

CHAPTER TWO.
PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
TEMPORARY EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY (UNTEA).
15 AUGUST TO 1 OCTOBER 1962.

The End of United States Interest and the Search for a UN Security Force.

In Washington, the end of the West New Guinea dispute was seen as a valuable window of opportunity with regard to US-Indonesian relations. On 15 August 1962, the day the agreement was signed, Komer wrote to President Kennedy:

Without trying to count too many chickens before they've hatched, we ought to capitalise on the WNG settlement by moving fast toward the 'future fruitful cooperation' of which you spoke to Sukarno. Capital of the sort we've gained is a transitory asset to be used while it's still good. Moreover, Indonesia is one of the truly big areas of East-West competition; having invested so much in maneuvering a WNG settlement for the express purpose of giving us leverage in this competition, we'd be foolish not to follow through.¹

Kennedy agreed, and issued a National Security Action Memorandum the next day calling for a plan of action to be ready within a month that would assess what further measures could be taken to capitalise on the US role in the settlement to move towards a "new and better relationship with Indonesia." Specifically he suggested the possibility of expanded civic action, military aid and economic stabilisation and development programmes, as well as diplomatic initiatives.² It was clear that

Washington had little if any interest any longer in West New Guinea itself. The task of putting the transition process into practice was to be left to the UN.

The signing of the New York Agreement gave the United Nations just six weeks in which to prepare for the task of taking over administrative control of the territory, a responsibility for which it had no previous experience to draw upon. It was therefore never possible for there to be any proper planning for the operation, or for there to be any clear idea of the role that the UN was supposed to play under the terms of the Agreement.

The first priority was to organise and set up a UN Security Force (UNSF) preferably to be in place before 1 October. Article VII of the agreement stipulated that the role of this force was primarily to supplement existing Papuan police in maintaining law and order on behalf of the UN Administrator. The UN Administrator would also have at his disposal the Papuan Volunteer Force. This military unit was created in 1960 by the Dutch who also provided the officers. In addition to its military purpose, the Dutch had envisaged it as being “a good opportunity for the growing national consciousness to express itself and promote community feeling among the Papuans.”³

The UNSF would also incorporate all Indonesian armed forces already in the territory at the time of the ceasefire. In reality, the UNSF's role was to be more than simply supplementing the existing Papuan Police Force. In a confidential letter written two days after the signing, U Thant specified that the UNSF's responsibility was to

take over law and order responsibilities from the Netherlands Armed Forces on 1 October.⁴

While the UN's legitimisation of the existing Indonesian military presence in West New Guinea was the only realistic option, it was also another concession to Indonesia and one that would undermine, rather than strengthen, the UN's ability to maintain law and order. These conditions, under which the UN was forced to operate, may have been practical necessities, but they made it extremely difficult for the organisation to maintain even the illusion of an effective international involvement in the future of the territory and its people.

The UNSF might have been more acceptable to the West Papuans if it had been multi-national, with black and/or non-Muslim countries contributing, but instead it was decided, almost certainly before the signing of the agreement, to use Pakistani troops only.

Initially, there was speculation in the press that U Thant would ask Malaya to provide the troops for the UNSF. On 17 August, the *New York Times* commented: "Although Malaya is one of the most pro-Western of the newly independent states, she is more acceptable to neutralist Indonesia than Pakistan, which is a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization." On the same day there were reports that U Thant had decided to ask Malaya to provide the entire UNSF, although on the following day a UN spokesman revealed that a formal request had not yet been made.⁵

In fact on 17 August, Acting UN Secretary-General U Thant wrote to Pakistan's Permanent Representative at the UN requesting that his country provide a UNSF consisting of an infantry battalion and essential arms and services with a total strength of about 1000 men.⁶ A week later U Thant was given a verbal reply assuring him that Pakistan would agree to his request.⁷

According to Chakravarthi V. Narasimhan, the Secretary-General's Indian Chef de Cabinet, it was he who suggested to U Thant that Pakistani troops be used.⁸ Although he did not explain why, there were practical arguments against assembling a multi-national force at such short notice. Writing in 1964 on legal aspects of UN practice, D W Bowett comments:

