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November 30, 1965

Ambassy DJAKARTA

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This Weeka covers the period November 15 - 24.

POLITICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL-MILITARY

1. Army-Sukarno Tug-of-War and its Ramifications

A. The semi-overt struggle between Sukarno and military leaders for ultimate political power in Indonesia remained in the center of the stage during the reporting period, although it became increasingly apparent that under cover of this dispute, changes were occurring pointing toward the growth of more freedom to criticize and operate politically for moderate elements long submerged by the Sukarno-PKI forces.

B. In a series of meetings with youth leaders from several parties, General Nasution expressed his determination early last week to continue the campaign to repress the PKI, which has reached the stage of mass executions in several Indonesian provinces, apparently at the behest of General Suharto in Central Java at least. Nasution rejected the youth's demands for the Army to move directly against Sukarno, however, indicating that this would open the military to charges that a Generals' Coup had been planned for October 5, as the 30th September Movement had claimed. He indicated that the military had a plan of action, although he did not explain further, and from other reports it appears the Army may have a time schedule of from four to six months for toppling or at least totally neutralizing Sukarno.

C. Part of this plan may have been embodied in several military victories during the week which demonstrated the Army's

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strength and Sukarno's weakness. On November 15, Sukarno met with Nasution and the four service chiefs. Following the meeting, General Suharto announced that all regional and unit armed forces commanders were being called to Bogor Palace the following Saturday for an address by Sukarno. Suharto also announced that the proposed reorganization of the Supreme Operations Command (KOTI) had been prepared, and would be announced during the week at a "special occasion," giving rise to belief that Saturday would provide the occasion. On Friday, West Java Army Commander Adjie with a tortuously-worded statement effectively banned the PKI and Baperki in his district, thus giving rise to speculation that Sukarno had finally agreed to do the same for all Indonesia, since Adjie's close relationship to Sukarno is widely known. However, there were rumors during the week that Sukarno had attempted (with unknown success) to bribe some of the Moslem party leaders to drop the attack on the PKI. It was also reported that he had threatened to ban two other parties, IP-KI and the PSII, instead if they did not stop "arousing emotions," a Sukarno euphemism for attacking Subandrio and the PKI.

D. But on the appointed day, Sukarno did no more than deliver a petulant, megalomaniac speech in which he threatened to arrest reporters if they continued "arousing emotions," lectured the military commanders on the nature of the Indonesian revolution, and attempted to restore and gild his image as the sole spokesman of the Indonesian people. The military officers present - 387 in number - generally believed the meeting to be useless, although it did provide them an opportunity to consult each other. Some commanders reportedly expressed the opinion that Sukarno was batty. And two days later General Suharto "inaugurated" a "new-style" KOTI staff in which the names of Sukarnoites Subandrio, Achmadi and Jusuf Muda Dalam, formerly chairmen of staff groups, did not appear. Although a leading anti-communist general was also excluded, the symbolic importance of this exercise lay in the Army's success in removing their adversaries from a key policy-implementation body.

E. There were a number of other areas where the Army displayed strength at Sukarno's expense. Although at Sukarno's order Djakarta Military Commander Umar had relinquished his War Administrator (Peperda) status the preceding week, ~~and Sukarno's order~~ he announced that the regulations and tasks to be implemented in his normal status as "Dwikora Executive" would remain the same as during the State of War. This appeared to be the case, as the Army continued to round up and arrest communists, demonstrate its partial control of the information media, and, at one point, provide protection to a vocal anti-Subandrio agent who had been arrested at the Palace's orders. Umar also reportedly prevented the occurrence of several pro-Subandrio demonstrations planned by Achmadi, and issued an order that all political activities of university students would henceforth be conducted under the aegis of the anti-communist association "KAMI," rather than by other leftist-infiltrated organizations.

