

Coup and Counter Reaction: October 1965– March 1966

142. Memorandum for President Johnson¹

Washington, October 1, 1965, 7:20 a.m.

Indonesia

(Following is the text of a CIA situation report.)

A power move which may have far-reaching implications is under way in Djakarta.

A group which calls itself the "30 September Movement" claims to have forestalled a "Generals' coup" in Indonesia.² A number of unnamed generals and politicians have been arrested, and the homes of Defense Minister General Nasution and Army Commander General Yani are under guard.

A decree issued on 1 October by Lt. Colonel Untung, Commander of the Presidential Bodyguard, stated that the government would be administered by an Indonesian Revolution Council. According to the decree, the council will follow already established government policies, and council membership will be announced shortly.

No mention has been made of any active role by Sukarno. The government radio initially announced that the 30 September Movement was organized to "save President Sukarno whose health was in danger." It later commented that he was safe and "continues to carry out the leadership of the state."

The 30 September group claims that the alleged Generals' plot was American inspired. The US Embassy's external telephone line was cut three hours before the Indonesian Radio announced that the "coup" had been thwarted. Troops are stationed at the Embassy.

¹ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Indonesia, Vol. V, Memos, 10/65-11/65. Secret. There is an indication on the memorandum that the President saw it.

² In Tosec 34 to USUN, October 1, the Department transmitted a memorandum, originally prepared by Underhill for William Bundy, to Rusk and Goldberg both of whom were at the United Nations. The memorandum noted that the 30th of September Movement had installed a 40-man Revolutionary Council led by Untung who had a "military police background and was trained in the United States," although he was unknown to the Embassy. Underhill considered that the way the Revolutionary Council was virtually ignoring Sukarno "suggests he is either dead or completely incapacitated," and noted that as a senior member of the Palace Guard, Untung was in an ideal position to know if Sukarno had been suddenly stricken. Underhill summarized the proclamations issued by Untung, and weighed 4 unfavorable tentative indicators against 3 favorable ones. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 23-9 INDON)

The immediate purpose of the 30 September Movement appears to be the elimination of any political role by anti-communist Army elements and a change in Army leadership. Action against similar Army elements apparently is also planned outside Djakarta. The affair may also be used to generate new Anti-American activity.

It seems likely that Sukarno knew in advance of the movement and its intention. Prime movers in the whole affair, however, in terms of timing and detailed planning may well have been First Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio and Communist Leaders who are close to him and to Sukarno.

143. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Acting Secretary of State Ball and Secretary of Defense McNamara¹

Washington, October 1, 1965, 9:30 a.m.

Ball thinks the business in Indonesia has a very bad smell. It looks more and more as though this is a PKI operation but he could not be sure. Ball's feeling is that this may be the first step toward a Communist takeover. They have pushed the young officers out in front. The PKI headquarters seem to be going ahead without any strain and the people we have depended on in the Army are under house arrest or have been shot—we do not know. The people on the list are not terribly reassuring. Subandrio is on the list but as number nine. It is not a healthy situation on its present appearance.²

Ball said we are taking a look at the contingency plans that have been made. Ball asked if McNamara's people could take a look and

¹ Source: Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia [4/12/64–11/10/65]. No classification marking.

² Ball also called Rusk at 10 a.m., McGeorge Bundy at 10:35 a.m., and Helms at 11:35 a.m. In the conversations with Rusk and McGeorge Bundy, Ball reiterated his concern as expressed to McNamara, but with McGeorge Bundy Ball noted that there was an FBIS report that the Indonesian Army had retaken the Djakarta radio station. Ball asked Helms "if we were in a position where we can categorically deny this involvement of CIA operations in the Indonesia situation." Helms replied, "yes; that he had been in touch with Rayborn [Raborn] by phone and had gotten his permission to identify himself with Helms in denying it so they are solidly lined up." Helms stated, "they had had absolutely nothing to do with it. [1 line of source text not declassified]." Ball called Rusk again at 3:15 p.m. to inform him that there was a counter coup led by Nasution "which would mean bringing back Sukarno in some way." (Ibid.)

see if there are any ships in the area and perhaps we should talk to the British and the Australians about putting some aircraft into Singapore in the event we have to take some people out. We have a couple of thousand Americans throughout the islands.