No doubt this almost exclusive reliance on the contingent from one state was due to the fact that it was estimated that about one battalion was all that was needed, and it would have led to unnecessary complications to accept small contingents from several states in order to make up the one battalion required.⁹

More effort could have been made to employ military personnel who were not, like most of the Indonesians, Muslim, but there was no time. Outside of the Western and Eastern Blocs, there were few countries capable of fulfilling the UN's requirements at such short notice. In the event, Pakistan's UNSF soldiers were to fulfil the difficult role assigned to them with a commendable degree of professionalism under very difficult circumstances.

Ceasefire

The first UN military personnel arrived in West New Guinea on 20 August 1962 (followed by more on 24 August). The advance team consisted of 21 military observers (UNMO's) led by O W Melin, a Swedish Naval Commander, who was transferred from UN duties in Israel/Palestine. He was accompanied by U Thant's Indian military adviser, Brigadier Rikhye, overall head of the observer operation. Their responsibility was to observe implementation of the agreement, particularly the ceasefire arrangements which came into force at 0001 GMT on 18 August.

It was a potentially dangerous assignment. Shortly before their arrival, angry Papuan police in Kaimana reacted to the appearance of the first armed Indonesian paratrooper officer by firing rifle shots into the air. Despite being able to resolve the matter without violence, it was still, according to a Dutch colonial officer afterwards, an explosive situation.¹⁰

The observers faced a possible crisis almost immediately. On the night of 21 August, 14 Indonesian troops were landed by submarine in the vicinity of the capital Hollandia. The submarine (some reports spoke of two) was not attacked by the Dutch who instead illuminated it with flares and a searchlight until it withdrew shortly after being spotted.¹¹ Brigadier Rikhye sent a telegram to U Thant soon afterwards describing it as the third violation of the agreement by Indonesia.¹² The Dutch complained and a later investigation by UN military observers found full physical evidence to confirm that the incursion had occurred.¹³ As in previous such incidents,

the operation was amateurish and the Dutch authorities quickly apprehended five of the intruders whom they intended to repatriate on the basis that they had arrived illegally after the signing of the ceasefire agreement.

A unilateral decision by the Dutch to repatriate was seen as something to be avoided by Under Secretary-General Jose Rolz-Bennett, the Guatemalan Special Representative of the Secretary-General in West New Guinea. He suggested instead to Brigadier Rikye that he should endeavour to resolve the matter via consultation with the Indonesian and Dutch liaison teams.¹⁴ The Dutch conceded to this and the Indonesian authorities eventually agreed to have their personnel returned to Indonesia.¹⁵

The UNMO's first job on arrival was to establish a series of observation posts at sites around the territory, including the nine garrison positions where most of the 12,000 Dutch troops were stationed. Four more UNMO's were stationed in Jakarta. Plans were made for an air drop of nine tons of Indonesian-language pamphlets. This, along with a series of radio transmissions, was designed to inform the estimated 800 to 1000 Indonesian military personnel still at large that a ceasefire was in operation. The plan then was to choose a number of mutually acceptable sites where the Indonesian troops could gather and report to the UNMO's.

For intelligence on the Indonesian troops, the Dutch relied mainly on information gathered by the Papuan police who had been primarily responsible for the

rounding up of at least 500 Indonesian infiltrators before the cease-fire. Their intelligence suggested that the remaining Indonesian forces were deployed in six main areas, each area being about 40 to 100 kilometres wide: 350 in the Merauke area; 250 in the Kaimama area; 75 in the Fak Fak area; 180 on the island of Miscol; 150 in the Sorong area and either 40 or 250 on the island of Waigo.¹⁶

