Abbreviations used in notes:

DOSB (US) Department of State Bulletin
FRUS Foreign Relations of the United States (year, volume number, page number)
IO Indonesian Observer (Jakarta)
JFKNSF John F. Kennedy National Security Files (reel, page number)
NYT New York Times
OR Official Records (of the United Nations General Assembly)
PIM Pacific Islands Monthly (Sydney)
ROI Report on Indonesia (Washington)
YUN Yearbook of the United Nations

1 Even to name the territory in question is to reveal a bias. The Dutch called it Netherlands New Guinea, the Indonesians Irian Barat (West Irian) and later Irian Jaya (Victorious Irian), the indigenous nationalist movement eventually declared their country to be Papua Barat (West Papua), while some later preferred West Melanesia. West New Guinea, while favouring the Dutch terminology somewhat, is the most common choice of those seeking a neutral term. This paper uses the terms interchangeably, depending on the viewpoint being examined, while using West New Guinea at first as the most recognizable term. The people of the territory are referred to with their own preferred term, Papuans. For more on the power of names, see below & appendix A.


4 ibid, p. 175-8.

5 The question of language will not be addressed here, save to note that the same language, called Bahasa Indonesia in one area and Malay in the other. In both, it served as a common second language that was beginning to unite linguistically diverse areas.

6 “By nation-of-intent I mean a more or less precisely-defined idea of the form of a nation, i.e. its territory, population, language, culture, symbols and institutions. The idea must be shared by a number of people who perceive themselves as members of that nation, and who feel that it unites them... In some aspects, conceptually, ‘nation-of-intent’ is not dissimilar to Anderson’s concept of ‘imagined political community.’... However, nation-of-intent is a more open-ended concept. It is more positive, pro-active and forward looking. It has a programmatic programme of action articulated in realpolitik...” Shamsul A.B., “Nations-of-Intent in Malaysia,” in Stein Tønnesson & Hans Antløv, eds., Asian Forms of the Nation (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 1996), p. 328-9.


13 Hatta, “The Digoel Tragedy of Dutch Colonial Imperialism,” (1929), Portrait of a Patriot: Selected Writings

14 Sukarno interview with UPI, 28 Dec. 1957, ROI Nov. ‘57-Jan ‘58: 21


16 Lijphart, *Trauma*, p. 100-10.


20 Yamin’s speech is reprinted in *Background to Indonesia’s Policy towards Malaysia: The Territory of the Indonesian State, Discussions of the Badan Penjelidik Usaha Persiapkan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1964), pp. 1-14.

21 Hatta’s speech, ibid, p. 18.

22 For instance, the Australian representative at the talks, T.K. Critchley, recalled: “Hatta was the one Indonesian I met who did not seem emotionally concerned about the issue. He agreed with me that postponement was better than a breakdown of the Conference and that it was an issue that could be more readily and realistically solved after the Dutch had taken the major step of transferring sovereignty.” Mavis Rose, *Indonesia Free: A Political Biography of Mohammad Hatta* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, 1987), p. 160-1. According to one account, Hatta forced his Federalist compatriots to compromise by offering to walk out over the issue as they wanted if they would agree in return to take up arms against the Dutch. Ali Sastroamijoyo, *Milestones on My Journey* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), p. 208.


25 This approach had the active support of the American government, which dispatched an order to “support the Dutch position” on West New Guinea. Memo by Frederick E. Nolting Jr, office of West European Affairs, to Acheson, Oct. 20, 1949, FRUS 1949, 7: 543.


