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West Irian (Dutch New Guinea)

23 Feb. 61

Extract from the speech of Minister
Luns in the Second Chamber of the
States General.

Extract from the speech of Minister Luns in the Second Chamber of the States General on February 23, 1961

In previous debates in this Chamber too I drew attention to the international aspects of our New Guinea policy. Those aspects have, of course, always existed, for the Netherlands administration of the territory is exercised, as the Chamber knows, in accordance with the rules laid down in Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations, implying extensive annual reporting and discussion in the appropriate committee in New York. The Government has always interpreted these rules in a liberal manner, more liberally than other countries. For although the Charter restricts the intervention of the international community to what are called technical questions of administration, the Netherlands has from the beginning voluntarily submitted annual reports on the political development as well. I found, when I assisted at the recent General Assembly in New York, that these reports are studied by many countries, particularly in the part of the world where New Guinea is situated. We have always done this because we felt, not only that we had nothing to conceal, but also that the political development of the territory may be helped by the most intensive possible interaction between what the Netherlands thinks and does and what are the international conceptions and norms.

-It is-

It is therefore understandable, Mr. President, that the Government gives extra emphasis to this international openness whenever Indonesia accuses us of bad practice or warlike intentions. I need not remind the Chamber that during the past year Indonesia has repeatedly done so. What I do remind the Chamber of is that the Netherlands reaction has always been: "Come and look and judge for yourselves what the situation and the Netherlands intentions are". Thus in June last year, in connexion with the Indonesian accusations concerning the voyage of the Karel Doorman, we said to the Secretary-General of the United Nations that a personal representative of his would be heartily welcome in New Guinea. Mr. Hammarskjold then did not take up that suggestion but, as you will remember, he declared publicly that such a Netherlands gesture had definitely strengthened the Netherlands position.

I followed the same line of thinking when I made my speech on October 4 last year in the General Assembly in New York. The formula I used on that occasion, that of "scrutiny and judgment", is known to you.

In spite of the exegesis produced by Mr van der Veen, I believe that these words speak for themselves. They are meant as impressive evidence of our intentions; as such they were understood by many. Nevertheless I wish to say something more about them because this formulation was intended exactly

to make possible what Mr. Blaisse desired, namely a continuous ¹⁰⁴adaptation to new facts. One of those facts was the Indonesian note of December 23, copy of which the Government sent to the Chamber, and in which ~~after~~ all armed action is explicitly threatened. Our answer to that was a repetition of the request to Mr. Hammarskjold to send a representative to New Guinea. That was on January 4 and it was intended as practical evidence that the Government takes seriously the "scrutiny and judgment" of the U.N. We would be most happy if a representative of the U.N. would come and scrutinize and judge and, naturally, we will take his judgment to heart. With reference to Mr. Burger's remark that Luns was being ambiguous and equivocal again, I would say that this is an implication of our statement which we would not wish to avoid.

As you know, Mr. President, Mr. Hammarskjold is still considering our request. I do not know when he will make a final decision on it. Nor do I know whether he will indeed be able to accede to our request. The Chamber will, I trust, join the Government in showing understanding for the exceptionally difficult position in which the Secretary General now finds himself. The attacks by the Soviet bloc on his person and his actions have - and the Government rejoices in that fact - not been able to force his immediate resignation. But it is obvious that under these circumstances he will be rather inclined to give a more restrictive interpretation to his powers than hitherto.

-I would-

I would therefore not be surprised if we did not at once receive a decision on our request. Meanwhile time is precious and the Government continues to strive for the sending of a U.N. representative. I could also use another formula: What the Government now has in mind is to obtain in New Guinea a "U.N. presence".

Already in 1958 the Government discussed all possibilities with the Secretary-General of the U.N. during an oral exchange of ideas in respect of U.N. action with regard to our policy in New Guinea. I then came to the conclusion, as a result of the pertinent information I received, that a trusteeship would not be possible. In September/October 1960 I discussed the question anew with the Secretary-General - and discussed it in detail - and I then listed on paper for the Secretary-General all possibilities I could think of for U.N. action in our New Guinea policy. After that - and I hope that even Mr. Burger will not doubt this - I received from the Secretary-General some opinions in respect of the manner in which the Netherlands might act in the first, the second and the third instance. When it is now said that the question of U.N. action has now been brought up in the U.N. for the first time, then I would point out that this has happened on the basis of the opinion of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I also fear - and I say this to put Mr. Burger's mind at ease - that this is not the final solution of the matter. The Chamber will, I am sure, consider it reasonable

-that-

that I wait first to see what will happen to the request. I retain the hope that the Secretary-General will comply with our request. I regret that, for understandable reasons, his position has not been strengthened. That is why I have been rather reserved in my utterances, but in any case I shall have to wait. That is not a question of months, but at most a question of weeks, until we shall know how matters stand.

Extract from the speech of Minister Luns in the Second Chamber of the States General on February 23, 1961

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