The UN also had to deal with Indonesia's inability to resupply its forces once they entered Dutch territory. Consequently, many Indonesians who had evaded the Papuan police and Dutch army were in acute need of food and medical supplies. One Dutch colonial official later described his journeys around the Fak Fak area, locating Indonesian paratroopers who "gave themselves up willingly because they could not survive in the area."¹⁷ In Brigadier Rikyhe's statement to the press on 10 October 1962, he described the UN's serious humanitarian problem of getting supplies to the Indonesian troops. He also added that: "Some supplies to meet emergency situations were arranged by the Netherlands forces. They also offered to take in for treatment all those seriously sick".¹⁸ Dutch willingness to help was also mentioned by UNMO Commander Melin in his report to Rolz-Bennett:

The Netherlands authorities showed a constant preparedness to give every medical assistance, hospitalization included, to Indonesian soldiers in need of such, and to supply them with tentage and food from their own stores until re-supply from Indonesia was flown in some weeks later. No Indonesian vessels were utilized for such transportation.¹⁹

It was a reality far removed from the version of events still adhered to by Jakarta, in which victorious Indonesian soldiers, hand in hand with their Papuan brothers, had fought and defeated the Dutch.

Indonesian Suspicion of the Netherlands

Unsurprisingly, the UN encountered a deep mutual mistrust between the Dutch and Indonesians. Sukarno took seriously the possibility that the Dutch would encourage Papuans to resist once they departed. In August, he told Rikhye that he suspected that the Dutch were distributing weapons deliberately encouraging “elements opposed to Indonesia.”²⁰ He brought the issue up again with Rikhye in September when he declared that his main concern was the possibility of the Dutch leaving “time bombs” and “Westerling” types in the territory to create disorder (In January 1950, Dutch Captain Raymond Westerling had led attacks against the newly independent Indonesian state). Rikhye replied that he believed the Dutch government was genuinely behind the agreement but that there were always “black sheep.” He assured Sukarno that UNSF was on alert and would deal with such a situation firmly.²¹

U Thant was made personally aware of these concerns by Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio when he visited him in New York on 22 September. According to

Narasimhan, Subandrio informed U Thant that he had information of lower echelon Dutch officials attempting to create trouble before their departure from West New Guinea:

these officials were distributing weapons to Papuan population in following areas: Manokwari, Sorong, Fak-Fak, Kaimana, Biak, Hollandia. The instructions to the local population were to start creating trouble immediately on assumption of temporary executive authority by UN on 1 October. If such disturbances occurred the Foreign Minister felt that it would be difficult to hold back Indonesian army and leave the matter to be handled by UNSF exclusively.²²

Rikyhe himself sympathised with Sukarno's concerns, despite the fact that Subandrio had used them as a reason to explicitly threaten the Secretary-General that Indonesian troops might ignore the UN's authority in the territory if they felt the need to take military action against trouble-making Papuans. Rikyhe's impression of the Dutch colonial officials was that they were inflexible in their opinions and not in tune with home politics, views and interests. He reported to Narasimham that the efforts of the Dutch Government to win them over to the agreement had little impact.²³ Importantly, on 20 September he cabled U Thant:

Several Papuan groups pro and anti-Dutch have started requesting for UN protection. Political activity has received considerable impetus lately from outgoing colonial power. Congress of political parties, continuous session NG Council and meetings between Dutch administrative officials and political leaders are decidedly contributing to tension. Administration has said little about UNTEA and generally Dutch controlled information media indicate void after 1 October. My request to Governor...to explain agreement has had little effect. Certain outgoing Dutch officials are complacently hoping for breakdown in law and order. It would be fair assumption that outgoing administration is contributing more to tension than any other single factor...UN must be prepared for certainly some breakdown in law and order.²⁴

Papuan Reaction

Rikhye's assessment that it was the Dutch officials who had stirred up this Papuan political activity ignored the effect that news of the agreement would have had on Papuan activists. For the most part, the Agreement left them feeling confused, shocked and betrayed. Until the signing, the Dutch had insisted that their promise of genuine self-determination would be honoured. These Papuans did not need any encouragement from outgoing colonial officials to step up their political activity. The politically aware section of the population knew all too well that UNTEA and the transfer to Indonesia would entail fundamental changes to the way their country was run. As with all the other foreigners who had decided West New Guinea's future, Rikhye seemed unable to accept that the Papuans were capable of independent political thought. In public, however, he stated "The Papuans approached us with open minds and left us relieved."²⁵