McNamara asked Ball if he were only thinking of evacuation and not any other plans. Ball said he would not know about this until the situation clarified. McN asked what kind of clarification could lead to other action—a definite Communist takeover? Ball replied he thought the situation hopeless. McN said what Ball then was really asking was for them to examine possibility of evacuation. McN said they would go to work on it.

144. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Acting Secretary of State Ball and Senator William Fulbright¹

Washington, October 1, 1965, 3:45 p.m.

Ball called Fulbright re the Indonesian situation and said it is very murky still. There has been a coup and counter-coup and we cannot tell how successful the counter-coup has been. Ball said quite definitely the first coup would appear to have been from the leftist side. It was by group of young officers but most of the council they set up are pretty far on the left and there is very big question as to how much PKI were instrumental in this or at least aware of it. There was a lot of activity in PKI Hq which remained open. We have had in past three hours report that Nasution had gotten hold of other army elements and taken back Djakarta radio station and rescued Sukarno and to what extent he has been able to get control of the situation is not known. Ball said if it would be useful to Fulbright he could send someone up to give him drill. Fulbright said Lausche and some others wanted to have a meeting but he had gotten a report that there was not enough information to warrant it. Fulbright said in view of circumstances he did not think it would do much good. Ball said it is very hard to know just what the situation is—they simply say Sukarno is fine and that they had rescued him. The other side said Sukarno was in good health. Ball said he has feeling if Nasution takes over he may keep going and clean up PKI—this is the most optimistic expectation

¹ Source: Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia, [4/12/64-11/10/65]. No classification marking.

but it is unclear at the moment. Fulbright again said in view of tentative nature of it it would be waste of time for Ball to send someone over until Monday.² Fulbright asked if Nasution was best bet and Ball said he is about the best bet but that the army's antipathy to PKI is not based on ideology—but the army may not be in a cushy spot—it is [an] ignoble motive. Ball and Fulbright agreed they could not depend on any Indonesians.

[Here follows discussion unrelated to Indonesia.]

² October 4.

145. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Acting Secretary of State Ball and Secretary of State Rusk¹

October 2, 1965, 10:45 a.m.

Secretary wanted to know if there was anything special this morning on Indonesian situation. Ball mentioned the telcon during the night,² which Secretary said he had seen. Ball said situation still pretty opaque, but definite indications that army under General Suharto³ and, from that point of view, doesn't look too bad. Ball said PKI have definitely aligned themselves with Untung side which seems to be the losing side. Secretary said this could work out advantageously later in the

¹ Source: Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia. [4/12/64–11/10/65]. No classification marking. Ball was in Washington, Rusk was in New York.

² In this teleconference, October 2, Ball asked the Embassy four questions: what was the current situation, who was in ascendancy, what was Sukarno's status and if unknown, what was the Embassy's estimate, and what was the situation with the PKI? The Embassy responded that Djakarta was relatively quiet with forces loyal to Untung no longer a major military threat. Suharto was in ascendancy, Sukarno's status was unknown, but he was not supporting the Army. He was in order of probability either dead, incapacitated, in custody, waiting for the dust to settle, or he masterminded the whole affair to discredit the Army (highly unlikely). PKI was not active but still prepared and able to combat Army repression. Green did not think evacuation of Americans was necessary and could even be counterproductive. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964–66, POL 23–9 INDON)

³ The CIA prepared an intelligence memorandum on Suharto's background on October 2. (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Indonesia, Vol. V, Memos, 10/65–11/65)

day. Ball said he was surprised that there had been nothing from Sukarno. Secretary said he was probably dead or seriously ill.

[Here follows discussion unrelated to Indonesia.]

**146. Memorandum From the Director of the Far East Region
(Blouin) to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for
International Security Affairs (McNaughton)¹**

I-26491/65

Washington, October 4, 1965.

