

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

In the ante-room to the Prime Minister's talks with President Soeharto, Sir Antony Acland had an informal discussion with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja.

Mr. B.S. Arifin (Indonesian Ambassador to the United Kingdom), Mr. Nana Sutresna (Director-General of MFA), Mr. Alan Donald (HM Ambassador to Indonesia) and I were present.

China

The discussion started with each side describing its current relations with China. Dr. Mochtar said that Indonesia's relations with China were conditioned by history: their association had not been imperialised, but Indonesia had been influenced by Chinese culture and civilisation before the times when, first the Portuguese and Dutch and secondly the French and British, came to the region. In modern times Indonesia believed that China had helped the Communist coup in Indonesia in 1965: although the Russians had probably been the propagator of that coup they arranged things so that the Chinese were left holding the baby. Indeed, the present Chinese Government did not deny their involvement, but blamed it on the Gang of Four. In consequence the Indonesians felt that the Chinese should make the first move towards restoring relations.

Emphasising the privacy of what he was saying, Dr. Mochtar continued that this message had been conveyed bilaterally to the Chinese, and the Indonesians thought that it had been understood. They had nominated Wu Xue Chien to attend the commemoration ceremony in April and he had applied for an Audience with the President. Much would depend on the nature of his message. If it was an overture for better relations, Indonesia would regard the obstacle to the restoration of good relations as having been overcome: if, however, it was a purely formal message, no progress would be made.

/ Sir Antony

Sir Antony Acland briefly outlined Britain's historical relationship with China and our more recent experience over Hong Kong. Those negotiations had been complex and there had been moments of extreme difficulty, but the Chinese had accepted the common objective of maintaining the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. Part of the difficulty had been to convince the Chinese what was needed to retain confidence, but they had accepted eventually a much more detailed agreement than might have been expected. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew had said that he could not believe that the Chinese could have been brought to sign an agreement in such detail.

Indo-China

At Sir Antony Acland's invitation, Dr. Mochtar described Indonesian policy on Vietnam and Kampuchea. He said that the Indonesians had reacted strongly to the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea out of principle. They attached much importance to the principle of self-determination, not least in order to get the message across to their immediate neighbours, and it was at his insistence that the Bangkok Declaration of January 1979 had criticised the Vietnamese action as neo-colonialism. The Indonesians' policy, however, was always to act through ASEAN. The policy of dealing with Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea through the United Nations had not solved the problem; but it did not follow that it was a failure. The important objective of denying the Vietnamese the fruits of aggression and confining the embroglioto Kampuchea had been achieved. Diplomacy had succeeded in stopping the advance of the Vietnamese Communists, in contrast to America's use of force in Vietnam. The Vietnamese were bogged down and branded as the aggressor.

In answer to a question from Sir Antony Acland, Dr. Mochtar said that he did not expect the Vietnamese to make incursions into Thailand except for the limited purposes of hot pursuit. The

position reached was not a permanent solution or a foundation for real political stability. That was why he had visited Hanoi and had proposed a new initiative. Seen in the strategic context of South East Asia, the situation in Kampuchea was a symptom of the conflict of two strategies - the Chinese attempt to obtain hegemony in the region and the efforts of the Vietnamese to get domination with the help of the USSR. A Sihanouk regime in Kampuchea would probably be more viable than the present coalition but would not necessarily be more stable. And, because of this, Sihanouk was too smart to agree to it. There was a need to bring about a change in the configuration of forces in the region and the initiative which Dr. Mochtar had taken in Hanoi was to urge the Vietnamese to re-establish relations with the Americans. He thought that the Americans were reaching the stage of being ready for this, but two necessary conditions were a solution to the "missing in action" problem and a solution to the problem of Kampuchea. The former was probably the more important and he had urged the Vietnamese to make the Americans an offer which would not be seen as an attempt to bargain. He had also urged them to make the effort before President Reagan passed the mid-term of his present Administration. Phan Van Dong had reacted positively to the suggestion. His initiative had succeeded in uniting opinion within Indonesia. The Vietnamese recognised that their involvement with Russia was getting them nowhere. They had said that they could not change their policies before their Party Congress next year and he had urged them to bring this forward to July. There were many difficulties in the way, but Indonesian domestic opinion had demanded that some initiative were taken. Malaysia supported the initiative and Singapore accepted the logic but had not given it positive support. The Thais could also accept it but would be wary of the Chinese attitude. He had urged the Vietnamese as a goodwill gesture to release Mr. William Smithers, and they had done so although this had not succeeded in achieving a response from the Americans.

/ ASEAN

ASEAN

Dr. Mochtar said that the United States, Japan and Australia had talked for some time about setting up a Pacific Community. They had talked about a free trade area but the United States' attitude had been vague. Indonesia would have nothing to do with a community which would lose the identity of the ASEAN countries. This was the background to the ASEAN cooperative development initiative, covering trade, economy and human resources. The ASEAN countries would be permanent members, but other countries could be involved in specific projects. The ASEAN secretariat would coordinate it. It was a deliberate policy of Indonesia not to put all their eggs in the Japanese and United States baskets.

East Timor

HM Ambassador invited Dr. Mochtar to explain the Indonesian position on East Timor. Dr. Mochtar said that Indonesia had reached an agreement with the Portuguese in 1974 to cooperate on achieving self-determination in East Timor. However, following the change of Government in Portugal, the Portuguese had negated the agreement by creating Fretilin and encouraging them to use force.

At this point, the meeting was brought to an end by the breaking up of the talks between the President and Prime Minister.

F.R.B.

cc: Sir A Acland
HM Ambassador, Jakarta

11 April, 1985