In a heated debate that ended on 1 September, many members of the West New Guinea Council spoke out against the bill for ratification of the agreement, which had been referred to the Council by the Dutch, although only for an advisory opinion. Nicholas Jouwe, the representative for Hollandia (who would later go into exile) said that they were being asked to sign their own "death warrants" but that there was no alternative to accepting it. He suggested that members should abstain, thereby giving no formal agreement. Markus Kaisiepo (who would also go into exile) was startled and angry with the terms of the settlement but blamed the Papuans themselves for their

own lack of unity and concluded that they would now have to resign themselves to the results. Elizer Bonay, on the other hand, welcomed the agreement and declared that the justified demands of the Papuans would be met under Indonesian rule (Bonay, a spokesman for Parna, the National Party, would become the territory's first post UNTEA governor before being removed by the Indonesians and eventually fleeing to Papua New Guinea in the early 1980's). When the Council eventually voted, the bill was only supported by nine councillors and was therefore defeated. The Chairman called for another vote, at which point half the Councillors (including the five Dutch members) walked out, the remaining fourteen who voted in favour by a margin of twelve to two.²⁶ Of the 28 members, only 13 would go on to swear an oath of allegiance to the incoming UNTEA administration.²⁷

Two weeks after the Council's vote, a "Papuan National Congress" (one of the events described by Rikhye as contributing to the tension) was organised by Nicholas Tanggahma, the Council member for Fak Fak (and another eventual exile), and Herman Wajoi (leader of Parna, a party which favoured eventual Papuan independence while remaining friendly with Indonesia). The Congress brought together about 80 Papuans of differing opinions from around the country to discuss the future in the light of the Agreement. At the end of the Congress on 19 September, a statement was drawn up accepting the agreement as the only way to prevent a war, although a majority favoured holding a plebiscite during the UNTEA period. The delegates made clear that they saw UNTEA and Indonesian rule as periods of preparation for a plebiscite that would allow the people to "choose its own freedom in 1969."

Furthermore the Congress expressed support for the continuing use of the Papuan flag and anthem. They also expressed a wish to send a delegation to Indonesia to explain their position. The Indonesians in turn agreed to invite some Council members including Tanggahma and M. Achmad, the representative for Kaimana.²⁸

Significantly, Kaimana's, and Tanggahma's region of Fak Fak contained numbers of pro-Indonesian Papuan Moslems and Indonesian settlers, but there was apparently little contact between them and the rest of the people.²⁹ Nonetheless, this ethnic and religious factor probably explained Indonesia's choice of which councillors to invite. Tanggahma remained sceptical of Indonesian intentions following his visit, but Achmed returned in late October and began a campaign against UNTEA and the plebiscite in the Kaimana district, eventually sending in a petition asking for the end to UNTEA by 1 January 1963. The Indonesians had chosen well in getting Achmed's support. He was the head of the Kaimana sub-district and the son of the local raja (traditional leader) which meant that he could ensure that his pro-Indonesian petitions would have a large number of signatures, although many who signed had no idea of what they were signing. Achmad was also to become an UNTEA employee and use his position to attempt to intimidate the handful of Dutch UNTEA employees who were stationed in the area. Harold Luckham, UNTEA's Divisional Commissioner in the Fak Fak area, warned him to stop these activities or resign. Luckham also contacted his UNTEA superiors in Hollandia to try to have Achmed removed, but according to him they would not support him in this.³⁰

The Papuan Flag

The West Papuan ‘Morning Star’ flag had been adopted as the official flag of the territory by the New Guinea Council on 1 December 1961. The flag was, and has remained, a powerful symbol of West Papuan nationalism, with its origins going back to the Korero nationalist movement in Biak prior to the Second World War. In turn, Korero had its origins in the belief that a liberator spirit called “Manseren” had taken on a human form in the 1860’s and would one day return and free the Papuans, if their faith was strong enough.³¹ But to Rikhye, the Papuan flag was simply another Dutch initiated tactic for raising the political temperature prior to UNTEA’s arrival. On 2 September he cabled Narisimhan from Hollandia to say that the flag was:

Flying over all government buildings and practically every Papuan house and abode. Governor and Netherlands officials indicate that Papuans would prove sensitive to removal. Colonel Papuan Corps said removal would cause trouble. Some Papuan councillors approached me saying their flag should be permitted by United Nations. Netherlands authorities encouraged Papuans flying flag during negotiations agreement. They should have informed us earlier question included for discussion under terms of agreement. All realise that agreement does not recognise Papuan flag and suggest it could be allowed as state or provincial flag.³²

The view that the Dutch should have included the issue of the flag in negotiations was shared by Papuan leaders including New Guinea Council member Tanggahma who, along with Jouwe, Womsiwor and Kaisiepo attended the UN debate on the agreement. He told Rikhye that when he had been in New York he had questioned the Dutch Mission on this omission and felt let down by them on this issue.³³

A few weeks later Rolz-Bennett informed Narasimhan that he had discussed the question of the flag with Papuan leaders. He also reported that a mixed group of UN, Indonesian and Netherlands officials, which had recently visited most of the main population centres of the territory, found that in every place the issue of the flag was raised. A Papuan leader in Merauke had told one official in private that his people would fight if their flag was not hoisted along with the others when UNTEA took over.³⁴ From the beginning however, the Indonesians made it clear that they would not tolerate this symbol of Papuan nationalism and Antara, Indonesia's official news agency, published a series of warnings on the subject in early October:

New York October 2: Indonesia said in a press statement released here today that the UN flag now was the "only official flag" in West Irian, and any effort to fly "the so-called 'Papuan Flag' is illegal".....The Indonesian flag will be hoisted on Dec 31, 1962, side by side with the UN flag. Any effort to fly the so-called 'Papuan Flag' is illegal and a violation of the agreement and therefore cannot be tolerated.³⁵

The issue of flags, particularly the West Papuan one, was to continue to be a source of tension throughout the UNTEA period, and subsequently.

At this stage of the UN's involvement in West New Guinea, it is significant that an official as important as Rikhye should have been reporting that the main cause of concern for UNTEA was likely to be Dutch-inspired West Papuan nationalism. This was felt to be a more serious threat than other factors such as the presence of the 1000 or more Indonesian troops in the territory, whose loyalty to the incoming UN administration was going to be doubtful at the very least.

Indonesian Troops

For their part, the Dutch made frequent representations to the UNMO's about Indonesia's reluctance to comply with the agreements on concentration of their troops, something which Melin apparently did not consider to be a particularly difficult problem to solve.³⁶ Despite the Swedish Commander's relaxed attitude, Indonesian troops continued to be a cause for concern to the Dutch authorities, particularly in the area around the border town of Merauke.

Indonesian forces had first arrived in the area in mid-1962 when 200 paratroopers were dropped in. According to the Australians:

Three who crossed the border [into Papua and New Guinea] were disarmed and sent back. Villagers generally attempted to avoid involvement and tended to refuse cooperation. Some assisted Dutch troops to hunt them down. The Dutch killed 13 Indonesians in Nassem village. One wounded paratrooper was allowed to remain in the village until able to depart, but was not assisted.³⁷

Following the ceasefire, there were accusations from Papuans that these paratroopers commenced a campaign of intimidation against the local inhabitants which led to tension in the area. In a telegram to Rolz-Bennett on 14 September, Rikhye relayed the complaints and appeals of locals:

Paratroopers at Koeperik near Merauke are persuading Papuans accept arms against Dutch. Also giving Indonesian flags and change of name Western Papua to Indonesia. Not acceptable to locals, force was used by paratroopers. Inhabitants of Jobar, Boeti and Spadim near Merauke have fled and those of Koeper gone astray. Permission required from Indonesian paratroopers for villagers to enter bush causing hunger.³⁸

