 521 stationed in the area. Manokwari's Indonesian Police Commissioner blamed the clash on provocative behaviour by the PVK, but they in turn accused the Indonesians of opening fire on them. Following the initial clash, the PVK troops involved informed their colleagues back at barracks. About one hundred of them then broke into the barrack armoury and armed themselves before heading into town, declaring that they were going to attack the local Indonesian army camp.

Throughout the night, PVK troops ignored pleas from their officers and senior UNTEA officials to return to barracks. Instead, they patrolled the town, accompanied by supporting Papuan civilians while the Indonesian troops retreated to their barracks. The PVK's central demand was that all Indonesians should return to Indonesia. According to Cameron, the mutiny was well-organised, phone lines to the Indonesian PVK officers were cut while the patrols in town were co-ordinated by the two ringleaders, Sergeants Frits Awom and Namrey. This suggests perhaps that the mutiny had been planned in advance, with the clash in town merely a pretext to take action. Nonetheless, there were only a few injuries and the PVK did not carry out their threat to attack the army camp. The next morning Cameron called in two platoons of Pakistani troops, but by this time the PVK had returned to barracks and returned most

of their weapons, although twenty rifles and a number of hand grenades remained unaccounted for.⁷⁷

Cameron's recommendations to Abdoh following the mutiny were unambiguous. He stated that the PVK were a menace to public order and had to be disarmed and disbanded as soon as possible, certainly before 1 May. He further suggested that if the Indonesians wished to keep any Papuans from the Corps on as soldiers, they would be advised to recruit them into the Indonesian Armed Forces only after a period of re-training in Indonesia.

It was also clear that Cameron objected to the PVK because, like the police, their anti-Indonesian attitude gave encouragement to Papuan civilians who shared their views. While little could be done to alter Papuan antipathy towards Jakarta, UNTEA could at least deprive them of any confidence which might have resulted from them having their own Corps as a potential defence against Indonesian military intimidation. The more they accepted that events were out of their hands, the less likely it would be that UNTEA's last months would be threatened by disorder. Cameron concluded by stating:

It must be realised that only good fortune saved us from a very bloody clash. From my own observation and the reports of my officers I have no doubt that had fighting begun the PVK would have been joined by civilians some of them armed and I regret to say, by the police. Accounts that Arfaks tribesman were gathering I discount, this is a popular bogey, nevertheless any large-scale fighting would probably have repercussions beyond the immediate inhabitants of Manokwari. For this reason we cannot afford to retain the PVK as a focus of discontent.⁷⁸

Two days after the mutiny, Capt. Karim, the Indonesian acting commander of the PVK, asked Cameron to disarm the corps. This request was repeated by Major Tuisita, another Indonesian who replaced Karim as acting PVK commander on the same day. Cameron supported their request, but refused to act until authorised by UNSF Commander Khan.⁷⁹ Once Khan's permission was received, Cameron and the Indonesian officers discussed how they could get the arms of the Papuan troops without incident.

Eventually it was decided to use deception to obtain the weaponry. On the morning of the 20 February, the PVK were ordered to parade with their arms. They were then told to lay their arms on the ground so that UN officials could inspect them. While the inspection took place, the men were ordered out of their camp for a run. Once the PVK had departed, Pakistani UNSF troops arrived and took away all the arms and ammunition. The Indonesian PVK officers were allowed to retain their side arms but agreed not to wear them. Furthermore, at the request of the Indonesian officers, Cameron agreed to tell the PVK that the decision to disarm them was his, not the officers'. When the PVK returned from their run, there was a predictable outcry and anti-Indonesian chants, but no violence. Cameron addressed them and told them that some UNSF troops would remain at their camp for a while to ensure their protection.⁸⁰

A Special Commission was established to interview members of the PVK about the incident. Those interviewed denied that the PVK were to blame and most complained that while their access to firearms was restricted while the Indonesians' was not.⁸¹ The Commission was also designed to encourage as many of the corps' 'trouble makers' to voluntarily resign as possible. Each man was interviewed privately and offered the chance to leave, however this did not go as UNTEA had planned:

Some 348 members of the Papuan Volunteer Corps were interviewed. 342 indicated that they wished to remain in the Corps. Six indicated that they wished to leave. In view of recent happenings, these results are surprising, the more so because none of those listed as ringleaders of Sunday night's mutiny said they wished to leave, neither did any of those whom Capt. Karim wishes to discharge.⁸²

Eventually, in addition to the six volunteers, 22 men were compulsorily dismissed and a further 14 disciplined. Although it was not disbanded by UNTEA, the now unarmed PVK were no longer a potential threat to the Indonesians.