30 van der Veer, “Political,” p. 60.
33 West Irian and the World (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1954); The Question of West Irian.
34 The old PKI leadership had envisioned a two-state league grouping independent Indonesia and West Irian. Feith, Decline, p. 161 fn. Dutch Communists had also opposed handing West Irian to a state headed by Sukarno or Hatta. A younger leadership under D.N. Aidit reversed this policy, helped by a similar shift by the Dutch Communists and a Soviet Union that had reclassified Indonesia into the progressive camp.
35 Willem Oltmans reported that Hatta felt “cheated” by his Dutch friends. “The agreement I made with the Dutch government in private and behind the scenes stipulated a transfer of the Residency of New Guinea, as soon as the shock of the transfer of the Netherlands East Indies as a whole would be digested by the Dutch people.” Oltmans memo to Rostow, April 5, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 337ff.
36 One Dutch New Guinea governor recalled his early wish for “a tie between West New Guinea and Indonesia.... The dissolution of the [federal states], though, left us with no choice but to keep the territory.... After letting down so many other groups, we had to show that at least this one people we would protect.” van Baal, 1992 interview, Markin p. 26 fn.
38 Lijphart, Trauma, p. 163-77.
40 “The Republic of Indonesia did not want to be regarded as of no significance in the world,” Ali wrote in his memoirs. “Our territories were extensive, our inhabitants numbered millions. We had natural resources in abundance and our country was situated very strategically in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.” Ali, Milestones, p. 255.
41 Hansard, June 5, 1956, pp. 4778-80. While Indonesian case for West Irian as Indonesian territory continued to rest on legal arguments based on the territorial unity of the Indies, increased stress was also laid on anti-colonial arguments. An unreasonable Dutch government was stifling attempts at peaceful resolution, it was argued, most notably by incorporating Netherlands New Guinea into the territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the 1953 revision of the Dutch constitution. Dutch arguments that this was simply an overdue recognition of fact, replacing the old reference to Indonesia as part of the Kingdom, cut no ice with outraged Indonesians who saw a new Dutch claim to part of their own national territory. More and more attention was paid to the repression of fighters for Indonesia inside West Irian, and to the role of war hero Silas Papare, founder of the pro-Indonesian political party PKII. United Asian and African support for Indonesia’s anti-colonial claim also received increased stress. The Question of West Irian; The Truth About West Irian (Jakarta: Ministry of Information, 1956); The Case of West Irian (West New Guinea) (Cairo: Indonesian Embassy, n.d. [1955?]), 1954 memo to UN, A/2694.
42 Lijphart, Trauma, p. 29-30. The Indonesian case for a resolution is given in explanatory memo A/2694.
44 “The Secretary [John Foster Dulles] said he very strongly opposed Indonesia’s getting control of New Guinea,” according to the notes of one meeting. “This might not always be the case if a strong and stable government should emerge in Indonesia, but under present conditions for the territory to come under the control of Indonesia was neither in our interests nor in the interests of the inhabitants of New Guinea. He recognized, on the other hand, that an important political factor was the emergence of a slightly better government in Indonesia which he would not want to rebuff. The Secretary said that if a resolution failed of adoption in the Assembly, without our being tagged with its defeat, he would not mind at all.” Memo
46 YUN 1956: 77-80; A/3644.
48 *West Irian Liberation Campaign #4* (Jakarta: Ministry of Information, n.d. [1957]), p. 29-31. This booklet is primarily concerned with demonstrating the united claim of all forces in Indonesian society to West Irian. Along the same lines, Sukarno said: “I am only expressing what is in the hearts of our society, what was in the hearts of our youth when, on October 28, 1928, they took the pledge of ‘One Nation, One Country, One Language’; what was in the hearts of all of us when we made the Proclamation of August 17, 1945. At those times, there was no split — once again, there was no split in the inner self of the Indonesian Nation.” Speech of Feb 21/57, Herbert Feith & Lance Castles, eds., *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945-65* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 88.
49 *West Irian Liberation Campaign #4*.
51 Sumitro Dyoyo hadikusumo, “Irian, Indonesia and the Summit,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Aug, 18, 1960. The rebel government was led by Syafruddin Prawirenegara, the same man who led a Sumatra-based Emergency Government after Sukarno and Hatta were captured by the Dutch in 1948.
52 YUN 1957: 77-80.
54 “I was informed that in private conversations in the UN corridors it was made clear that the United States would not be offended if the resolution should be defeated.” John M. Allison, *Ambassador from the Prairies, or Allison Wonderland* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), p. 335. See also Department of State to UN mission, Nov. 15, 1957, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 502.
59 “The Rediscovery of Our Revolution,” speech of Aug. 17, 1959, in *Toward Freedom*, p. 45, 61. This speech was retroactively declared the Political Manifesto of Indonesia.
60 Lijphart, *Trauma*, p. 167.

Lijphart, *Trauma*, p. 97-8, 143.

A Dutch government pamphlet produced for the 1954 UN debates argued for a Dutch “sacred mission” in West New Guinea: “The corresponding inner motive on the Netherlands side, in refusing to relinquish a task which holds out no hope of material gain — though it does offer prospects of a worthwhile contribution to general world improvement — is the natural self-respect of a guardian who has begun the upbringing of an infant and does not want to relinquish the responsibility until the child can stand on its own legs.” *Western New Guinea and the Netherlands* (The Hague: State Printing Office, 1954), p. 19.


One particularly effective Indonesian pamphlet skewered the Dutch developmentalist rhetoric, using Dutch figures to show that over half the budget went to providing facilities to government and Western private business, over a quarter to the administration itself, just over 20% to everything else. In short, it concluded, “the Irianese are to be ‘inserted’ into an export economy as the producers of export goods and as labour power in the Western sector.” *Colonial Purposes in West Irian: A Exposé of Dutch Intentions* (Jakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1962), p. 35-6.