There is evidence that once UNTEA assumed control, the paratroopers' behaviour towards the Papuans improved, at least initially. Harold Luckham, a British citizen working for UNTEA, arrived in Merauke at the end of September to find the paratroopers under good discipline and behaving well, "although later on in December discipline got laxer." Nonetheless, his assessment of local opinion towards the Indonesians suggested that relations between the two groups had, for whatever reason, been strained for some time before his arrival. This situation had been deemed serious enough to prompt UNTEA to post him there as soon as their administration began, apparently with the express purpose of not only preventing disorder, but also of diffusing Papuan opposition to Indonesia. Arriving in Merauke on 30 September to takeover from the Dutch Resident of South New Guinea, Luckham commented:

I was sent to Merauke as there was the possibility of trouble there. The Papuans of this division appeared more opposed to the Indonesian takeover than those of other divisions and threatened to resist by force, although they were in no position to do so. My brief was, therefore, to prevent trouble between the Papuans and Indonesians, trying to get them on better terms.....I was in Merauke for three weeks. A great deal happened during this time, but the relevant point was really that the Papuans were united in their objections to Indonesian rule, sent petitions against it to the UN and tried to organise demonstrations. We managed to keep them quiet, but there was a risk of incidents, which would have started rioting and worse.³⁹

In an attempt to get the Indonesian troops around Merauke moved and the rest relocated to agreed areas, the Dutch urged the Secretary-General to make a decision on the location of the sites. The Dutch agreed to Sorong, Fak Fak and Kaimana, but not Merauke. In support of their objection they informed Rolz-Bennett on 11 September that two tribes in the Merauke area were preparing to attack Indonesian

paratroopers once UNTEA took over. The tribes apparently realised that they could expect only limited success but “wanted to see blood.”⁴⁰ Furthermore the Dutch claimed:

The Indonesian troops were spreading out in a circle around Merauke and were also said to hand over weapons to local Indonesian population. This supports apparently the desirability of the evacuation of Indonesian troops at Merauke as suggested by Admiral Reser.⁴¹

Eventually however, the Dutch gave way and accepted the adoption of the Merauke vicinity as the fourth area of concentration for Indonesian forces. In addition to Merauke, the Dutch warned of possible Papuan resistance to the Indonesians in the Central Highlands and reportedly sent an official to dissuade the locals. It was believed that the Highlanders had unpleasant memories of Japanese behaviour following the previous Dutch evacuation in 1942.⁴²

Following the UNTEA takeover, this final phase of Dutch/Indonesian negotiations was portrayed publicly by Rikhye in a positive light, understandably underlining the official UN position that, even before beginning its main task in West New Guinea, it had proved itself to be an effective tool of conflict resolution:

Slowly the tension was ebbing out. The goodwill shown by the Netherlands authorities towards the Indonesian liaison team and the tactfulness on the part of the Indonesians was beginning to pay.⁴³

Once agreement had been reached, the process of repatriating the Indonesian detainees began. A total of 537, who had been held in two camps at Manokwari and

on Woendi Island, were flown back to Indonesia in United States Air Force C-130 aircraft. This operation was completed by 21 September.

Problems in Recruiting UNTEA Staff

As the start of the UNTEA period drew closer, the problem of recruiting sufficient personnel to serve in the territory in such a short time became more obvious.

On 4 October the *New York Times* reported:

At the moment there are only about 20 non-Indonesian members of the United Nations staff on hand, including secretaries and at least five information aides. The United Nations found it was impossible to get quickly enough skilled specialists willing to serve in a dreary climate on a job that would not last longer than several months.⁴⁴

At the same time, Radio Australia quoted a UNTEA official in Hollandia as saying that the administration would collapse in three months unless sufficient staff could be found.⁴⁵

An official involved in recruiting personnel for UNTEA illustrated the authority's recruitment problem in a communication on 11 October to Charles Coates, a senior officer at the UN's Personnel Office in New York. Commenting upon the appointment of six Filipino police officers and nineteen patrol officers, the Manila-based UN official wrote that he was not happy about the 'calibre' of the police officers: "However, this was a rush programme" and all but two of the candidates presented to them had been accepted.⁴⁶