F. Meanwhile, both in the provinces and Djakarta, repression of the PKI continued, with the main problem that of what to feed and where to house the prisoners. Many provinces appear to be successfully meeting this problem by executing their PKI prisoners, or by killing them before they are captured, a task in which Moslem youth groups are providing assistance. There were several rumors that Njoto, Oei Tjoe Tat, Lukman, Azmunanto, and other high-ranking communists or sympathizers are now in Army hands, and this may be true in some cases. There were no indications that PKI resistance has been significant in any provinces where major purges are being pursued, although indications of trouble in some parts of Sumatra have been registered. If all figures received are added up, a total of anywhere from 5,000-10,000 PKI leaders and activists have been reported executed in recent weeks, although this is probably grossly exaggerated.

G. One of the key fields in which the struggle between Sukarno and the Army-moderate-Moslem side broke through to the surface is that of the Djakarta press. At his speech on Saturday, the President devoted a majority of his time to the press, accusing inter alia General Sukendro's Api and General Sugandhi's Djakarta Daily Mail of having attacked "Nefo comrades" North Vietnam and Cambodia. Api immediately carried a denial of the President's words in the Saturday afternoon edition of its "weekly" and that night, at a "friendly gathering" hosted by the President for reporters at Bogor, offered to lock itself up if his words were true. According to Antara, the President back-tracked, and corrected himself, thus performing like Subandrio who several weeks earlier had accused several newspapers of being financed by the CIA, then retracted his remark under pressure. Api's confronting Sukarno, Sukarno's retracting his words, and Antara's printing the item are all examples of the phenomenal changes that have recently taken place in Indonesia. A day later, however, Api admitted it had attacked North Vietnam, and retracted its denial.

H. Another key aspect of the press hassle has been Information Minister Achmadi's confused behavior after issuing a series of press regulations at Sukarno's orders in an attempt to dampen the efforts of the anti-communist forces. Faced with mounting protests by political parties, Achmadi has wavered back and forth in such a confusing manner that his authority to supervise the press field seems grievously weakened. In conjunction with the increasing tendency of the press to raise its sights toward Sukarno, here was another admission of political weakness for the Palace forces. The final touch was added when Api carried a long editorial praising the Sultan of Jogjakarta, whose status as a possible Sukarno replacement and even rival is a matter of wide though never publicly stated knowledge in Indonesia. According to reports, Api, if it is not banned by Saturday, intends to carry in its weekly an article recommending a return to the true provisions of the 1945 Constitution, which limits the President to a five-year term and provides for a Vice-President.

I. Among other events of significance during the week were the banning of the PKI in the province of Maluku, the "retooling" of pro-communist Governor Sitepu of North Sumatra, the transfer of "Dwikora Executive" authority in Bali from the Governor (a crypto-communist) to the Military Commander (a leftist) and the growing strength of the expelled right-wing leaders of the PNI, who are now publishing their own newspaper and apparently garnering support among PNI branches disaffected with the pro-communist Ali Sastroamidjojo leadership. An anti-Chinese riot in Makassar reportedly caused the destruction, without looting, of 90 percent of the Chinese homes and shops in that city, and resulted in two more Chinese protests and the imposition of a strict curfew by the military commander of that region. Relations with the Chinese Communists continued very chilly during the reporting period, despite efforts by Subandrio and Sukarno to gloss things over. All Chinese technicians have been withdrawn from the Comefo project, and both trade and aid are at a standstill.

J. Underlying the events of the week has been the growth of a new atmosphere in Djakarta, which though barely perceptible at this time, gives promise of taking hold. The apparent readiness of the Army, Moslems, and other moderates to disobey Sukarno in overt as well as subtle ways has helped to dissipate the pall of fear and suspicion which has shrouded this city for so long, and with the PKI in disarray, groups which in the past would have been too paralyzed to operate politically are emerging into the open. Evidences of these significant developments show up in various ways. A campaign is just beginning which, if it succeeds, may lead to the showing of American movies in Indonesia; even such a pro-Sukarno organ as the Indonesian Herald has editorialized that both anti-imperialist and pro-imperialist books should be available so that readers may formulate opinions based on "philosophical truth." The thrust of the Indonesian revolution toward totalitarian controls on expression and behavior has clearly stalled; as time passes, it will be increasingly difficult for Sukarno to start it rolling again.

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