The United States ands Britain first announced their neutrality in advance of December 1950 talks between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Robert Bone, *The Dynamics of the Western New Guinea (Irian Barat) Problem* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indoeneisan Project, 1958), p. 110. The neutrality policy was affirmed by the Eisenhower administration on joint recommendation to the National Security Council of the secretaries of state and defence. “Both sides have solicited United States support. United States relations with either country would suffer seriously if the United States were to support the other’s claim. President Sukarno and the preponderance of Indonesian political parties concentrate on the New Guinea issue the fervor of nationalism and the fear of resurgent colonialism. The United States has pursued a policy of avid neutrality in this issue.” Memo by Secretary of State (Dulles) and Acting Secretary of Defense (Robert B Anderson) to NSC, Aug. 27, 1953, FRUS 1952-4, 12: 378. Neutrality on New Guinea was part of the administration’s Indonesia policy outlined in NSC 171/1, FRUS 1952-4, 12: 395-400. NSC 5518 saw US influence in Indonesia limited by the neutrality policy but unable to move due to Dutch and Australian opposition: “Thus far the U.S. has maintained a position of neutrality between the conflicting claims. Any other U.S. approach would open us to violent condemnation and loss of influence with one side or the other.” NSC 5518, May 3, 1955, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 155.


Memo of conversation, Rusk & Ambassador van Kleffens, Nov. 4, 1949, FRUS 1949: 564; Rusk to Dept. of Defense, March 22, 1950, FRUS 1950, 6: 985

Gardner 140-1.

Allison to State, Nov. 4, 1957, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 487.

“All whatever the legal rights might be,” Allison wrote in his memoirs, “the political realities were that if Indonesian desires were not, in some manner, recognized, Sukarno could, and probably would, lead his close to 100 million people into the Communist camp. At the same time I was sure that if the Indonesian demands were granted, the slightly more than 10 million Dutch would protest vigorously, threaten to leave NATO, castigate the United States — if we had helped Indonesia — and then accept the situation.
There was nothing else for them to do. They certainly did not wish to become Communists. In view of the strategic location of the Indonesian islands, lying as they did across the lines of communication between America’s Philippine and ANZUS allies, and because of the all important Indonesian oil production, it seemed to me that our interest lay more in keeping the Indonesians out of the Communist camp than in worrying about ruffling the feelings of the Dutch.” Allison 304. See also Allison to Robertson, Aug. 12, 1957, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 409; Allison to State, Aug. 27, 1956, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 426-9; Allison to State, Dec. 9, 1957, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 537. The same position was taken by the commander-in-chief Pacific (CINCPAC) Adm. Stump to Chief of naval operations Adm. Burke, Dec. 26, 1957, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 657; Audrey R. Kahin & George McT. Kahin, Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), p. 109-11.

Casey, Foreign Minister, p. 297-8, 309, 310, 324; Mackie, World Affairs, p. 303; Embassy in Australia to Rusk, Aug. 27, 1958, FRUS 1958: 271; Memorandum of conversation, Casey with Dulles, Sept. 8, 1959, FRUS 1958-60, 17: 279.

Rusk to DoD, FRUS 1950, 6: 986. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred that there was “no major United States strategic interests at this time in the disposition of Netherlands New Guinea so long as it remains in the hands of a nation friendly to the United States.” FRUS 1950, 6: 1074. This estimate was confirmed regularly thereafter.

Secretary of Defense to Acheson, Nov. 7, 1950, FRUS 1950, 6: 1092.

Secretary of Defense to Acheson, April 14, 1950, FRUS 1950, 6: 780.


Hastings, New Guinea, p. 201.


“The Australian and Netherlands Governments are therefore pursuing, and will continue to pursue, policies directed toward the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples in their territories in a manner which recognizes the ethnological and geographical affinity. At the same time, the two Governments will continue, and strengthen, the co-operation at present existing between their respective administrations in the territories. In so doing the two Governments are determined to promote an uninterrupted development of this process until such time as the inhabitants of the territories concerned will be in a position to determine their own future.” Memorandum on Netherlands New Guinea vol. 2, p. 1. See also Verrier, p. 61-87.


Luns told John Foster Dulles in 1958 that pro-Indonesian infiltrators were present, but that Papuan natives “either apprehended and reported these agitators to the local administration or they ate the
agitators. He said there was only one variation to this latter practice and that existed among the more Christianized natives who would only eat fisherman on Fridays.” FRUS 1958-60, 17: 122. Governor Rudy Plateel, while pursuing localization, never had any real faith in Papuans. His true attitude of Papuan government was expressed privately to an Australian colleague: “There is a large round table with a pile of money on it. Around it are seated a number of black men. Behind each is a white who tells him how much money to ask for.” Hastings, New Guinea, 207 fn.