In a report on 27 October by the Divisional Commissioner for South New Guinea, policing was described as one of the biggest headaches. He noted that although the three Filipino officers in his area were doing a good job, they were handicapped by a lack of knowledge of Malay (Indonesian) language and by a failure of UNTEA to provide English/Malay interpreters. He added that the imminent arrival of Indonesian inspectors would improve the language situation, but he was apprehensive about the reaction of the Papuan police.⁴⁷

Specifically however, UNTEA had hoped to persuade enough Dutch officials to stay to enable a smooth transition to take place. Within a week of the Agreement being signed, Rikhye had emphasised to U Thant the importance of retaining sufficient numbers of Dutch officers in the Papuan Volunteer Corps and the Papuan Police. Following a visit to the Papuan Volunteer Corps at Manokwari, he telegraphed:

Dutch personnel consisting of 10 officers and 34 NCO's are due to leave. Perhaps some of them would agree to stay if offered better terms, similarly 200 Dutch police officers are planning to leave. If this situation allowed to develop UN would face an impossible task. Early arrangements for retention of Dutch personnel in Papuan Volunteer Corps and Civil Police need to be concluded.⁴⁸

Unsurprisingly, for the most part the Dutch declined UNTEA's offer. This was partly due to understandable concerns for their safety once the agreement had been signed. On 17 August the British Embassy at the Hague reported:

Meanwhile there is some anxiety about the possible conduct of the Indonesian soldiers infiltrated into New Guinea. There have been suggestions that the Netherlands community there should be concentrated on the island of Biak under guard by Netherlands troops. There does not seem to be much chance of persuading any

large numbers of Dutch civil servants to stay on...the [UN] may therefore find administration an immensely formidable problem in this strange country.⁴⁹

A month later, Britain's Embassy in The Hague was estimating that around 2000 out of 2500 Dutch officials were planning to leave by mid-October.⁵⁰ In fact, by 1 October only 775 were left in the territory.⁵¹ Van der Veur summarised the problem in his critique of UNTEA:

The hurried exodus of Dutch officials compounded UNTEA's problems....[and] disrupted existing services at least temporarily. Indonesian officials rapidly filled the vacuum and soon out-numbered the handful of United Nations personnel. This immediately jeopardised the development of an independent United Nations administration. Unfamiliarity with the language also created a problem. In an attempt to overcome it, UNTEA attracted a proportionately large number of British personnel with experience in Malaya....Notably absent, however, was a core of experienced and neutral translators. The effects of complete ignorance of both Dutch and Malay/Indonesian can only be imagined.⁵²

Australian Reaction

Although Canberra had concluded by early 1962 that the Dutch position in New Guinea was no longer tenable, Jakarta's success was still a major setback for Australian foreign policy. In private, Australia had done everything, short of offering military assistance, to keep the Dutch in place until a solution for New Guinea could be found that did not include an Indonesian takeover. Part of this policy had included the stationing of an Australian Liaison Officer in Hollandia and a Dutch counterpart in Port Moresby. With the Dutch leaving, Australia would have to completely rethink its cross-border cooperation policy, and this became a source of some disagreement within the Government.

Garfield Barwick, Australia's External Affairs Minister at the time, had been the main driving force behind Australia's change of policy towards West New Guinea in 1962. In a letter on 7 September to Paul Hasluck, Canberra's Minister for Territories, he outlined the problems Australia now faced, but cautioned against rapid changes to the liaison arrangements in place. Hasluck had written to him on 4 September pointing out that the 1957 joint Australian-Netherlands statement of principles could no longer provide a basis for cooperation between the two halves of New Guinea. This was because the underlying motive had been to encourage the Dutch to stay on until the island could be united. Barwick, however, reminded Hasluck that, in public, Canberra had spoken simply of improving the welfare of the Papuan people as a basis for the 1957 statement:

it is, I believe, a reason against having an abrupt termination of the appointment of a liaison officer in such a way as to enable the Indonesian Government to claim that Australia has demonstrated that our concern was less with the welfare of the indigenous inhabitants of West New Guinea and more with keeping the colonist Dutch there...I would hope that some forms of co-operation with the new Administration...will not be found to be impractical.⁵³

