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JPRS: 4389

9 February 1961

POLITICAL INFORMATION ON INDONESIA

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FOREWORD

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JPRS: 4389

CSO: 1218-S/c

POLITICAL INFORMATION ON INDONESIA

[Following are translations of articles on the above subject, selected from Indonesian sources. Source information accompanies each article]

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THE PLACE OF INDONESIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

[Following is a translation of an article by Sjami D. N. in Mimbar Indonesia (Pulpit of Indonesia) 8 October 1960, pages 13 and 14.]

I am convinced that no matter how much the elements of democracy in their generally accepted sense are shriveling up, the right of freedom of speech is living in a guided democracy. We will have to confine it to a narrow spot, though.

In a narrow place, certainly only liberties that go wild will be unable to find a right to live. We are therefore fortunate to find vast and satisfying aspirations instead of the commotion we experienced for many years as a result of liberalism.

Is it really fortunate that we find ourselves in such a situation? I think that history has given us an adequate reply, looking at it in the light of the laws of the revolution as well as the ideas thesis-antithesis-synthesis, resembling a cycle of phenomena.

I believe that in this connection we can introduce the problem of the party system in Indonesia. This is the fundamental problem, according to Ali Sastroamidjojo of the provincial army command of West Borneo, South Sumatra, and South Celebes.

It is strange that the people only now are feeling threatened in their position. Were they not long ago already afflicted with tuberculosis? That sickness of dry cough tightening the chest, cough which they tried to suppress as they wanted to adhere to the doctor's advice.

Surely, if they had given in to the itching throat and vomiting blood, sudden death would have been the result. However, how long will they remain alive when these microbes start to crawl all over?

But what is life anyway without the possibility of stretching one's legs? Lean and shriveled as that Aki in the story of Bung Idris, who at best was able to strum the guitar.

Who, just to console his heart, could play the guitar during twilight to revive romantic memories of the times he spent with a girl. But what does egocentric love of bygone years mean when people spoil the sweet beauty of this world while honeymooning in the villas around the Puntjak [weekend mountain resort of Djakarta]?

If one could smile in sympathy it would not become more than a bitter reaction. Bitter salute to a nearby and much feared death. Do we have to expose these faults? Is the above mentioned sickness not

the result of obesity while tasting all the food in the restaurants around the Puntjak?

In Mimbar Indonesia, number 37 of 10 September 1960, my colleague Zobeir A. Hadid touches upon this problem. But comrade Zobeir takes only a problem that was during that week very topical. Yet what is wrong about it when I discuss in passing the happenings that preceded it? I shall repeat the course of events. People think about the problems of the revolution in all kinds of manners. Based on these ideas we try to approach the present balance of power to predict the near future.

We just start at the time before the revolution of the PRRI PERMESTA [Partai Rakjat Republik Indonesia - People's Party of the Republic of Indonesia]. It begins with Ahmad Husein and Ventje Samuel with their demands on the central government. Important was their demand for money to begin with. They explained it to be for the development of the province, whereas the development was being undertaken by the people themselves according to the system of mutual assistance. We repeat mutual assistance. But it was probably like the system of building roads on Java under the Dutch. Another reason was their accusation about widespread corruption in the center of government. On the contrary, as soon as these people received money from the central government they started to stuff their own stomachs.

Apparently because the government did not want to quarrel, it opened the public purse. So the trickle of inflation was opened up again to unite with the deficits of the provinces that had not been covered for years. The hope of the government to increase its foreign assets grew dim because the provinces started a barter system. Even in front of the gates of Tandjong Priok it was demonstrated how weak the measures of the government were at that time.

In this matter the government twice deserted its principles. First it was forced to accept the mockery of its representatives in the provinces. The second time it was forced to accept the burden of inflation because it surrendered to the claims of the provinces.

This evidence made the challengers of the government bold enough to say that if they were to cut the ties with the central government completely, it would die without a sound, not being able to pay its civil servants. On the other hand this opinion caused these people to make an even bigger mistake in their calculations. They thought that the central government would share the same fate as capitalism, that is, digging its own grave by way of permanent crises.

Fortunately this error also enabled our government to maintain itself. If this had not been the case, we would have witnessed the bitterest provincial fragmentation in history.

At first the challengers of the government presumed that it would retire with one blow, but after the second they delivered a senseless coup. In this situation their only adversary was Ali Sastroamidjojo, who quickly returned his mandate to the president. He was apparently unable to cope with the small dignitaries just emerged from the revolution

with some little knowledge of politics. However, neither Ali nor Djuanda (the engineer) himself, but a great part of the population remembered history; all alone they had to face small party bosses who represented the people.