90 van der Veur, “Political,” p. 63; Lijphart, Trauma, p. 264-9.
92 One Australian district officer saw the plan as “deliberately designed to embarrass the Australian Government, or force its hand.” Its announcement sent Hasluck (who thought 30 years was an appropriate time-frame) scurrying to the Hague to plead for a delay, and made prime minister Menzies announce for the first time that independence was the eventual Australian goal. Verrier, p. 85, 93; Albinski, p. 377; J.J. West, “The New Guinea Question: An Australian View,” Foreign Affairs 39 #3 (April 1961): 504.
94 “During the liberal era,” army chief Nasution said, “we have given opportunity to the Dutch to gradually and systematically suppress all pro-Indonesian elements in West Irian and to educate and indoctrinate West Irian intellectuals to hate Indonesia. We must stop it.” A.H. Nasution, To Safeguard the Banner of the Revolution (Jakarta: Delegasi, 1964), p. 63.
95 Jaren van Reconstructie, 210.
99 Harsono, p. 216.
101 Mortimer, p. 190.
105 Harsono; Soviet Ambassador Zhoukov, Indonesian Spectator, Feb 15, 1957: 15.
106 Army attaché in Indonesia (Collier) to Dept. of Army, Dec. 21, 1957, FRUS 1955-7, 12: 558.
110 IO Jan. 9, 1961; CIA Intelligence weekly summary, 16 Feb. 1961, JFKNSF 2: 282. Nasution recalled that he had originally sought arms from the United States but been refused. “Because of this, I went to the Soviet Union. When I arrived at the Kremlin, Krushchev embraced me. He said, ‘You can have anything you want. I am not afraid of the Dutch.’” Interview conducted 1994, Gardner 178.
113 Markin, p. 56-7.
In 1958, Sukarno had asked whether “we wish to be a great and united nation with its own identity, in a strongly united State, procuring the equipment and building the bridge towards a just and prosperous society which will bring happiness to all the people? Or do we wish to become a nation which in fact is not a nation at all, but merely a conglomeration of numerous clans, devoid of a strong international identity?” A Year of Challenge, speech of Aug. 17, 1958, p. 5.


Daniel Lev, Transition to Guided Democracy (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1966) p. 286; J.D. Legge, Sukarno: A Political Biography (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1972), p. 353-7. As his biographer wrote: “The idea of revolution could now be served by the struggle for West Irian, by confrontation with Malaysia, by the idea of a struggle between NEFOs and OLDEFOs in the world at large while domestic upheaval was carefully contained.” Legge, p. 383-4.

Frederick Bunnell, “Guided Democracy Foreign Policy 1960-5,” Indonesia # 2 (Oct. 1966): 42. In Subandrio’s words: “The path we have taken has been full of sacrifice, sometimes suffering. But this path that we have taken has also hardened and strengthened us, and this is an asset for our struggle. Every nation must go through this phase at one time or another.” “The Impact of the Indonesian Revolution on the World,” Indonesia on the March, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Department of Foreign Affairs, n.d. [1963]), p. 328.

Reinhardt, p. 122.


Sanskrit for “five principles.” The principles were belief in one god, nationalism, internationalism, democracy through consensus of representatives (mufakat and musyawarah), and social justice. The five could be compressed into one, gotong royong or mutual cooperation. “The Birth of Pancasila,” speech of June 1, 1945, in Toward Freedom.


Legge, p. 373.


“To Revolutionary Diplomacy,” in Subandrio, Indonesia on the March, p. 268. Again: “Indonesia’s foreign policy is correctly regarded as an instrument of the Indonesian Revolution, but at the same time the foreign policy must safeguard the Revolution, must carry out the objectives of the Revolution in the international sphere and must try to ensure that the Revolution is not obstructed from without.”


Subandrio’s report to parliament on Irian, 1957, in Indonesia on the March, p. 32.


Sukarno, The Era of Confrontation, speech to Cairo non-aligned summit (Jakarta: Department of Information, n.d. [1964]).

Joint communiqué on occasion of Premier Chen Yi’s visit to Jakarta, IO, April 2, 1961. See also Sukarno’s comments at a return visit to China, IO June 15, 1961.

David Mozingo, Chinese Policy toward Indonesia, 1949-1967 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 145. Some reports say that China also offered volunteers to fight on the government side,
counterbalancing Taiwanese aid to the rebels (this in turn prompted an offer to the rebels by Syngman Rhee of South Korea). Mozingo, p. 146; Kahin, p. 185-6.


137 Nishihara 158-60; Embassy in Tokyo to Rusk, Sept. 3, 1960, FRUS 1958-60, 17: 531.


139 Basic Information on Indonesia (New York: Indonesian Mission to UN, n.d. [1971?]).

140 The first reference in an Indonesian government pamphlet published internationally is in The Truth About West Irian (1956), which also invokes the Hindu epic Ramayana, equating its “snow-covered mountains” with West Irian (p. 7).

141 Mohammad Yamin, A Legal and Historical Review of Indonesia’s Sovereignty over the Ages (Manila: Indonesian Embassy, n.d. [1959]). See also Yamin’s comments on the Negarakertagama in the 1945 debates over Indonesia’s territorial extent, in Background to Indonesia’s Policy.

142 Control over Majapahit’s tributaries was nominal at best, and the two areas identified with West Irian cover only short stretches of coast. G. Th. Pigeaud, Java in the 14th Century, A Study in Cultural History: The Negara-Kertagama by Pakawi Parakaanca of Majapahit, 1365 AD (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), vol. 4, p. 29. 34. Se also G.J. Resink, Indonesia’s History Between the Myths: Essays in Legal History and Historical Theory (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1968), p. 21.