SUBJECT

Situation in Indonesia

The situation in Indonesia is in an uneasy calm, and President Sukarno seems to be making great efforts to bring about national unity in the face of growing antagonism between the Army and the groups that supported the 30 September Movement. The bodies of the senior military officers who were shot early in the 30 September attempted coup have been discovered. There is report of "brutalization" of their bodies, and the Army is capitalizing on these incidents to build up public support for its position. Sukarno, however, has indicated that he is not prepared to move against the PKI, the Air Force, Subandrio, or other elements who may have been in on the 30 September grab for power. One report indicates that Sukarno was in the hands of the Air Force until Sunday and did not know the true situation. Another report states that he now is fully aware of what happened and who were the culprits. The Army has banned the PKI newspaper but has made no move against PKI headquarters. General Suharto, who seems to have firm control of the military situation in and around Djakarta, went on the radio today with a strong speech denouncing the Air Force for its role in the plot and went to great lengths to build up public support for the Army by describing the brutal slaying of its top generals. This is the first indication we have that the Army may be willing to take issue with Sukarno's policy of trying to gloss over the events of the last few days.

¹ Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OASD/ISA Files: FRC 70 A 3717, Indonesia, 000.1-291.2. Secret. Drafted by D.E. Nuechterlein (OASD/ISA/FER).

Evacuation of Americans

There has not yet been any departure of U.S. dependents from Djakarta via commercial aircraft, although the Embassy indicated that this might begin today. A high Indonesian official (General Rubiono) told the Embassy it would be unwise to evacuate Americans at this time because it would show a lack of confidence in the Army's ability to control the situation. On the other hand there are reports that Colonel Untung is in central Java organizing several battalions for possible further action against the Army and that PKI leader Aidit is in hiding. At noon, Task Force 77 and 76 were holding in two positions about 320 miles apart, with TF-76 at about 5 degrees north latitude. Late this afternoon TF-76 was ordered to steam north and "hold" at 8 degrees north latitude, near the position now being held by TF-77.²

Estimate of Situation

There are several current appraisals of the recent course of events, all of which are supported by the sometimes conflicting information. The two major ones are:

(1) Sukarno knew what was happening all along and was lying low until he could see who was going to come out on top (presumably he hoped the Untung-Subandrio-Dani coup would succeed and the Army high command would no longer be a threat to his pro-Peking policy).

(2) Sukarno was duped into believing that the Untung coup was to save him from a US-sponsored coup by the Army and that he is only now beginning to believe that the Air Force PKI were involved in a plot to get rid of their only major opposition, the Army.

If one assumes estimate (1) above to be true, it follows that Sukarno will do everything possible to prevent the Army from cracking down on the Air Force and PKI and that he will continue his previous policy of close relations with Peking and with the PKI, to our disadvantage. He has already made some attempt at playing up the incident as a mere interservice squabble. If we assume that estimate (2) is correct, then it follows that the Army will be given more authority and that people like Subandrio, Dani and Untung are out. But, Sukarno may fear that if he allows the Army to move too fast against the 30 September Movement, and more particularly against the PKI, civil war will develop and tear the country apart—leaving the outer islands open to foreign penetration and perhaps independent governments. By moving

² The decision to position these naval forces for possible emergency evacuation of U.S. citizens from Indonesia was the subject of multiple telephone conversations among Ball and McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, William Bundy, and Rusk on October 3 and 4. The memoranda of these telephone conversations are at the Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia, [4/12/64-11/10/65].

slowly and making a great show of national unity, he may be able to prevent disintegration of the Federation and still take care of the elements who sought to topple the government.

I am inclined to think that Sukarno was aware, at least in part, of what was going on from the beginning and that he is now attempting to put the best face on a botched job, hoping to keep his own prestige intact. The big question is whether the Army, having shown its strength and unity in the face of an effort to demolish its influence, will permit Sukarno to exercise the kind of control he had before. In any event, the Sukarno image has been tarnished.

The next two days should tell a lot. If the Army turns the Armed Forces Day celebration (October 5) into a big funeral procession for its fallen leaders, the momentum generated could well put the Army into the commanding position in spite of Sukarno. However, we cannot underestimate the power of Sukarno to manipulate the situation any way he wants, for better or worse. There is probably no other person in Indonesia today who can hold the Federation together, and the Army may well consider this factor more important than taking revenge on the Air Force and PKI.

E.J. Blouin³
Rear Admiral, USN
Director, Far East Region

³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

147. Telegram From the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State¹

Djakarta, October 5, 1965, 1435Z.