The Final Period of UNTEA and International Opinion

As time went on, pro-Indonesian Papuans became increasingly confident. On 21 February, Abdoh was informed that a letter had been sent to Shell New Guinea, threatening to attack any Dutch civilians who remained after 1 May.⁸³ Abdoh advised the company not to take these threats seriously, but pledged that UNTEA would provide the Dutch with adequate protection.⁸⁴ However, since the leaflet warned of violence after UNTEA left but not before then, Abdoh's assurance was of little comfort. A British diplomat in Jakarta noted in late February:

Dutch reports from Amsterdam said that there are now only about 500 Dutchmen left in West Irian, 200 of whom are in UNTEA, and that very few will remain by May 1.⁸⁵

By this stage of the administration the vast majority of non-Papuan UNTEA employees were Indonesian. Figures for 1 March give the total as 1,200 Indonesians, 200 Dutch and 80 from other countries [84].⁸⁶

British concerns over the territory, such as they were, mainly related to growing tensions with Jakarta over Malaysia. Aware of this fact, in early February the Dutch informed the British that Goedhart, their Hollandia-based liaison officer, had reported Indonesian troop movements and changes of command that were a possible cause for concern to Britain. He stated that Indonesia had concentrated their best paratroopers at Biak, to be moved at short notice to an undisclosed destination. Furthermore, senior officers, including future President General Suharto, were being replaced by less important personnel, the inference being that their abilities were now needed elsewhere. Goedhart surmised that it could be linked to increasing tension over British Borneo.⁸⁷

As further evidence of the growing strains between London and Jakarta, the Foreign Office noted Luckham's comment in early April regarding the gradual withdrawal of UNTEA personnel that: "whether by coincidence or through Indonesian pressure the British [UNTEA] officials seem to be the earliest to be sent off."⁸⁸

For the Australians, the imminent arrival of an Indonesian administration in West New Guinea continued to stimulate debate within the government. By late January, the Department of External Affairs seemed to have become less enthusiastic about maintaining an Australian representative in Hollandia, principally because this would probably result in having an Indonesian presence in Port Moresby:

Australia should seek to continue some representation at Hollandia by a consular office so that up to date and reliable information about what was happening in West New Guinea would continue to be available. On the other hand, if the Indonesians made it a condition of such an arrangement that an Indonesian Consul be located in Port Moresby, External Affairs would feel that the disadvantages of this in terms of the opportunity it would give an Indonesian representative for contact with and discussion with emerging local leaders and also for disseminating Indonesian propaganda and possibly for under-cover intelligence activity would outweigh the advantages in having an Australian consular office at Hollandia.⁸⁹

On the other hand, the hostility of the Department of Territories towards cross-border representation with Indonesia, appeared to have receded since the previous September. In his report of a conversation on the subject with Sir Arthur Tange of the Department of External Affairs, a senior Department of Territories official commented:

...from the Territories' point of view...We had found the information coming from the Australian Liaison Officer at Hollandia very useful, particularly in recent weeks...Should it be decided that some form of co-operation arrangement would be entered into between the two Administrations, then from the Administration's point of view the presence of representatives of the other administrations in Hollandia and Port Moresby would be useful for the purpose of the co-operation arrangement.⁹⁰

The UN also believed that the Australian representative in Hollandia was “a great asset,” a view shared by Plimsoll of the Australian UN mission in New York who saw him as a good source of information about the territory during the transition period.⁹¹ UNTEA, however, was not so enthusiastic about Australian press coverage of their administration. On 25 March, Abdoh felt it necessary to bring the subject up with the Australian Representative:

I took this opportunity to point out to Mr Hutton the unfavourable and tendentious attitude of certain sections of the Australian press towards the UNTEA operations as a whole...Mr Hutton admitted that he himself and the Australian Dept. of External Affairs were aware of the nature of unjustified criticism directed in certain sections of the Australian press against UNTEA. Mr Hutton promised that upon his return to Canberra he would do his best to correct the attitude of the erring newspapers.⁹²

In a 1964 article on UNTEA, Paul Van der Veur described the consequences that resulted from the decision by elected Papuan members of the Biak-Numfur regional council to draft its December 1962 resolution criticising Indonesia and calling for Papuan freedom. According to Van der Veur, pressure from Indonesian UNTEA employees had by 30 March, resulted in the Council members drafting a new resolution expressing regret for any displeasure that they might have caused Sukarno. This was rejected by the Indonesian officials in Biak and a second draft was submitted to them on 2 April which withdrew the December resolution, but still emphasised Articles XVIII and XX of the Agreement referring to Papuan self-determination.⁹³