Who emerged during these critical moments? The dignitaries of the big parties so clever in Parliament? Or did an angel from heaven descend to whisper in their ears to keep in mind that the series of events would force them to the edge of the jungle?

Everybody was waiting for Sukarno. The people don't idolize him, but in their fear they said: we hope that Sukarno's wisdom will overcome these problems.

I don't know whether we realized it, but the formal power of the cabinet based on the confidence of Parliament had indeed been transferred a long time ago to the hands of the president. This time he did not just keep silent as he had done so many years as constitutional president. He was certainly tired of looking at the faces of party dignitaries whom the prime ministers installed as ministers. An inferior kind of compromise trading had propelled these dignitaries to the palace to be installed as ministers. Less than a year later they used to be as crippled as the old donkey outside the building of Parliament.

Was it not only human that the president had enough of it? Again and again he received statements from the prime ministers that their cabinet would return its mandate. The day after, he looks again for a new face to form a cabinet while keeping in touch with party dignitaries. These people are then proposed by their parties.

It is only human that Sukarno often pondered on this: if he did not, we may say that he possesses the political sharpness that Stalin had before World War II. During interim periods, he can only ask his own advice. Are there indeed other people who possess more influence than he? Does not every important occasion always await his presence, and is this not a clear sign that no other people can solve these problems? Can the revolution proceed guided by persons who surrender quickly? Would it not be better if his personal influence were used to continue the revolution for a happy country? Would he not be accused of being a dictator? Where is the real essence of that dictatorship? How to defend your principles when people call you a dictator? Well, every philosophical question also contains its own philosophical answer.

This is more or less what the president was pondering. Then he arrived at the conclusion to appoint himself to form the first Karya [work] cabinet.

The underlying views and considerations in his suggestions have not received enough attention up till now, neither from the cabinets nor from the party dignitaries who still hoped for political stability from the democratic liberal system.

When they heard that Sukarno had appointed himself to form a cabinet, the politicians became panicky because this action was unprecedented. There were no constitutional provisions to permit a

constitutional president such action. Sukarno could not possibly have any other intention except becoming a dictator.

Sukarno's assumption that he would be accused of dictatorship was not wrong. But he would not be leader of the revolution if he had retreated one step from his viewpoint. We must consider this without asking ourselves whether each of his thoughts contained the answer needed by the revolution, with its many facets.

In short, his distinct personal influence in all proceedings are well known from the very beginning of the national movement. He can therefore turn to his experience in the struggle of his PNI [Partai Nasional Indonesia - National Party of Indonesia] and his knowledge of world revolution. The French revolution brought Napoleon forth, who, although hated by a certain part of the influential people, up to now has received quite some praise. The Bolshevich revolution has its leader, Stalin. The present leaders of Russia now consider him a scoundrel. Nevertheless, an honest acknowledgement without involving ourselves in the Communist conception shows that it was exactly Stalin who was the founder of Russia that now can navigate in outer space.

The panic of the political bosses became clearer after the president ordered the return to the constitution of 1945. This resulted in quick withdrawal of the council for the preparation of the constitution. His next move was to dissolve Parliament, but before that he had already altered the measures for reconstruction of the government and the equipment of the country.

These measures inspired interpretations of the law. Could these measures be accounted for or not? Was the decree of the president imposed upon the constitution or parallel with it? Should the decisions and measures of the president really be legalized by Parliament? Once more, for the president philosophical questions contain their own answers. He knew what was behind all those questions and answers regarding his actions.

I feel that the criticism of Sukarno in this respect is no more than a drive without substance. It may share the fate of the Greek orators of the Middle Ages.

We don't have to repeat which instruments of government have already been overhauled by Sukarno. Most important for us are therefore the facts and not what the parties are now thinking of them. That laws that have not even yet a constitutional basis are endangered does not exactly disturb us.

So now the events are more or less connected; as a red thread around the throats of the political parties. And what is more, when this thread is stretched forward all the way, little pale dolls are seen dangling from its very end.

Because the present situation is connected with Presidential Decree number 7-1959, which put a noose around the necks of the political parties Masjumi and PSI [Partai Serikat Indonesia - Union Party of Indonesia] we should take a look at the events surrounding the organization of Peperda.

Why exactly were the above mentioned parties hit by Presidential Decree 7-1959? Because it is generally known that dignitaries of these parties were involved in the revolt of PRRI and PERMESTA, while these parties themselves never condemned the dignitaries that were involved.

Because the attitude of these two parties rather confused the government. It was even possible that because they were not ready to support Manipol and Usdek, this final blow had to bring them down. These are the corpses of that Aki [term unexplained in source], the first ones in history to be covered by Presidential Decree 7-1959 as the tombstone. Is Aki really dead? In a formal sense of course, but we don't have to cry about it.