868. Ref: Embtel 852.²

1. Events of the past few days have put PKI and pro-Communist elements very much on defensive and they may embolden army at long last to act effectively against Communists.

2. At same time we seem to be witnessing what may be the passing of power from Sukarno's hands to a figure or figures whose identity is yet unknown, possibly bringing changes in national policy and posture in its wake.

3. Right now, our key problem is if we can help shape developments to our advantage, bearing in mind that events will largely follow their own course as determined by basic forces far beyond our capability to control.

4. Following guidelines may supply part of the answer to what our posture should be:

A. Avoid overt involvement as power struggle unfolds.

B. Covertly, however, indicate clearly to key people in army such as Nasution and Suharto our desire to be of assistance where we can, while at same time conveying to them our assumption that we should avoid appearance of involvement or interference in any way.

C. Maintain and if possible extend our contact with military.

D. Avoid moves that might be interpreted as note of nonconfidence in army (such as precipately moving out our dependents or cutting staff).

E. Spread the story of PKI's guilt, treachery and brutality (this priority effort is perhaps most needed immediate assistance we can

¹ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 23-9 INDON. Secret; Priority. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD, Canberra, Karachi, Kuala Lumpur, London, Manila, New Delhi, Paris, Singapore, Tokyo, and Wellington. Passed to the White House, DOD, CIA, USIA, and USUN. In situation report 9 of the Indonesia Working Group, October 5, this was described as the "first of a series of telegrams recommending courses of action (Djakarta 868, October 5) which generally suggests that the United States avoid overt involvement in the power struggle but should indicate, clearly but covertly, to key Army officers our desire to assist where we can." (Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Indonesia, Vol. V, Cables, 10/65-11/65, [3 of 3])

² In telegram 852, October 5, 0405Z, the Embassy reported on the implications of the unsuccessful September 30 coup, suggesting that Army had an opportunity to move against the PKI. The Embassy stated, "it's now or never" and estimated that the "agony of riding Indonesia of the effects of Sukarno and NASAKOM has begun," but it would be wrong "to assume process will be over easily or quickly." (Ibid.)

give army if we can find way to do it without identifying it as solely or largely US effort).

F. Support through information output and such other means as becomes available to us unity of Indonesian armed forces.

G. Bear in mind that Moscow and Peking are in basic conflict regarding Indonesia, and that Soviet Union might find itself even more in line with our thinking than at present. This will be subject of our next Country Team meeting and we may have specific recommendations for exploiting this phenomenon.

H. Continue to consult closely with friendly embassies (who take up much of our time and occasionally our facilities) extending our line of credit and enhancing our image generally through them as a constructive influence here.

I. Continue for time being to maintain low profile and be restrained about any apparent opportunities to rush in with new, overt programs (although need for stepped-up information effort will be great).

5. We will submit further recommendations as these seem to be appropriate to what will undoubtedly be fast-moving or at least uncertain situation for some time to come.

Green

148. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Indonesia¹

Washington, October 6, 1965, 7:39 p.m.

400. Ref Embtel 868.²

1. Subject to comments on emphasis and discretion below, we are in basic agreement with policy guidelines set forth para 4 reftel.

¹ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL 23-9 INDON. Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Underhill and Cuthell; cleared by James B. Freeman, Special Assistant in P, Richard L. Sneider, Public Affairs Adviser in FE, and in substance by Daniel E. Moore, Deputy Director, Office of Assistant Director (Far East), USIA; and approved by Ball and William Bundy. Repeated to Canberra, Karachi, Kuala Lumpur, London, Manila, New Delhi, Paris for TOPOL, Tokyo, Wellington, Singapore, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

² Document 147.

2. Reports of October 6 Cabinet meeting just received via FBIS make it clear Sukarno is attempting to reestablish status quo ante by raising bogey of imperialist exploitation Indonesian differences and submerging Army's vengeful hostility towards PKI in a closing of ranks to preserve national unity.³

3. As you have brought out, major question is whether Army can maintain momentum its offensive against PKI in face Sukarno's practiced political manipulations.