This too was rejected by the Indonesian officials:

At this point Indonesian ‘gentle pressure’ made room for Indonesia ‘guided democracy.’ Stunned council members were told that they

no longer had to worry about drafting an acceptable resolution at all - a prepared statement would be given them for signature.⁹⁴

The council members protested to Commissioner Carter that, by this action, the Indonesians were totally ignoring the terms of the Agreement. Carter promised to inform Abdoh of this “political crisis” and, on 5 April, UNTEA Internal Affairs Director Somerville arrived in Biak to meet the members. Somerville apparently wasted little time in reminding them of the reality of the situation. He declared that while this agreement was the “guiding document” of UNTEA, its task ended on 1 May.⁹⁵ In essence this meant that once Indonesia took over, the UN accepted that they would do whatever they pleased, regardless of anything promised in the Agreement. The Papuans were to be abandoned by the international community.

Following this discussion, the council members signed the Indonesian-prepared statement and retracted their original resolution. However, the matter was not yet closed because the authorities in Jakarta then intervened and demanded a new resolution be signed, even more supportive of the Indonesian position than the first one drafted by their officials in Biak. Consequently, on 10 April, a new version was drafted by the two most senior Indonesian UNTEA officials in Biak and addressed to the Chairman of the UNGA:

This resolution not only withdrew the December 3 resolution but declared loyalty ‘with complete sincerity and honesty’ to the ‘Unitary Republic of Indonesia which is based on the 1945 Constitution.’ Members of the regional council’s executive committee signed the document, though they did so under protest and for the good of the people of Biak. One high UNTEA official commented: ‘The astonishing aspect is that they [the Indonesians]

are doing this right under our noses. They don't even wait until the first of May'.⁹⁶

If accurate, Van der Veur's allegations illustrate the UN's complete abrogation of its responsibilities under the Agreement to defend the rights and freedoms of the Papuans. It also gives credence to the British Ambassador's observation that Indonesia had been virtually running the internal affairs of the territory for several months before 1 May.⁹⁷

The fate of the Biak-Numfur Council also puts into context a British report from Jakarta in early March, suggesting that this incident was part of a general Indonesian campaign, shortly before the handover, to further demonstrate Papuan loyalty to Indonesia:

The press have given publicity to a series of statements made by various groups of West Irian leaders. These statements are said to represent the unanimous view of the entire West Irian people...One such statement was described as the West Irian Charter. This according to Antara, among other things expressed loyalty to the Proclamation of August 17 1945, adopted and defended the Pantjasila, defended and pledged the implementation of the Political Manifesto...recognising the legal authority of the Indonesian Republic as of 1 October 1962 and rejected the holding of a plebiscite in 1969.⁹⁸

This not only contradicted earlier British assessments that Jakarta was already losing interest in the territory: it also signalled a build-up in Indonesia's campaign against any plans to hold an 'Act of Free Choice' in West New Guinea to decide its final status.

For the Netherlands, the main concern now was to forget West New Guinea. This was facilitated by Jakarta's agreement on 13 March to re-establish diplomatic relations with The Hague. For the UN, this was a positive step for which they, as peace brokers, could claim some credit and U Thant applauded it as a "fitting and happy outcome of the Agreement and related understandings concerning West New Guinea."⁹⁹ This Dutch attitude was reported on in June 1963 by Australian diplomats at the UN who spoke with Goedhart, who had been the Dutch liaison officer with UNTEA:

Goedhart indicated that Dutch had little if any interest left in West New Guinea. He said that Luns who had pushed the matter hardest and longest could not bear even to mention the subject to such an extent that Schurmann and Goedhart were 'in the dog house' with him simply because their duties had required them to be so active in this matter here. Goedhart also said that the Dutch correspondingly had little interest in arrangements in respect of any act of self-determination and were only concerned that some facade of respectability should be maintained...if such an arrangement could be cloaked with air of respectability referred to, Dutch would be satisfied.¹⁰⁰

In the last week of UNTEA, Abdoh opened the 1963 session of the New Guinea Council in its newly-constructed building in Hollandia. At the opening, Abdoh expressed the hope that this "seat of democracy would reflect the will of the people."¹⁰¹

Thontje Meset, the Council's Chairman, declared that a great deal of responsibility had been placed on the members who 'hand in hand' with the Government of Indonesia would focus their minds on the existing problems in order to

overcome them.¹⁰² This was to prove rather optimistic. Six days later, twelve of the twenty-eight members turned up to vote by seven to five to dissolve the Council and request:

