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Amembassy DJAKARTA

October 23, 1965

Efforts of Political Moderates to Help the Army Destroy
the PKI and Pitfalls in the Current Political Situation.

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1. The enclosed memorandum of conversation with Mr. A. Bujung Nasution, an assistant to the Indonesian Attorney General, conveys some of the flavor of the current post-September 30 political atmosphere in Indonesia as viewed by an Indonesian moderate who has actively entered the fray. Perhaps its greatest significance is the indication it gives that a part of Indonesia's able middle class which in recent years has been politically inert is coming forward at this time to challenge the leftward course of Indonesian events.

2. In addition to the enclosed comments by Mr. Nasution, there is public evidence of his active involvement. On both October 20 and 21 the armed forces newspaper, Angkatan Bersendjata, carried by-line articles by Nasution calling upon all organizations in the society to cleanse themselves of those who helped prepare the ground for the September 30 movement. The articles state that the time has come for every person to take a stand. No longer can people await orders or wait and see which way the wind is blowing. He recalls how agitators and their sycophants in government offices even had arrested band musicians for playing music the people wanted and had destroyed phonograph records. In the field of justice, a high official had issued instructions that officials must take the side of the "farmers and workers" in any dispute whatever its merits. (Note: An obvious reference to crypto-Communist Justice Minister Astrawinata). Such persons served to pave the way for the September 30 movement with their

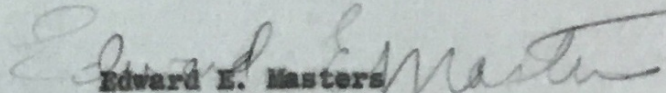
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accusations, demonstrations and distortions, Nasution wrote, and there should be no more place for them either in government or private enterprise.

For the Ambassador:



Edward E. Masters
Counselor of Embassy
for Political Affairs

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Enclosure:

Memorandum of Conversation.

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Subject: The Situation in Indonesia after the Coup Attempt and Efforts of Indonesian Moderates to Assist the Army to Destroy the PEI.

Participants: Mr. A. Bujung NASUTION, S.H., Assistant to the Attorney General of Indonesia.

Robert G. Rich, Jr., Second Secretary of Embassy

Place: Djakarta, Indonesia

Dates: October 15 and 19, 1965

1. Mr. Nasution, who has been an acquaintance of the reporting officer for two years, but previously has refrained from discussing internal Indonesian politics, contacted me at his initiative and asked for a meeting to discuss the current situation. The following details emerged in two successive conversations on October 15 and 19, 1965.

2. Nasution said that the present situation offered a unique and perhaps not to be repeated opportunity for the moderate elements in Indonesia to stand up and make an effort to redirect the course of the country's fortunes. He repeatedly used the pronoun "we" in the ensuing discussion but declined to specifically identify the group he referred to. However, the reporting officer had the impression that Nasution represents the intellectual legacies of the former Masjumi and PSI segment of the Indonesian population. His position as an assistant to the Attorney General is apparently being directly utilized and he spoke of being in contact with the Army leadership concerning the continued round-up of communists in the Djakarta area.

3. Nasution emphasized that the outcome of the present power struggle is still far from being determined. These are very critical times. The important thing for the moment is to continue to crack down on the Communist organizations in order to break the back of PKI power before Sukarno had begun to successfully paper over recent events on the political level. Nasution said that the Army had already executed many Communists but that this fact must be very closely held. He had

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been shocked several days previously to hear Radio Malaysia refer to possible Army executions of Communist cadres. He emphasized that the key to the present situation remained Sukarno. Sukarno was always ready to grab on to foreign press reports and use them against those forces in the country which were currently trying to crush the PKI. The extent of Army repression of the PKI was being carefully kept from Sukarno. While Sukarno would probably hear reports to this effect, it was very important that he not be able to cite particular sources such as foreign radio and press reports since emphasis on these aspects in the foreign press would not only incite Sukarno to crack down on the Army's activities but also encourage him to wrongfully accuse military leaders of aiding and abetting Nekolim. Mr. Nasution particularly stressed the delicate position of Indonesian moderates at this time. They currently have the initiative, but need more time to break the back of PKI strength. To do this Sukarno must not be handed ammunition from abroad which he can turn against the Army and its supporters.

4. The reporting officer stressed that the US Government was fully aware of the sensitive nature of current events and was making every effort to avoid stimulating press speculation which would redound to the detriment of moderate forces in Indonesia at this time. It was noted, however, that the USG has no control over its press.

5. Nasution spoke of Sukarno as a man whose image in the country was irrevocably shattered for the long run and yet who still held a pre-eminent psychological position which the Army could not challenge directly. A distinct danger foreseen by the moderates at present was that Sukarno and Subandrio might yet be able to divert public attention to an alleged Nekolim threat and blame the US and "imperialists" in general for attempting to set Indonesians against themselves in early October. He noted the difficulty, and even impossibility, of pursuing a course of denials and refutations of spurious charges which might arise in this connection and recalled the effectiveness with which the PKI in the past had been able to utilize false documents and fabricated charges, resulting in Sukarno even turning against a long term friend, Bill Palmer. Rather than be placed on the defensive by such charges, he said, "we" are placing all our efforts in getting the true story of what happened to the Indonesian people in its fullest extent. By repeated emphasis on what really happened, little opening would be permitted for PKI fabrication. In searching for evidence of Subandrio's connection in the 30th September movement, however, the Army and moderate groups had thus far been unable to turn up firm useable evidence of Subandrio's

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participation. He asked specifically whether the American Embassy could provide any firm evidence of Subandrio's links with the PKI or with Communist China.

6. Nasution stated that some elements in the Army had raised the possibility of freeing former Masjumi and PSI leaders who had been in jail since the PRRI rebellion. "We" have told the Army, Nasution said, that the important thing at present is to protect these moderate figures where they are, in jail, and preserve their safety for the future. The political scene is still too delicate to consider their overt release at this time and they are perhaps safer in jail than any where else.

Biographic Note

7. Mr. Nasution is an intelligent and soft spoken young lawyer who did some university study in Australia. Throughout the reporting officer's two-year acquaintance with him he has deplored the leftist trend of Indonesian politics. Until the September 30 coup attempt, however, he had never indicated any overt political participation himself. He has worked in the intelligence and security sections of the Attorney General's office prior to being appointed a special aide to the Attorney General in 1964. He was in charge of security arrangements for U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy during the latter's 1961 visit to Indonesia and has frequently spoken of his considerable admiration for the Kennedys as a result of that experience. Up until 1963 Nasution had for some time also been a member of the Indonesian Film Board Censor Committee for foreign films but had been removed from this group when it became more leftist oriented. Nasution is a Moslem Mendailing Batak from the same part of Sumatra as his famous namesake at the head of the Indonesian Armed Forces.

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