4. Sukarno, Subandrio and PKI sympathizers in Cabinet will be alert to any evidence substantiating their charges that NEKOLIM will attempt to exploit situation. We believe it essential that we not give Sukarno and company opportunity claim that they about to be attacked by NEKOLIM and that we not give Subandrio and the PKI citable public evidence that USG supports Army against them.

5. Army clearly needs no material assistance from us at this point. Over past years inter-service relationships developed through training program, civic action program and MILTAG, as well as regular assurances to Nasution, should have established clearly in minds Army leaders that U.S. stands behind them if they should need help. Reur paras 4 b and c believe we should therefore exercise extreme caution in contacts with the Army lest our well-meaning efforts to offer assistance or steel their resolve may in fact play into hands of Sukarno and Subandrio. In particular, given Nasution's apparent present emotional state and precariousness his position do not believe it wise for you to attempt direct contact with him unless he seeks it, but know you have reliable indirect access to him through politically conscious senior officers who routinely in contact with Mission.

6. We plan and are already carrying out VOA and information program based on citation Indonesian sources and official statements without at this stage injecting U.S. editorializing. At least in present situation we believe ample such material pointing finger at PKI and playing up brutality of September 30 rebels is available from Radio Djakarta and Indo press, but we will look at situation again if in coming days or weeks these sources dry up. Similar coverage will be given by VOA to Indo situation in key broadcasts other than to Indonesia.

7. Reur para 4 d, agree that precipitate evacuation undesirable, but it is essential that you start moving out dependents and non-

³ At 9:19 a.m. on October 5, Rusk and Ball talked on the telephone. Rusk asked about Indonesia. Ball answered that "the army is not moving and this is a matter of concern because Sukarno got away with his press conference and cabinet meeting. It looks as though they are losing a lot of critical time there because PKI disavowed September 30 movement and are moving toward position of respectability." (Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia, [4/12/64-11/10/64])

essential staff as commercial space becomes available on any carrier to any point. Septel this subject follows.

8. Will look forward to further Embassy recommendations as to how we should proceed.

Ball

149. Intelligence Memorandum¹

OCI No. 2330/65

Washington, October 6, 1965.

THE UPHEAVAL IN INDONESIA

Summary

The Indonesian army, having countered what appears to have been a leftist coup on 1 October, is for the time being firmly in control of Indonesia. It would like to use the opportunity to take strong steps against the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and elements allied with it. It would be reluctant to take decisive action, however, without the approval of President Sukarno. Sukarno, in the interest of national unity and probably fearing the ascendancy of the army, has asserted that the present situation is a political problem that requires a political settlement and that he wishes to settle it himself. He apparently hopes to conciliate the leftists and return the Communist Party to the favorable political position it enjoyed prior to the events of 1 October.

1. Early on 1 October a group which called itself the "30 September Movement" kidnapped six army generals, including Army Commander Yani, and later murdered them. The movement was led by Lt. Col. Untung, a battalion commander in President Sukarno's bodyguard, the Tjakrabirawa regiment. In addition to Untung's own battalion (which was one of three in the regiment), the movement also appears to have included some elements of the air force and initially was openly supported by the Air Force Chief of Staff Marshal Dani. Also reportedly

¹ Source: Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Indonesia, Vol. V, Memos, 10/65-11/65. Secret. Prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency.

involved were Communist-influenced army elements from Central Java and members of Pemuda Rakjat—the Communist youth organization, the party's special security force, and GERWANI—the Communist women's front group.

2. A message read over the Djakarta radio on the morning of 1 October claimed that Untung's action was "supported by troops of other branches of the armed forces" and that the "30 September Movement" had acted to forestall an American-inspired "generals' coup." The message stated that President Sukarno and other targets of the "generals' coup" were under the protection of the movement. Shortly thereafter the 45 members of a leftist "Revolutionary Council" were announced. About half of the council's membership was composed of government officials, a few of whom were high-level and none of whom at that time was maintaining an anti- or even strong non-Communist position. The council contained three members of the Indonesian Communist Party Central Committee. The rest were well-known fellow travellers or crypto-Communists.