‘His Excellency the President of the Republic of Indonesia/The Great Leader of the Revolution of the Indonesian People from Sabang to Merauke, Father Dr. Ir. Hadji Soekarno to return as soon as possible a People’s Representative Council for the District of West Irian.’¹⁰³

Four days after Abdoh’s speech at the Council’s inauguration, he attended the ‘roofing ceremony’ of the Court of Justice, another public building project by UNTEA:

In his speech, Dr. Abdoh expressed confidence that fundamental freedoms, rights and liberties would be upheld by the court because “the Universal declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations have this purpose in view and the United Nations has been directly concerned with this Seat of Justice which will be the means of enforcing these very objectives.”¹⁰⁴

International Reaction to the 1 May Hand-over

Finally, on 1 May 1963 a public ceremony was held in Hollandia to hand the territory over from UNTEA to Indonesia who installed Elizar Bonay, a Papuan (and spokesman for the Papuan political party Parna), as its first Governor. At 12:41, local time, a Pakistani sergeant lowered the UN flag while a predominantly Papuan crowd of around 5,000 stood to attention.¹⁰⁵ The UN was represented by Abdoh and Narasimhan. Indonesia’s representatives were Foreign Minister Subandrio and the Chief of the Indonesian Liaison Mission with UNTEA, Dr. Sudjarwo Tjondronegoro.

Sukarno had decided to delay his arrival until several days after UNTEA's departure. The Netherlands' representative was Goedhart.

Among those making speeches, Abdoh thanked the Indonesian contingent and expressed confidence that the new administration would protect and promote the welfare of the people of the territory, although he did not specifically mention self-determination. Sudjarwo thanked the Papuans for the "numerous resolutions which have been forwarded to me by the people from various places and by various groups...expressing the growth of their awareness of the new situation."¹⁰⁶

Neither of the Indonesian speakers, however, made any reference to a plebiscite or any other opportunity for Papuan self-determination. Mention of this was left to Narasimhan who read out a message from U Thant to the "people of West Irian." In it he announced that as agreed in Article XVI of the New York agreement, a few UN 'experts' would visit the territory "as often as may be necessary and spend such time as may be required to enable them to report fully to me." Their function would be to "advise and assist" in preparations for carrying out the "provisions of self-determination." He concluded by stating:

I am confident that the Republic of Indonesia will scrupulously observe the terms of the agreement concluded on 15 August 1962, and will ensure the exercise by the population of the territory of their right to express their wishes as to their future.¹⁰⁷

He later wrote how, he, and the remaining 100 UN staff then "got out" the territory "that very night." Narasimhan himself flew straight to the Netherlands where he met

the Dutch queen. She apparently expressed her concern to him for the Papuans and hoped that they would be allowed a proper act of self-determination.¹⁰⁸

Official international reaction was little more than a repetition of established positions. President Kennedy praised the transfer as “a notable event both for Indonesia and the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes between nations.”¹⁰⁹ Khrushchev described it as a victory in Indonesia’s just struggle for the territory. The North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong declared:

...we extend our warm congratulations to the brother Indonesian people for their recovery of West Irian on 1 May. The heart warming support given by the people of Indonesia to the patriotic movement in South Vietnam has had far-reaching repercussions among our people.¹¹⁰

A different view of events was given by the *Fiji Times* which commented in its editorial that it had:

...caused deep rooted misgivings in Fiji, and members of the Fijian race have stressed, in and out of the Legislative Council, that the halted progress of the indigenous West Papuans towards choosing their own destiny is a subject of grave concern in these islands.¹¹¹

Fijian interest had also been aroused because four West Papuan students studying in British colony had asked, and received, permission to remain following an Indonesian request for their immediate return. The students told the authorities that they disliked the new administration at home and wished to stay on after their studies were over. In public, the colonial Fijian Government announced that the students only wanted to stay to finish their studies and made no mention of their political motives.

