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STATE DEPT. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

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after 2/27 01/01/2008

EO 12958, 25X 1, 6

SUBJECT: Shadows Behind Appointment of ~~Ruslan Abdulgani~~ Ruslan Abdulgani

WH 11-10-97

DHartley 10/28/02

Ref: Djakarta's 6163

1. In our talks before he left for New York, Malik commented with some bitterness on Suharto's insistence in naming ex-Sukarno henchman-propagandist Ruslan Abdulgani as Indonesia's permanent delegate to United Nations, a decision Malik had repeatedly opposed and which is unpalatable to FonOff, most of Generals, and to intellectual community. Malik had tried to head this off by suggesting a military man (General Simatupang), but his proposal had been turned down by Suharto who maintained that, having promised ~~Abdulgani~~ ^{Ruslan} this job last year, he must follow ~~Abdulgani~~ ^{Ruslan} through and that ~~Abdulgani~~ ^{Ruslan} now supported the New Order. Malik commented to me that real reason for Suharto's decision was advice from his Dukun (soothsayer), who in

AmbMGreen:vr
June 20, 1967

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turn was in pay of PNI (in which party Ruslan is prominent).

This led to a discussion of Suharto's connections with PNI.

2. According to Malik, Suharto sees the PNI as the only political party large enough to serve as a counterpoise to those Moslem groups which Suharto suspects of favoring the creation of an Islamic State. Malik agreed with me that these fears of an Islamic State seem unfounded but he nevertheless insisted that they are a matter of preoccupation for Suharto. This has caused his relations with Nasution to cool off, not only because Suharto sees Nasution as the only military leader who could challenge his own position, but also as the man who might become leader of Islamic state proponents. Malik conceded that Suharto had other reasons as well for supporting the PNI: PNI's strength is principally in Central Java which is Suharto's birth place; desire to win over PNI as far as possible in support of New Order and not let PNI be driven into opposition, etc.

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3. Malik was nevertheless much concerned that such identification of Suharto with PNI (and this would be magnified further by appointment of Ruslan Abdulgani, a former PNI luminary) would antagonize many of those now supporting New Order, such as Action Fronts and Moslem groups. He finds it ironical that Suharto should be giving any support to the political party regarded as most pro-Sukarno and anti-New Order.

4. Malik had these further remarks to make (supplementing Djakarta 6058) about military officers on Suharto's personal staff: Alamsjah (the man whom no one trusts), Sudjono Humardani (honest, not too bright, close to Suharto only in a mystic sense), Slamet (close to General Suwanto and our best hope amongst men on Suharto's staff), Nurtopo (smart but corrupt; he should stick to intelligence and stay out of political and economic affairs), Suhardjono (an inefficient bureaucrat), Surjo (utterly corrupt and untrustworthy), Sunarso (influential only in foreign affairs field and helpful to FonOff).

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5. Comments: Despite his reservations about Suharto, Malik will continue to seek to work with him. He feels, as I do, that Suharto's horizons and contacts must be broadened. He also feels that Suharto must move soon to restructure the political party system in a way that will best ensure mass support for Indonesia's New Order. Even though Malik does not anticipate elections before 1970, he believes this is no excuse for further delays in facing up to basic political issues.

6. As reflected in his comments about Suharto's Dukun, Malik is not above taking special aim at this feature of Javanese traditionalism, even though his subsequent comments indicate a far more realistic reason for Suharto's cosiness towards the PNI.

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