After the death of the two Akis there are other people that must become Aki because these people cannot live through this age. No matter in what manner it may come, their death cannot be prevented. In spite of Buddha's teachings, that man will not die direct and straight. He just roams around in a more intimate incarnation before he reaches heaven. But is this also the case with political parties? We leave the question to those who like to answer it.

It appears that the death of these two Akis was received with boisterous support by those who did not want Aki to live. Even before Aki's last breath they felt it necessary to speed up his death.

Now those who are still living want to grab Usdek [term not explained in source]. Everybody claims the right to possess it. This is because Usdek itself is not as foolproof as was hoped by the one who fathered it. They had hoped to give it magic power of justice.

This can be observed in the everyday language that has clearer tendencies to balance the viewpoints within the society. So expressions sometimes do not reflect what really lives in heart and soul. This is proved by the existence of symptoms that try to play the government and its executive organs off against each other. Symptoms that want to turn the course of Manipol to the North and South Pole; until even the birth of Manipol is perverted to serve the state of paralysis of these people.

The people who just seek Sukarno's shelter for political advantages can turn the president, who sincerely wants to establish socialism quickly, into an Ingker [a kind of squirrel from Borneo's interior that can look in all directions by turning its neck like a pivot].

But I am convinced that Sukarno will outwit them by realizing that the right answer lies in the National Front that he founded. When the still living parties want to exert their influence over the masses, the National Front, very much like a mass organization itself, can be mobilized in a much more practical manner. As once Aki did, the parties that wish to fight its strength could thus find their own grave.

When the present situation works out smoothly, we see a state party in the future. This could possibly mean the tombstone for the next Akis. Even so, there are still many questions. Will the system of one party or a national party improve the conditions under which

socialism can be materialized? The future will give the answer. We may only hope that future generations will not become so dumb, blind and idiotic as to take their own future for granted.

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THE PROBLEM OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

[Following is the translation of an article by Zobeir
A. Hadid in Mimbar Indonesia (Pulpit of Indonesia)
8 October 1960, pages 5 and 6]

At the end of September of this year, upon instructions of Peperti [Penguasa Perang Tertinggi - High Command of the Armed Forces] four printing offices were seized in Djakarta and one each in Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya and Makassar. This seizure forces all the newspapers that were printed by these enterprises to stop publication, except for the daily Pikiran Rakyat [Thought of the People] in Bandung, probably because the West Java Command is allowed to use its own judgement in executing the order of the High Command. The daily papers that are forced to stop their publication through this seizure are: Berita Indonesia [News of Indonesia], Pedoman [Compass], Abadi [Eternal], Duta Masyarakat dan Nusantara [Envoy of Society and Archipelago] in Djakarta, Suara Merdeka [Free Voice] in Semarang, Suara Rakyat [People's Voice] in Surabaya, and Pedoman Rakyat [People's Compass] of Makassar.

It is known that the reason for the seizure is that these printing offices, bought with government credit, are thought to be used or going to be used to interfere with the public order and peace and the Manifesto Politik [Political Manifesto, a part of Sukarno's speech of 17 August 1959] that has become the guide for the nation. Probably for this last reason, i.e., interference with the execution of the Political Manifesto, the publishing license of the newspaper Nusantara [Archipelago] was completely revoked by the Command of Greater Djakarta in accordance with instructions from the High Command. This paper is known to be very anti-communist and is headed by somebody whose attitude during the time of armed revolution is open to criticism.

When one pays attention to the names of the papers that are unable to publish on account of the seizure, except perhaps the daily papers Duta Masyarakat and Berita Indonesia, prejudiced people may consider the seizure as killing the press that is thought to be right wing, liberal and in opposition to the government. But such prejudice is untrue and unfounded, as proved by several explanations that can be believed by those who want to believe. The first and most important proof is the explanation of the Minister of Information, Maladi, that only the printing offices were seized, while the newspapers that were stopped (temporarily) may be printed soon again, in the beginning under firm conditions, or may look for other printers. This last

solution is theoretically possible, but practically impossible on account of the limited capacity of the existing printers or those not seized by the government.

The second proof is that the publishing license of the daily paper Nusantara was revoked, while this was not the case with the other papers hit by the seizure. This is another sign and indication that it is, of course, not the intention of the government to kill the papers that are (considered to be) not in favor of USDEK [UUD 1945, Socialisme Indonesia, Demokrasi Terpimpin, Ekonomi Terpimpin, Kepribadian Indonesia -- Constitution of 1945, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, Personality of Indonesia] and the Political Manifesto. Other proof is that Pikiran Rakyat [Thought of the People] is still appearing in Bandung, although its printing establishment, as we explained above, was seized by the government. It is clear too that there are still several other newspapers all over Indonesia that may still publish, although they are considered to be of the right wing and liberal, or opposed to USDEK and the Political Manifesto.