Shortly afterwards, however, local media leaked the real reasons, to the annoyance of the authorities.¹¹² The Australians also received similar requests from West Papuans asking to continue their studies in Port Moresby. A Canberra official informed the Fijian Government “Australians are asking Indonesians not to press for their return. But should Indonesians insist, we understand that decision in principle has been taken that they shall be allowed to stay.”¹¹³

Meanwhile, the Indonesian newspaper, *Warta Berita*, claimed to have exposed a United States/Dutch plot to ‘wrest’ West Irian from Indonesia, using among other things, the ‘loophole’ of the so-called plebiscite due in 1969. It also accused the two countries of funding and organising subversive groups.¹¹⁴

In reality, Washington’s position on West New Guinea and Sukarno had altered little since the New York Agreement, although there were growing concerns within the Kennedy Administration about the Indonesian President’s hostility towards Malaysia. Despite continuing calls from some analysts to “get tough” with Sukarno, the accepted policy remained one which sought to woo rather than confront him. In mid-January 1963, Robert Komer of the National Security Council staff wrote:

Given all the anti-Sukarno emotionalism rampant these days, I was delighted to find the Governor [Harriman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs] thoroughly statesmanlike (I didn’t have to do any selling). He says we’re just going to have to ‘sweat out Sukarno,’ alternatively using the carrot and stick, but essentially living with this guy and trying to box him in. He agrees that we must turn Sukarno off Malaysia by (1) working harder to get the Phils [Philippines] to stop serving as a talking horse for Indos in

Borneo; and (2) making more of a political demonstration of our interest in Malaysia.¹¹⁵

In a telegram to the State Department in March, US Ambassador Howard Palfrey Jones in Jakarta gave his assessment of the current situation in Indonesia and its relevance to US interests. In a telegram review which supported Komer's position, Jones wrote:

Sukarno is one of our biggest problems in Indonesia but we must approach Indonesia's needs and role we play here in terms importance US places upon Indonesia and not on basis that Sukarno is eternal....As result New Guinea settlement Indonesians temporarily drew back from Soviets and attempted halt flow massive military assistance as Soviet military technicians left in droves. Indonesians turned toward US hoping for massive economic assistance, and for renewal military shipments.¹¹⁶

Jones, however, remained concerned that Indonesian interest in Malaysia and the recent left-wing rebellion of in Brunei against the Sultan (which British troops crushed in December 1962) would give the Soviets a further opportunity to expand their influence in Indonesia, particularly if the issue deflected Jakarta's attention away from economic stabilization policies. His advice was to combat this threat by continuing to work with Jakarta and provide substantial economic assistance.

In contrast to this approach, the right-wing American analyst Guy Pauker advocated a much tougher stance towards Jakarta. In a January 1963 memorandum for the Rand Corporation on the strategic implications of Soviet military aid to Indonesia, he concluded that:

...continued acceptance of large-scale Soviet military aid after the settlement of the West New Guinea issue endangered the Indonesian Army, increased the influence of the PKI, and encouraged Indonesian expansion into Portuguese Timor, North Borneo and possibly other areas. [He recommended] a tough US stance toward Indonesia in enforcing the West New Guinea settlement and in protecting Timor, Borneo and Malaysia.¹¹⁷

This stance was condemned by Komer and Harriman who described Pauker as very 'dim':

All these guys who advocate 'tough' policies towards neutralists like Nasser and Sukarno blink at the fact that it was precisely such policies which helped influence these countries to accept Moscow offers in the first place. The best way to keep Nasser or Sukarno from becoming prisoners of the USSR is to compete for them, not thrust them into Soviet hands.¹¹⁸

Although Komer dismissed Pauker's view, he was concerned that British policy was following a similar line now that Sukarno was threatening their plans for Malaysia. On 11 January, the British Ambassador in Washington had delivered an 'aide memoire' from London to Secretary of State Rusk stating that Britain believed Sukarno's territorial ambitions would not stop with West New Guinea. Borneo, Portuguese Timor, greater Malaysia and the rest of New Guinea (i.e. Papua and New Guinea) were also at risk. It added that while the British understood US policy in Indonesia, they feared that it would aid Indonesian expansionism.¹¹⁹ Komer remarked "I can see we're going to have a tough time defending our Indo policy for the next few months (especially with the Brits taking a 'head-in-sand' attitude)."¹²⁰

While broadly supporting US policy regarding West New Guinea, Britain's attitude towards Jakarta was entirely different when its own interests were threatened.

In late January 1963, Earl Selkirk, the UK's Commissioner for Singapore and Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia, had written to the Foreign Office commenting:

we have too long regarded Indonesia as a rather spoilt child whose aberrations had to be tolerated with a mild sense of regret. In reality Indonesia has now reached the status of manhood in the form of a robust, ill-disciplined gangster. We know she is making active military preparations in Kalimantan south of the North Borneo/Sarawak border and is considering taking certain preliminary steps which will probably lead to incidents in Timor. If she does not think she can get away with it, no doubt these will be represented as purely defensive measures otherwise I have no doubt she will try another West Irian.¹²¹

Although Selkirk does not comment on the source of his information, MI5 were apparently intercepting communications between Indonesia's London Embassy and Jakarta throughout the period of confrontation over Malaysia.¹²²

