

6513

GEHEIM

MEMORANDUM No. 35

c.c. A
Z
DOA
DBI
DWH

Van: Mr. J. M. A. H. Luns

Aan: Secretaris-Generaal

./.

De Amerikaanse Ambassadeur overhandigde mij op 7 dezer het hiernevensgaande geheime document, waarin de Amerikaanse reactie is neergelegd op ons "intelligence estimate" over de Indonesische bedreiging van Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea.

Als mijn eerste commentaar heb ik de Ambassadeur gezegd, dat mij opviel, dat het gehele gewicht der Amerikaanse redenering wordt gelegd op een politieke waardering, die wel zeer optimistisch is gesteld, terwijl de technische overwegingen nauwelijks worden geadstrueerd. De Ambassadeur zeide dat het hem bekend was, dat wat dit laatste betreft nauwkeurige militaire evaluaties waren voorafgegaan aan de conclusies.

9 maart 1959

Secret

ZEER GEHEIM

COMMENTS ON DUTCH INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE OF
"INDONESIAN THREAT TO NETHERLANDS NEW GUINEA"

March 7, 1959.

1. At the NAC Meeting on December 17, 1958, Secretary Dulles stated that, on the basis of our intelligence, the U.S. does not believe that there is any present danger of an Indonesian effort to take West New Guinea by force. We have, since that time, completed a thorough review of all available information and we again conclude that there is no present danger that Indonesia will resort to the use of force against West New Guinea.

2. Our conclusion that Indonesia will not resort to the use of force against West New Guinea, either on a full or limited scale, is based primarily on the view that the Indonesians keenly realize that such use of force would provoke adverse international reaction. Even in the event of a small-scale attack, unless the Indonesians could point to strong evidence of military provocation by the Dutch, they would face accusations that they had resorted to armed force, thereby reducing the possibility of any UN action favorable to Indonesia. As the Secretary said at the December NAC Meeting, the U.S. has made it crystal clear to Indonesia that, if they made any effort to use force against West New Guinea, they would not only have the opposition of the Netherlands, but would have to confront the opposition of the U.S. itself. Subandrio publicly acknowledged this in a press conference in Canberra last month. We feel this constitutes a very considerable deterrent to the Indonesians.

3. The joint Australian-Indonesian communique, embodying the statement that the West New Guinea issue is one to be resolved by peaceful means, and proscribing the use of force in the settlement of territorial differences, is the most forthright Indonesian pronouncement on this subject to date and certainly would not appear to presage any Indonesian military adventure against West New Guinea. The fostering of better relations between Australia and Indonesia, which appears to have resulted from the Subandrio visit, and the possibility of even closer ties between these two countries in the face of the Chinese Communist threat, would again appear to dictate against any precipitous Indonesian action which would alienate Australia.

4. It should be emphasized that the U.S. for its part, and in pursuance of its own objectives in Indonesia, would wish to do everything feasible and in consonance with the friendly relations we maintain with Indonesia to deter an Indonesian attack against West New Guinea. Briefly stated, we are trying

ZEER GEHEIM

to maintain whatever influence we can in Indonesia to prevent that country's orientation toward the Communist Bloc. Any unprovoked military adventure against West New Guinea would result in a situation which could lead to quick dissipation of U.S. influence in Indonesia and to possible frustration of our objectives there.

5. Other considerations, such as the internal security problem and the severe economic disruption in Indonesia, would argue against an attack on West New Guinea. While important, we feel that these considerations are secondary to the major deterrent of adverse international reaction.

6. While we cannot exclude the possibility that Communist or extreme nationalist elements might at some time seek to precipitate action against West New Guinea, we believe that responsible Indonesian Government leaders, particularly in the Army, would take prompt action to retain control of the situation. From time to time there have been reported statements, attributed to Indonesian leaders, that military action against West New Guinea is being planned. We believe that such statements are for domestic political purposes and do not represent Indonesian Government policy.

7. Indonesian military capabilities.

A. Large-scale action. In strictly military terms, we do not believe that Indonesia has the capability at present to coordinate successfully any large-scale operation. In addition, we believe that preparations for such an operation could probably be detected.

B. Small-scale action. On the other hand, we believe that Indonesia has the military capability to launch a small-scale force of 1,000 or less men to capture one or more of the smaller Dutch settlements in West New Guinea without prior detection. It might be noted that Indonesia has probably possessed such a military capability for small-scale attack for a considerable period and that there is no substantial correlation between this capability and the recent furnishing of Bloc equipment. A small-scale attack would probably be made to provoke Dutch countermeasures which would attract international attention and UN consideration.

C. Future outlook. Indonesian military capabilities and the temptation to resort to armed force against West New Guinea will likely increase in coming years. But we believe that Indonesian armed action on any significant scale is and will remain much less likely than Indonesian use or provocation of some incident with the Dutch to bring the issue before the UN.