It is, of course, wiser for the government not to "kill" newspapers that are supposed to be opposed to the Political Manifesto. As long as they pay attention to the law and do not oppose in a wild and disorderly manner the government program and the Political Manifesto by using all kinds of ruses, instigations, falsifications and evidence that is twisted out of shape. Just killing papers considered to be of the opposition looks like giving ammunition and gunpowder to the anti-government parties. The head of the Army Information Center said in his commentary on the seizure of the printing offices that it will be of influence on the problem of peace and that is exactly what needs to be improved. The newspaper of the PNI [Partai Nasional Indonesia - National Party of Indonesia] Suluh Indonesia [Torch of Indonesia] wrote in a comment on the seizure that the freedom to express one's thoughts and convictions verbally and in writing is guaranteed in the UUD [Undang Umum Dasar - the Constitution]. Therefore anti-government circles will certainly seize upon the opportunity to accuse the government of breaking the constitution, should the freedom of expressing one's opinion verbally or in writing be attacked. The government may stop the opposition newspapers, but certainly not all the voices that circulate whispers and poisonous rumours -- probably much more dangerous than printed matter.

It is logical and there can be no controversy about it that the government, whose duty it is to follow the course and the ideals of the country, is obligated to eliminate all elements that thwart and hamper that duty. This includes the press, the most vital instrument in shaping public opinion. But in taking measures against the press, the government must make a difference between those who clearly use all kinds of ruses to thwart and hamper the execution of the Political Manifesto and those who are still mixed up and assume an attitude of wait and see. The last mentioned kind of press is not yet on the side

of Manipol [Manifesto Politik], but does not oppose its execution and limits itself to bringing up discussions. To this kind of press as Col Basuki Rachmat, chairman of the Committee to Revise and Guide the Functions of the Press, declared, sufficient time has to be given to come to terms with the atmosphere of Usdek.

In the meantime it remains a problem whether the papers that have been given time to come to terms will also be allowed to exercise their journalistic activities, although after some time they still have not officially declared themselves on the side of USDEK and the Political Manifesto, but during that period also did not exercise any activities that can be considered as hampering the execution of the principles that have been explained as the course and compass of this nation. Probably on account of the vexing nature of this problem, the people have not yet received any clarification from the Committee to Guide the Press, whose duty it is to explain this problem. As a sample of this problem, we take, for instance, the English language newspaper Times of Indonesia, published in Djakarta. Up to now this paper has not officially indicated through its articles and editorials whether it is in favor of the Political Manifesto, but it can not be accused of being an enemy of the policies of the government.

The US is often criticized on account of its current policy that may be worded as follows: "Those not in favor of America are against America and therefore enemies of America." It is clear that this policy is not correct, because between America (the Western Nations) and the USSR (the Communist bloc) are countries that pursue active and independent policies, convinced that they play an important part in creating a peaceful world without tying themselves, or because they do not tie themselves to a bloc.

The Committee to Renovate and Guide the Functions of the Press is obligated and qualified to decide whether the above mentioned parable will be applied to the Indonesian press.

GUIDE TO THE FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESS

[Following is a translation of an article in Pos Indonesia
(Indonesian Post) 9 October 1960, page 1.]

The Committee for Renovation and Guidance of the Press was today in session in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the guide and compass for the press that will be published soon.

The secretary of this committee, Lt Col Hadiharsono, explained after the session that the discussions regarding the subject of the guide or compass to be published by the government are finished and the results will be sent to the president in the course of next week.

According to Hadiharsono, it is possible that this guide will be published next week, after the president has approved it.

When asked about the contents of the guide, Lt Col Hadiharsono said that it would be better to await official publication, but basically it will indicate how the publishers will have to behave and act within the framework of the Political Manifesto and Usdek (Socialist plan). In this manner the publishers will have clear and positive instruction on how to proceed, said Hadiharsono.

When asked if during the session, plans of the government to have its own publication or news agency were discussed, he denied this emphatically. He said that the work of preparing instructions and renovating the functions of the press was heavy enough to warrant a weekly session of the committee.

He also said that the work of this committee will not be finished with the announced publication of the guide, but that it will regularly convene for discussions and to study and watch the functions of the press.

According to Hadiharsono, many suggestions were received from publishers while the committee was studying the guide governing the functions of the press.

We are able to inform the public that the above mentioned session was presided over by its chairman, Colonel Basuki Rachmat in the presence of temporary Foreign Minister Dr. Leimena, Minister of Information Maladi, Attorney General Gunawan, Head of the Directorate of Information of Foreign Affairs Suska, Subagjo, who represents Ruslan Abdulgani, and Lt Col Hadiharsono himself.