This opposition to further "appeasement" of Sukarno was also shared by British Ambassador Gilchrist in Jakarta. He remarked that, although the Australian and American Ambassadors would probably accompany Sukarno on his first visit to West Irian, he had no intention of listening to "a diatribe on Malaysia and neo-colonialism" and if invited, would decline.¹²³

This difference of approach was to remain an issue in Anglo-American relations as Sukarno's *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia developed. In January 1964, Britain's Foreign Secretary R. Butler commented in a memorandum to the Cabinet:

...we should continue to attempt to persuade our reluctant allies, the US first and foremost, and the Germans, our other NATO allies and the Japanese, that the possibility of influencing Sukarno does not rest in pandering to his threat to turn Communist but rather that failure to stand up to him now will only increase the risk of Indonesia becoming Communist later.¹²⁴

The growing dispute with Jakarta meant that London now had more of an interest in Indonesian policies regarding West New Guinea, but only so far as they could be related to the issue of Malaysia. At the time that UNTEA was pulling out of West New Guinea, Indonesia was demanding that the people of British Borneo be allowed a plebiscite to determine whether or not they wished to join Malaysia. Britain and Malaya's Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, were determined, however, that Borneo would join the new Malaysian State and had no enthusiasm for this demand. Consequently, the British were keen to highlight Jakarta's contrasting attitude on self-determination with regard to Borneo and West New Guinea.

Shortly after the transfer, at a British-hosted diplomatic dinner in Jakarta, Abdul Gani, the Indonesian Minister for Information, made some 'off the record' comments on West New Guinea:

[Gani] stated categorically that it was not the intention of the Indonesian Government that United Nations-supervised plebiscite should be held. The people of West Irian would be encouraged to declare that it was not necessary, and if they did not want it who could force it on them? Abdul Gani conceded that he was being 'naughty' and jocularly expressed the hope that Narasimhan would not be cross with him.¹²⁵

Gilchrist felt that if Gani's remarks were made public, it would undermine Jakarta's campaign for a plebiscite in Borneo. The problem was how arrange the leak without the source being revealed. In a communication to London, an Embassy official wrote:

The Ambassador thinks that, other things being equal, there would be considerable advantage for us in leaking Gani's post-prandial remarks about the West Irian plebiscite....Considering the size and nature of the audience there is almost bound to be a leak anyhow and to publicise the Indonesian attitude to plebiscites and to their pledged word can only be helpful to us at present. The difficulty is that, in the circumstances, any obvious leak is almost certain to come home to roost....The problem is, therefore, to find someone else whose opportunity and interest is as obvious...I am sorry to have to say that only the Australians fill the bill completely.¹²⁶

A month later, in a handwritten note on the cover of a report on the transfer, a Foreign Office official remarked:

Perhaps we need not shed too many tears over the Indonesian attitude towards the 1969 plebiscite since this may make it easier for the Tunku to shuffle/fudge (?) over the plebiscite which may be promised in the Borneo territories as a result of the Manila talks.¹²⁷

Conclusions

The official UN history of UNTEA described it as a success, based on the premise that its primary tasks of maintaining law and order and public services were accomplished. Indar Jit Rikhye, U Thant's senior military adviser in the territory before October 1962, went further. In a book written over ten years after UNTEA, he declared:

Certainly in terms of success the West New Guinea experience comes high in the order of merit on the list of UN achievements in the sphere of peacekeeping....UNTEA set a precedent that should not be overlooked; occasions could well arise where the establishment of an international interregnum could provide a stable administration for a period of vacuum in a state's political life - until

it is in a position to manage its affairs for itself. The experience of UNTEA should not be wasted but should serve as a model for the future.¹²⁸

Henderson also defended UNTEA's record, particularly against Van der Veur's charges that it was dominated by the Indonesians, failed to achieve its plans for public utility projects and did little to fulfil its obligations to publicise, and explain to the population the terms of the transfer and provisions for self-determination.¹²⁹ While he accepted that there was a lot of truth in all the charges:

..they overlook the crucial fact that UNTEA was conceived primarily as a device to lubricate the transfer of power of West New Guinea....and to do so in a very short period of time. There was simply no prospect that the brief UN administration could in other respects significantly affect the course of political evolution in the territory, and still less its economic development.¹³⁰

The basis of the argument of those who defend UNTEA's record is that it did as well as could be expected under very difficult circumstances, and allowed the Dutch to surrender their colony with some semblance of dignity and without serious bloodshed. Central to this is the fact that there were no major breakdowns of law and order and UNTEA was able to maintain the appearance at least of being in authority throughout.