145 Thongchai, An opening address to the UN Political Committee, p. 8.

146 Anderson, Imagined Communities, p. 175-8.


148 Anderson, Imagined Communities, p. 178.


150 This point has been made about the peripheral regions of Japan by Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “The Frontiers of Japanese Identity,” in Tennesson & Antlov, Asian Forms of the Nation, p. 62-4.


159 “Another Congo cannot happen here,” said Parna leader Herman Wajoi. “The Congolese kicked out
European officials. We will not do that. We know we have to work together at first, and we want Dutch economic help.” “Nationalist stir felt by Papuans,” NYT April 3, 1961.

161 Albinski, p. 379.
162 Verrier, p. 203. Race was also the basis of unity for Seth Rumkorem’s Republic of West Papua declared in 1983. Provisional Government of Republik Papua Barat, “Appeal to All Member States of the UN,” cited in Justus van der Kroef, Patterns of Conflict in Eastern Indonesia (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1977), p. 5. The same themes are struck by the anti-Indonesian resistance to this day, which insists that the “natural environment” for Papuans is Melanesia, not Indonesia. Nicolaas Jouwe, “Conflict at the Meeting Point of Melanesia and Asia,” PIM April 1978: 12.

164 Osborne 24, Verrier 225. Only fifteen councillors, twelve Papuans and three Dutchmen, were elected, the rest were appointed, “New Guinea vote hailed by Dutch,” NYT March 6, 1961.
165 “Everyone was there but America,” PIM April 1961: 20.
168 Ryan, p. 194.
171 Hastings, New Guinea, p. 205.
172 The flags had to be manufactured in Amsterdam, however. “Colonyl’s name changed,” NYT Dec. 1, 1961; IO Nov. 30, 1961.
176 Bone, p. 8.
177 van der Kroef, “Dutch Opinion,” p. 284. Exports as a percentage of imports, however, were increasing. A People on the way to Self-Determination, p. 19-21, 32.


“There is no intention that the territory shall be closed to the world as it certainly is today. All nationalities shall be freely given the opportunity of reasonable exploitation of the economic potentialities of the vast area for their own benefit and for the benefit of the people of West Irian.... It would be wrong to regard West Irian as being a ‘reservation’ for the Irian people. If this system is adopted, then the territory will be lost to the rest of the world. *The Case of West Irian*, p. 34-5.


McMahon 105-8.


Brackman, p. ix-xi, Fifield, p. 4-6.

Kennedy, p. 4-5.


Johnson to Rostow, July 10, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 543; Sukarno, *Autobiography*. The writer of the autobiography was an anti-Communist American journalist who says she was often used as a back channel by the ambassador. Adams 13.


Gardner 198.


Jones 193.

“Yet to permit West Irian to continue indefinitely as a bone of contention between Indonesia and the Netherlands is to afford Communism an opportunity to spread in Indonesia.... The West Irian question thus represents a tragedy. The United States, the Netherlands and Australia, all equally afraid of the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia, are carrying out a policy which in fact strengthens Communism. For, so long as West Irian is in Dutch hands, that long will the Communist Party of Indonesia be able to carry on a violent agitation, using nationalism as an excuse, to oppose colonialism and thereby touch the soul of the newly-emancipated Indonesian people whose memories are still afresh with the struggle against colonialism.” Hatta, “Between the Blocs,” p. 487. The same argument was made frequently by Sukarno and Subandrio.
Cabinet discussion cited Maga, Pacific, p. 56.


Indonesia rejected joint trusteeship by Malaya, India and Australia in March. IO March 16, 1961. Rusk was still recommending Malayan trusteeship to Kennedy in May. Memorandum from Rusk to Kennedy, May 23, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 395-8. The Tunku’s mediation effort is summarized in Henderson, p. 70-3.

There is no doubt in my mind,” he argued, “that for President Sukarno West Irian (West New Guinea) is the test case by which he determines who his friends are. Contrary to often expressed views, this is to him not a diversionary move ... but a nationalist obsession.” Pauker wanted any shift to support the Indonesian claim to be contingent on abandoning NASAKOM in favour of a national front that would abolish political parties, the elimination of the PKI from governing bodies, and curtailment of arms buys from USSR. “Indonesia Today,” p. 1, 12-3, JFKNSF 4: 306ff. See also the following articles by Pauker: “The Role of the Military in Indonesia,” in John J. Johnson, ed., The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); “General Nasution’s Mission to Moscow,” Asian Survey 1 #1 (March 1961); “The Soviet Challenge in Indonesia,” Foreign Affairs 40 #4 (July 1962). This last paper was definitely given to Kennedy to read. Transmittal memorandum, Feb. 24, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 285. Pauker was summoned to White House meetings with Rostow and other twice in March 1961. A similar line was stressed by modernization theorist Lucian Pye, who also wanted an end to Sukarno’s “childish behaviour” through a shift to economic development and a show of American determination in Southeast Asia, but who saw a deal on Irian as perhaps a pre-requisite to such a shift by Sukarno. Notes of Lucian Pye, March 23, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 289.

