

Small files: Tibet 1959-1961, West Irian (Dutch New Guinea) 1958-1961, Yeme...

HS L 179:194



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

West Irian (Dutch New Guinea)

„The Question of West Irian“
- Memorandum.

SECRET

THE QUESTION OF WEST IRIAN (WEST NEW GUINEA)

The question of West Irian has become very involved. The parties concerned, i.e. the Dutch and the Indonesians, would not move in consonance to effect a peaceful settlement on this question, and while it remains unsettled the situation in South East Asia is precarious. Afro-Asian countries are sensitive about this question. To support the Dutch claim to exercise control over this territory until such time when the people themselves can exercise their right of self-determination would be out of the question as according to them this would be to perpetuate colonialism. On the other hand a number of Western countries and Australia would oppose the handing-over of this territory to Indonesia on the ground that they do not want to see the sovereignty changed, but they would agree to self-determination for the territory of West Irian. The attitude of the Dutch is that they have more right over West Irian than Indonesia who, they maintain, have had little contact with West Irian, beyond the fact that these territories were ruled by the Dutch together with the rest of Indonesia but racially and culturally they were different from Indonesia.

In the meantime matters deteriorated as a result of which diplomatic relations between the two countries had been severed. In June 1950 it was suggested by Dr. Evatt of Australia that West Irian should be put under the Trusteeship of the U.N. and that Australia, who had more experience in Pacific problems, should either be the sole trustee or one of the trustees. But that was an opinion expressed some time ago and those terms today will not find acceptance either by Indonesia or any other Asian country.

On the other hand I feel strongly that the question of placing the territory of West Irian under the trusteeship of the U.N. should not be rejected altogether but the creation of this trusteeship must be for a purpose and not in the terms suggested by Dr. Evatt. The main purpose of course is to remove the danger of armed conflict between Indonesia and the Dutch, and even if this objective is not immediately achieved it would have the effect of relaxing tension in South East Asia. This would give time to the nations sincerely interested in the preservation of peace in this part of the world

to try and think of some ways and means whereby the question of West Irian might be amicably resolved.

I have in consequence made a proposal to Indonesia suggesting that Indonesia should agree to the creation of a trusteeship and that the U.N. should be approached to accept this territory as a trust territory to be administered and supervised under a trusteeship system by an administering authority designated for that purpose but with the ultimate aim of transferring the territory to Indonesia after the expiration of the trusteeship.

Indonesia was at first reluctant to accept my proposal but eventually their First Minister, Tun Djuanda was agreeable to it, but with the proviso that if this territory were transferred to the U.N. as a trust territory it must be for no other purpose than the eventual transfer of West Irian directly to the Republic of Indonesia and that the trust period should not exceed one year. Tun Djuanda further stated that the Indonesian concurrence to the creation of a trusteeship was pursuant to Article 76, paragraph a., of the United Nations Charter, which in effect states "to further international peace and security."

The position as I see it today is that the situation has become so tense that to adopt a passive attitude towards this problem would jeopardise the security and peace in this part of the world. There is a danger that if no solution is found Indonesia may take the matter into her own hands as she felt certain that Asian and African countries would take her side. Under these circumstances U.N. would have to intervene but by then the position might have become so bad that this intervention might be resisted.

Before the situation develops to that stage I feel very strongly that something must be done now by the U.N. at least by giving its attention and consideration to the question of creating this trusteeship. Asian countries such as India, Ceylon, Malaya and Burma could be appointed as administering authority for the trusteeship providing that it should hand over the territory of West Irian to Indonesia on termination of the trusteeship.

While I was in Holland recently I had the opportunity of discussing this matter with Mr. Lund, the Foreign Minister of Holland, but I did not suggest directly to him the terms of the trusteeship. He was however not averse to the creation of a trusteeship whereby the whole responsibility over the territory of West Irian could be transferred to U.N.

So far the attitude of the U.N. with regard to West Irian has been indecisive. In August 1954 the U.N. ignored an Indonesian request that since the Dutch had refused to enter into negotiations with Indonesia, the U.N. should not only show its interest but that they should help both parties to reach a solution. Again in January 1955 they refused to accept a compromise resolution by India, Pakistan, United Kingdom and Thailand which expressed the hope that Indonesia and the Netherlands should try to find a solution in conformity with the principles of the U.N.

In December 1955 U.N. approved a resolution which expressed the hope that the dispute between the Netherlands and Indonesia over West Irian should be peacefully resolved. In November 1956 the U.N. rejected a proposal to request the Secretary-General to appoint a three member group of good offices commission to assist the Netherlands and Indonesia in settling this dispute, in order that a just and peaceful solution of this question may be achieved in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter. In 1957 the U.N. again rejected a resolution calling for fresh negotiations between the Netherlands and Indonesia on the question of West New Guinea. In October 1960 Dr. Subandrio declared in the U.N. that Indonesia was determined to meet force with force over West Irian and confirmed General Nasution's earlier statement that the struggle for West Irian would be determined on the soil of West Irian itself. The implication of these statements is clear, and leaves no room for doubt as to the intention of Indonesia with regard to West Irian. The situation therefore is precarious and explosive.

In view of my anxiety for peace and security, particularly in this region, I have concerned myself with this problem in an endeavour to find a peaceful solution. If hostilities should break out it is certain that the

Dutch will find no support from Asian countries, e.g. no Asian country will allow any part of her territory to be used by the Dutch for the movement of their troops. It follows therefore that any country which gives the Dutch any help by allowing facilities to them would find itself at enmity with the Asian countries. If a country like Australia should unwittingly find herself involved by providing facilities for the movement of Dutch forces she would antagonise all the Asian countries and her relationship with these countries would be seriously injured. Such a breach will not be easy to heal. Malaya, for instance, because of her affinity with Indonesia, might have to declare openly her support of Indonesia. This would complicate matters in her relationship with countries taking sides with the Dutch. Therefore the solution to this vexed and involved problem of West Irian must be found within the framework of the U.N. and through peaceful means.

I propose therefore that :-

- (a) West Irian should be made a trust territory of the United Nations and the terms of trusteeship should include the proviso that this trust territory shall be handed over to Indonesia when circumstances are favourable;
- (b) Ceylon, India and Malaya be appointed to jointly administer this trust territory;
- and (c) Relationship between Indonesia and the Netherlands should be restored and Dutch investments and property in Indonesia and West Irian be returned to their owners and their security guaranteed.