This was true. The Indonesian campaigns to undermine UNTEA and stifle any opposition could very easily have provoked serious widespread incidents of violence and Indonesian retaliation. The result may have been a premature takeover by Jakarta,

or at least a more overtly Indonesian-controlled administration. UNTEA success was the West's success and a set back for Soviet bloc policy in Indonesia.

With regard to its official responsibilities, as laid down in the New York Agreement, however, UNTEA did not succeed. It patently failed to defend the rights and freedoms of the Papuan people and did little to confront the systematic and ruthless campaign of intimidation carried out by the Indonesians throughout the entire period. Through UNTEA, the UN allowed itself to be party to a cynical betrayal of a people who had no one left to defend their interests apart from the UN. However strong the argument that UN involvement helped prevent a war that was not in the West's interests, this betrayal should not be counted among the UN's great achievements. Rather, it remains a useful example of how the West used the UN to further its Cold War objectives, and in the process was prepared to endorse the deceit and double standards that permeated every aspect of the Indonesian takeover of West New Guinea. In his comments on the UN's involvement, Van der Veur observes that the Agreement was drawn up in an atmosphere of intimidation and therefore implicitly rewarded the threat of force. Therefore one could interpret its declarations on freedoms and rights as merely a way of saving Dutch 'face'. This being the case then the UN, as party to the settlement:

...must have acted with tongue in cheek when it placated unrest and incipient opposition among the inhabitants of West Irian with specific reference to the agreement and the future 'act of self determination.' Even if one assumes that the 'realists' are right and that the parties to the agreement did not expect its self-determination provisions to be taken seriously, one is left to wonder whether the

UN should have been the maid of honor in such a marriage of convenience.¹³¹

CHAPTER FOUR

Notes

1. Paul Van der Veur "The UN in West Irian: A Critique", p.55.
2. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/11A). Letter from Harold Luckham to the Foreign Office, 24 August 1963.
3. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia (J Robertson), 2 January 1963.
4. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Report by J. Robertson (Hollandia Police HQ). "Illegal Arrests By Indonesian Troops," 7 January 1963.
5. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 5 January 1963.
6. *ibid*
7. *ibid*
8. Antara Home News, Surabaya, Saturday, 13 October 1962.
9. It is interesting to note that Wajoi's use of the phrase "Time bombs" was also used by Sukarno in a conversation with Rikhye in late September 1962 when he discussed his concerns about Dutch 'mischief making' following their departure. This supports the view that the Papuan delegation were expressing their hosts' ideas rather than their own, see Antara Home News, 13 October 1962.
10. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 23 November 1962.
11. UN: DAG 13/2.101:18. Letter from D Vickers to Abdoh, 17 November 1962
12. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Biak, 7 January 1963.
13. UN: DAG 13/2/1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 7 January 1963
14. *ibid*
15. *ibid*
16. New York Agreement, 15 August 1962, Article XI.
17. *ibid* Article XXII.

18. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:24. Letter from U Thant to Abdoh, (c Sept/Oct 1962).
19. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 14 January 1963.
20. *ibid*
21. UN: DAG 13.2.1.01:17. Chief of Police Report to Abdoh on 15 January demonstration.
22. *ibid*
23. UN: DAG 2.23:9. Quoted in cable No. 82, Abdoh to Narasimhan, 19 January 1963
24. *ibid*
25. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/8). R Selby, (British Embassy Jakarta) to F Warner (SEAD, Foreign Office), 25 January 1963.
26. UN: DAG 1.2.23:9.Cable No. 97 Abdoh to Narasimhan, 22 January 1963.
27. PRO: FO 371/169952 (DJ 1019/5). Plimsoll (Australian Mission to the UN, New York) to Canberra, 23 January 1963. Copy sent to Foreign Office.
28. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/11A). Harold Luckham to the Foreign Office, 24 August 1963.
29. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:7. Harold Luckham to Abdoh (telegram A0181), 18 January 1963.
30. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 17 January 1963.
31. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:7. Luckham to Abdoh, 18 January 1963.
32. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/11A). Luckham to the Foreign Office, 24 August 1963.
33. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:7. Abdoh to Luckham, 18 January 1963.
34. *ibid*
35. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/11A). Luckham to the Foreign Office, 24 August 1963.
36. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 19 January 1963.

37. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 17 January 1963.
38. PRO: FO 371/180328 DH 1017/22. Department External Affairs, Canberra to Office of the Australian High Commission (London), 16 June 1965.
39. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 22 January 1963; UN DAG 1.2.23:9. Cable No.97, Abdoh to Narasimhan, 22 January 1963.
40. UN: DAG 1.2.22.3:9. Cable No.92, Abdoh to Narasimhan, 22 January 1963.
41. *ibid.*
42. UN: DAG 1/2/23:9. Cable to Narasimhan from Rolz-Bennett, 1 October 1962.
43. UN: DAG 1.2.23:9. Cable to Narasimhan from Abdoh and Brig. Gen. Said, 22 January 1963.
44. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Cable to Abdoh from Said, 4 February 1963.
45. *ibid*
46. *ibid*
47. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:5. Cable to Abdoh from J. Robertson, 24 January 1963.
48. *ibid*
49. UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Hollandia, 18 December 1962.
50. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:5. Cable to Abdoh from J. Robertson, 24 January 1963.
51. *ibid*
52. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:5 Cable to Abdoh from J. Robertson, 28 November 1962
53. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:5. Cable to Abdoh from J. Robertson, 24 January 1963.
54. *ibid*
55. *ibid*
56. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/11A). Leslie Fry, (British Embassy, Jakarta) to E Peck, (Foreign Office), 9 February 1963.
57. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/11A). Luckham to the Foreign Office, 24 August 1963.

58. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/9). J. C. Peterson (British Embassy, Jakarta) to F A Warner (SEAD, Foreign Office), 30 January 1963.
59. In Suluh Indonesia, 7 February 1963, quoted in J.D. Legge, "Indonesia after West Irian", Australian Outlook, Vol.17, No.1., (April 1963), p.6; see also The Straits Times, (Singapore), 8 February 1963.
60. *ibid*
61. PRO: FO 371/169952 (DJ 1019/5). Plimsoll (Australian Mission to the UN, New York) to Canberra, 23 January 1963. Copy sent to the Foreign Office,
62. Van der Veur, "The UN in West Irian: A Critique", p.64.
63. W Henderson, West New Guinea, the Dispute and its Settlement, p.218.
64. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/9). JC Peterson (British Embassy, Jakarta) to FA Warner (SEAD, Foreign Office), 30 January 1963.
65. *ibid*
66. PRO: FO 371/169952 (DJ 1019/7). FA Warner (SEAD, Foreign Office), 4 February 1963.
67. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:10. "Visits of CV Narasimhan: Programme of Events for Chef De Cabinet 9-11 February 1963".
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70. UN Press Services, Office of Public Information, UN New York. (WNG/89), UN Press Release, 11 February 1963.
71. *ibid*
72. Conversation with Rex Wait, ex-British Colonial officer and colleague of the late D.Wilson (UNTEA Divisional Commissioner), London, 28 May 1999.
73. UN Press Services, Office of Public Information, UN New York. (WNG/90), UN Press Release, 13 February 1963.
74. PRO: FO 371/169952 (DJ 1019/20). Ambassador Gilchrist (British Embassy, Jakarta) to Earl Home (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), 4 June 1963.
75. David Wainhouse, International Peace Observation - A History and Forecast. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 1966, p.417.

76. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:5. Cameron (Divisional Commissioner, Manokwari) to Abdoh, "Mutiny of PVK", 19 February 1963.
77. *ibid*; UN: DAG 1.2.23:9.Cable No.99, Abdoh to Rolz-Bennett, 20 February 1963; UN: DAG 13/2.1.00:1. Daily UNTEA Police Report, Manokwari, 19 and 20 February 1963.
78. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:5. Cameron to Abdoh, 19 February 1963.
79. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:15. Cameron to Abdoh "Disarming the PVK", 21 February 1963.
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81. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:25. UNTEA Dept. Of Social Affairs and Justice. Testimony of PVK Sergeant Wambrauw, early March 1963, gives a useful example of what was said.
82. UN: DAG 13/2.1.01:15. Cameron to Abdoh, 23 February 1963 "PVK Special Commission".
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85. PRO: FO 371/169951 (DJ 1013/12). R.W. Selby (British Embassy, Jakarta) to J.E. Cable (SEAD, Foreign Office), 21 February 1963.
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88. PRO: FO 371/169951. Report by Broome (SEAD, Foreign Office), 2 April 1963.
89. NAA: A452/2, 62/5946. Sir Arthur Tange (Australian Dept. of External Affairs), quoted in "Australian Representation in West New Guinea", by 1st Assistant Secretary Dept. Of Territories, 16 January 1963.
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95. *ibid*
96. *ibid*
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111. Fiji Times, editorial, 9 May 1963 .
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