Hasluck did not share Barwick's open-mindedness on this issue of continuing administrative co-operation. On 13 September a cablegram from Barwick's Department was sent to the Australian mission at the UN in New York. It stated that the Department favoured maintaining the liaison officer in Hollandia. It also gave the inaccurate impression that the officer was responsible for issuing entry permits for East New Guinea and other consular activities. Once Hasluck became aware of this he

wrote a minute to his officials on 17 September stating that this cablegram “went way beyond” his recent discussions with Barwick. Instructing them to make his views known to the Department of External Affairs, he asserted that there was no question of the liaison officer becoming involved in additional duties such as consular or diplomatic functions. Furthermore he wrote:

The circumstances in which administrative co-operation with West New Guinea was an advantage to our administration of East New Guinea have completely disappeared and indeed we have to watch closely a situation in which too ready and too active co-operation with Indonesia will damage the confidence of our own people in our own Administration....we should ease ourselves out of administrative co-operation arrangements.....there can be no case for administrative co-operation as we have known it up to date but only a case for trying to maintain friendly relations as best we can with the people next door.⁵⁴

United Nations General Assembly Debate September 1962

International reaction to the transition was limited to a vote on the Dutch/Indonesian resolution on the agreement by the UN General Assembly on 21 September. It was adopted by 89 votes to none with 14 abstentions. The group abstaining was made up of France and a number of francophone African countries. There had been a plan by these countries to submit an amendment, or to vote against the resolution since, as the Senagalese President commented to British diplomats shortly beforehand, there was much resentment over ‘Negro Papuans’ being handed over to Indonesia.⁵⁵ Dahomey, one of the countries which eventually abstained, explained its position following the vote:

my Government cannot endorse arrangements whereby a people of 700,000 is transferred from one power to another under a bilateral treaty concluded without previous consultation with the party chiefly concerned, the Papuan people.⁵⁶

In addition Mr Zollner, the Dahomey representative, drew attention to a crucial and deliberate omission in the agreement which would eventually allow the Indonesians to ensure that the Papuans were never given the opportunity to decide their own future:

Much has been said on the subject of self-determination; but when we peruse this Agreement, what do we see in the articles dealing with self-determination? Not once - I repeat, not once - do we find in the text any mention of a 'referendum', the most normal, the most usual and the most objective form of public expression of opinion. The most precise formula we find is the vague one of 'the freely expressed will of the population', without any indication of how that will is to be expressed. That is left entirely to the discretion of the councils, which are described as 'representative' without the slightest definition of the manner in which they are to be appointed.....the actual public expression of opinion will be organized entirely by the party which has the greatest interest in the yielding of results that are favourable to it.⁵⁷

Despite this African protest, there was little interest from other states in the fate of the Papuans once the agreement had been reached. Most interested parties were now only concerned in ensuring that preparations for the brief UNTEA period would allow some veneer of respectability to accompany the eventual handover of the territory to Indonesia. For this to be possible, UN officials preparing for UNTEA knew that they would have to work with Indonesia. For Rikhye in particular, the Dutch colonial authorities were seen as the main obstacle to this goal and any Papuan opposition was a result of Dutch incitement. While he no doubt underestimated the depth of the concerns of politically-informed Papuan, he was well aware

that the crucial factor for UNTEA to remember would be the increasingly dominant position of Indonesia throughout the whole period of its temporary administration

CHAPTER TWO

Notes.

1. Komer. Memorandum to President Kennedy, 15 August 1962. US Foreign Relations 1961-63, p. 626
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22. UN: DAG 1.2.2.3:9. Cable from Narasimhan to Brigadier Rikhye, 22 September 1962.

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