Kahin saw an Indonesian attack on West New Guinea as imminent unless the United States shifted to support the Indonesian claim. Of Pauker’s conditions, he dismissed all but one (an end to large arms deals with the USSR) as counter-productive. Kahin insisted that Indonesia would lose any immediate plebiscite in West New Guinea, and wanted the money saved on arms to be supplemented by American funds and redirected to the development of both Indonesia and West New Guinea — a tactic that could help build support for Indonesia among Papuans. Johnson to Rostow covering Kahin paper, April 19, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 382 ff.


Hilsman, p. 50, 378; Bunnell, Initiatives, p. 85-90; Jones, p. 203.

Jones, p. 199.

“Like Hitler, he is an open book, there to be read. Those who refuse to draw the proper conclusions may not be victims of Sukarno’s charm, but victims of self-delusion.... Only his removal from power would offer some hope that trends that now seem inexorable can still be reversed.” Attachment A to CIA Indonesia paper, March 1961, JFKNSF 2: 299ff. Lifting an image from Pauker’s “Indonesia Today,” the paper also argued that a bloodless victory on Irian would weaken the army just as Hitler’s win over Sudentenland had weakened the German general staff.

“We consider it likely that Indonesia’s success in this instance will set in train the launching of further
irredentist ventures already foreshadowed in lectures given by Professor Yamin, an avowed extremist. Success would be bound to cement relations between Indonesia and the USSR. Even assuming that it were the weight of United States power and prestige which gained Indonesia a bloodless and prestigious victory, we would not gain that country’s respect, let alone affection. By backing Indonesia’s claim to sovereignty over West Irian, we may inadvertently help to consolidate a regime which is innately antagonistic toward the United States.” ibid.


221 Delegation list, DOSB May 15, 1961: 714. For examples of the great hope placed in the new US government, see IO editorials Jan 20, April 15, April 26, 1961.


224 Johnson memo, April 17, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 380; Memo from Assistant Secretary (Far East) Parsons to Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs Hare, Feb. 13, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 310; memorandum of discussions with Luns, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 345-63.

225 Statements by Edward Heath and Robert Menzies, IO April 14, April 28, 1961.


227 Johnson memorandum, April 17, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 377; Assistant Secretary (Europe) Kohler to Rusk, April 6, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 341. The opinion seems born out by an IO editorial of March 30: “We are satisfied with the firm attitude of the United States [sic] in rejecting the invitation to be represented at a Dutch colonial puppet show in West Irian.... [The boycott] is a major diplomatic defeat” for the Netherlands. See also “Worth our greatest appreciation,” IO editorial, April 2, 1961.


229 Memoranda of conversation with Luns, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 345-63. The idea of a visiting UN mission to start the process, included in the eventual Dutch UN resolution, was in fact an American suggestion. Johnson to Rostow, July 10, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 405. The Dutch floated an early draft UN resolution with the state department in July 1961. Johnson to Rostow, July 10, 1961, JFKNSF 2: 543. American draft resolutions circulated over the summer and found their way into the Dutch version eventually presented - see drafts at FRUS 1961-3, 23: 409, 460; Memo from Assistant Secretary IO (Cleveland) to Rusk, Nov. 15, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 452.


234 Luns speech to UNGA, 8 Nov. 1961, OR, A/PV.1049, p. 589; explanatory memo A/4954.

235 Rusk to UN mission, Oct. 11, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 438; Johnson to Bundy, Nov. 6, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 449; Cleveland to Rusk, Nov. 15, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 452-8. Only in mid-November did anyone in Washington begin to realize that although the Luns plan may have served Indonesia’s ultimate goals, American support for it was alienating Indonesia. “However, from the Indonesian point of view we have now entered the lists against them.... Thus, the end results of all the months of work has been to put us in a worse position vis-à-vis the Indonesians than we have ever been in the past. In the past we have at least not actively opposed them in the UN.” Johnson to Rostow, Nov. 16, 1961, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 458.


Bingham speech to UNGA, 22 Nov. 1961, OR, A/VP.1061, p. 774.


Heroes’ Day speech, IO Nov. 11, 1961; speech to army leadership, IO Dec. 1, 1961; speech to Indonesian Women’s Movement (Gerwani), IO Dec. 16, 1961.

Sukarno, *The People’s Command*.


Later president. Suharto named one of his sons after this period, Hutomo Manelala Putra (son of Mandala).

Indonesia insisted that the clash had taken place in international waters, Admiral Sudomo and Indonesian diplomats admitted much later that they had “lied to the United Nations.” Markin 74fn.

His name is now part of the map of Irian: Jos Sudarso Island is part of the district of Merauke.


Syahrir, Indonesia’s first prime minister and a friend of many Americans, former foreign minister Anak Agung, Masyumi leader and former minister Roem, and ex-federalist leader Sultan Hamid were arrested. Technically, the order was signed by Nasution and Subandrio. Surveillance of Hatta was stepped up. At another time, all this would have drawn sharp protests from overseas, but with war looming it received little attention. Rose, p. 199-200; Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1994), p. 465; Arrests Alarm Indonesians,” NYT, Jan. 18, 1962.

IO reports on mobilizations included 19,000 in East Java (reported Dec. 29, 1961).


Sudomo interview, Markin 58.


Telegram from Bundy to Kennedy in Palm Beach, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 473; State department executive secretary (Battle) to Bundy, undated (Dec.), FRUS 1961-3, 23: 489.

Carl Kaysen, the new number two national security staffer, wrote: “I suspect that, while FE is perfectly clear on the point that our task is to facilitate the achievement of the inevitable outcome in a way which minimizes the Dutch defeat, the rest of the Department may not be. They are still concerned with the rightness or wrongness of Sukarno behavior....” Kaysen to Bundy, Jan., 12, 1962, JFKNSF 2: 838.


“Until a solution satisfactory to Sukarno is reached with the Netherlands, the West New Guinea dispute will continue to overshadow and strongly influence all other foreign and domestic issues in Indonesia. Sukarno will probably draw even closer to the Bloc position on major international issues as Indonesia continues to rely heavily on Soviet military aid and political support for the prosecution of the West New Guinea campaign. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) will continue to exploit the issue and to obstruct a negotiated settlement. The diversion of army energies into the West New Guinea campaign will continue to hamper its efforts to reduce PKI strength and influence.” National Intelligence

Guthman, p. 315-6. Jones also warned that there could be action against US oil interests. Pemberton, p. 97.


Letter from Sukarno to Kennedy, JFKNSF 2: 808-9.

Jones also warned that there could be action against US oil interests. Pemberton, p. 97.


Nishihara, p. 160-1; IO Feb. 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 16, 17, 20, March 6, 1962.


The eventual corridor, once transit rights had been refused by the US, Britain and Japan, was via Peru, French Tahiti and New Caledonia. “Dutch Troops Arrive via French Airfields!” PIM April 1962: 24. A still-classified query from France to the US concerning Dutch overflights on Feb 8/62 is referred to in box contents list, JFKNSF.


Sukarno, Indonesia Wants Negotiations on the West Irian Problem Based on Transfer of Administration from Netherlands to Indonesia, speech of Feb. 21, 1962 (Jakarta: Department of Information, 1962), p. 6-7. Despite Jones’ optimism, this can also be seen in diplomatic cables. On Feb. 18 Jones reported that “Indonesians would drop requirement for preconditions provided agreement could be reached with Dutch on agenda before formal talks commenced.” FRUS 1961-3, 23: 536fn. This seems likely to mean Indonesia would continue to insist that the agenda cover the transfer of West Irian to Indonesia. In any event, Sukarno in their next meeting told Jones “I want a clear understanding that the purpose of the meeting is to negotiate the basis of transfer of administration to Indonesia. The Bob Kennedy proposal is not satisfactory.” Jones to Rusk, Feb 20, 1962, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 535. Two days later Jones reported that Subandrio had agreed on Sukarno’s behalf to drop preconditions. FRUS 1961-3, 23: 536fn.

“We protest strongly Robert Kennedy’s humiliating statements on television concerning backwardness Papuan people and lack university trained workers, seemingly indicating advise to Indonesia to eradicate Papuan people,... Independence and democracy can be understood and practiced by common people even if they have not seen Harvard and we have an unalienable right to such practicing and we ask technical aid for it from the more advanced people of the world. Robert Kennedy should be ashamed if he tries to play poker with the fate of backward people for no other reason than to appease a dictator.” Cable in Voice of the Negroids, p. 30.

“It was quite clear that we wanted them to settle it, and we put a lot of pressure on the Dutch to get it
settled.... Mostly political pressure, telling them that they should sit down, that we didn’t want to support this kind of a war, that we didn’t want to get involved in it. They didn’t want West New Guinea. They wanted to get out of West New Guinea, as I said. It was just a question of saving face.... So we made it quite clear to the Dutch that we thought, when it came that close, that they should settle it. I was quite frank about that with the Dutch when I was in Holland.” Guthman, p. 319-20.

288 Markin, p. 15-7.
289 Markin, p. 144.
292 Kennedy letter to de Quay, 2 April 1962, from South Pacific Peoples Foundation files.
296 IO March 23, June 25, 26, 28, 29, 1962; Pour, p. 171-4. For the most part, paratroopers were utterly ineffectif. See the accounts in Herлина, p. 81, 120, 245-6.
299 IO April 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 25, May 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 20, 22, 29, June 1, 21, 29, 30, July 6, 9, 10, 11, 30, 31, 1962. In April volunteers were reported laying siege to the oil town Sorong on the western tip of New Guinea, in May to have claimed a beach-head on the Onin Peninsula (south coast), be engaged in heavy fighting near Fak Fak and Kaimana, and to have raised the Indonesian flag over the southwestern village of Teminaubuan, the first liberated zone in West Irian. In June a second village, Sausapor in the northwest, was reported as liberated, Sorong and Manokwari as besieged, and paratroopers near Merauke and Kaimana as exchanging fire with Dutch forces. In July two villages near Merauke and one in the northwest were reported liberated, with Kota Baru (Hollandia) in danger and Merauke itself besieged.
303 De Quay had initially tried to make the acceptance conditional on UN support for his call for a cease-fire. Letter to U Thant, May 16, 1962, cited Osborne, p. 29. In reply, Thant wrote: “Your suggestion that I now approach the Government of Indonesia with an appeal would, if accepted by me, imply that I was taking sides in the controversy, which I believe would not be in the best interests of all concerned,” and it was therefore “inappropriate” to appeal to both sides to refrain from aggression. Van der Kroef, “Settlement,” p. 145 fn.
306 Verrier, p. 178.
307 Malik, p. 242-3.
310 Markin, p. 357-9.
314 Proposal on UN role by UN legal counsel Constantine Stavropoulos, reprinted in Markin, p. 515-8.
315 Markin, p. 365-6.
316 Rusk to Kennedy, July 26, 1962, JFKNSF 3: 16ff.
317 Markin, p. 381-4. A CIA Indonesia station report to White House referred to “the threat delivered by President Kennedy to Subandrio to the effect that the Seventh Fleet would intercede on the side of the Dutch if Indonesia attempted a full scale attack on West Irian.” JFKNSF 3: 38. Subandrio told Jones that Kennedy had told him the United States was on Indonesia’s side but would change sides if he left the talks. Jones to Rusk, Aug. 3, 1962, FRUS 1961-3, 23: 624-5.
323 McMullen, p. 65-70.
325 Anti-Slavery Society, p. 31.
326 Voice of the Negroids, p. 5.
328 The only exception was a short-lived plan for trusteeship floated by Tanganyika in April 1962. “Tanganyika offers plan,” NYT April 8, 1962. The following month, the Brazzaville group refused to accept a report by the UN ambassadors of Dahomey and Upper Volta on their trip to West New Guinea, which asserted that the Papuans wanted independence. “African Group Bars Report on Papua,” NYT May 6, 1962.
332 IO Jan. 24, 1962. Parna also demanded new elections, the abolition of appointed members, and requested that the Dutch arm the people to “beat an Indonesian invasion,” but the Dutch minister of state for New Guinea Affairs refused on all counts.
333 Apple, West New Guinea Settlement, p. 120.
335 Herlina, p. 261-6.
339 Papuan members of the Dutch and Indonesian UN delegations, several related to each other, met at the 1961 UN debates on good terms. Herman Womsiwor of the Dutch delegation reportedly told J.A. Dimara of the Indonesian delegation “jangan merah, kita sama,” (don’t be angry, you and I are the same). IO Nov. 10, 1961. Warming up a crowd for Sukarno, Dimara insisted that Jouwe and Kaisiepo were nationalists who had been forced to joint the New Guinea Council. IO Jan. 6, 1962.
Bonay, named as governor to fulfill the promise that a Papuan would be the provincial leader, was removed in 1964 as unreliable, and arrested in 1965 for distributing pro-independence leaflets. Sharp, Rule of the Sword, 16. The first Papuan to become an officer in the Indonesian army, Seth Rumkorem, led a declaration of independence in 1970 as leader of the Organisasi Papua Merdeka, Free Papua Movement. Even as an Indonesian soldier, he had remained in close contact with exiled nationalist leaders. Savage, “National,” p. 990-1. Silas Papare, the most pro-Indonesian of all the Papuan elite, spoke out against rocket attacks and strafing of villages in 1967. Henderson, p. 223.

van der Veur, “Political,” p. 7.

Osborne, p. 31-2; Savage, “Reluctant Colony,” p. 90; IO Oct. 5, 6, 11, 12, 19, 1962. Papuan pro-independence actions were reported in the New York Times on Sept. 16, 18, 22 & 30, 1962.

IO Oct. 29, Nov. 1, 6, 10, Dec. 10, 1962. This delegation travelled under the name Dewan Papua Barat, West Papua Council, the first time the word Papua had been used openly in Indonesia in years.


van der Veur, “Political,” p. 72.

Ryan, p. 200.

YUN 1962: 127; UNGA OR, A/PV.1127 & 1150.


“We often forgot that the administration here was still in the hands of UNTEA,” one recalled. “We became quite good at playing hide and seek with this agency.” Herlina, p. 312. For criticisms of UNTEA as pro-Indonesian, see van der Veur, “The United Nations in West Irian: A Critique,” International Organization 18 #1 (1964). UNTEA after some debate banned the display of the West Papua flag. IO Dec. 11, 1962.