3. By the early evening of 1 October Army General Suharto, commander of the Army Strategic Reserve (KOSTRAD), informed all military areas that in the absence of Army Commander General Yani, who had been kidnapped, he was assuming command of the army. He was doing so with the understanding and cooperation of the navy in order to destroy the "30 September Movement." Two hours later Radio Indonesia announced that the army controlled the situation, that the police had also joined the army and navy to crush the "counterrevolutionary movement," and that President Sukarno and Defense Minister General Nasution—the latter had been a target of Untung's group—were safe.

4. During the night of 1 October, Lt. Col. Untung apparently fled to Central Java where he apparently hoped to establish a position with pro-Communist elements in that province. Repeated broadcasts of President Sukarno's appeal for restoration of order and the strong pro-Sukarno, pro-army stance of both General Sabur—Untung's superior officer in the Tjakrabirawa regiment—and of General Surjosumpeno—army commander in Central Java—appear to have cut away much of Untung's following. Reports are confused, however, as to his present support. They range from a mere 110 troops to several battalions. There are no present plans to send additional troops into Central Java to deal with him; loyal troops already stationed in that province are deemed sufficient to cope with the situation.

5. On 4 October Air Force Chief of Staff Marshal Dani, who had already been absolved of complicity in the "30 September Movement" by Sukarno, by implication denied any connection with the movement. In a special broadcast he thanked Sukarno "for trust in the air force" and

said appropriate action would be taken against any air force personnel involved in the movement.

6. Meanwhile President Sukarno had been maneuvering to reaffirm his own control of the situation. On 2 October he summoned all military commanders and Second Deputy Prime Minister Leimena to a meeting "to settle the 30 September incident immediately." (First Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio was in North Sumatra but has since returned and is with Sukarno in Bogor; Third Deputy Prime Minister Chaerul Saleh is en route home from Communist China.) Sukarno subsequently broadcast to the nation that he had assumed personal command of the army, that he had appointed General Pranoto, an army headquarters staff officer, administrative head of the army and had deputized General Suharto "to implement the restoration of security." A statement by Suharto which followed that of Sukarno affirmed the changes made by the president. A 3 October broadcast by the Supreme Operations Command (KOTI) described Pranoto only as "assisting the president."

7. Suharto, long regarded as apolitical and possibly an opportunist, emerges in the present situation as a strong military leader and apparently a firm anti-Communist. Pranoto, on the other hand, does not belong to the group of officers who looked to Yani and Nasution for leadership and obviously is viewed with some disfavor by Suharto and his colleagues. Sukarno is said to have elevated Pranoto during the present crisis as a means of conciliating and protecting the left, and it would seem that he also did it as a means of imposing disunity upon the army. Appraisals of Pranoto range from passive and soft on the Communists to actively pro-Communist. He has served in Central Java, a Communist stronghold, as a battalion commander and later as the territorial commander; he is reputed during those years to have done nothing to obstruct Communist growth there. Available information, most of it from pro-Suharto sources, has not mentioned any action taken by Pranoto in his present capacity.

8. The US Embassy in Djakarta has a confirmed report that Sukarno's palace guards and air force troops are protecting Sukarno and Dani in Bogor. Reportedly, Suharto's troops have their guns trained toward the palace. The US Embassy now believes that Suharto's forces are allowed access to Sukarno for bargaining and tape recording Sukarno's statements but they do not control him.

9. Sukarno has rejected army suggestions for firm measures against leaders of the "30 September Movement" and the Communist Party. On 4 October he told the army generals that the situation basically involves political issues, that tranquillity and order are needed for a solution, and that the generals should "leave the political settlement to me." Army officers, initially jubilant at the prospect of cracking

down on the Communists, were reported depressed after their meetings with Sukarno.

10. Apparently a few hours prior to this 4 October meeting between Sukarno and the generals and apparently also under the emotion of having just viewed the exhuming of the murdered generals, Suharto made an unusual public statement which strongly implied both doubt and criticism of the president and accused the air force and the Communists of complicity in the "30 September Movement." He stated that the bodies had been found in a well within the jurisdiction of the Halim Air Force Base near Djakarta. He said that an area near the well had been used as an air force training center for volunteers from Pemuda Rakjat (the Communist youth organization) and GERWANI (the Communist women's organization). He went on that "based on these facts, it is possible that there is truth in the statement of our beloved father, President, Supreme Commander, Great Leader of the Revolution, that the air force is not involved in the affair. But it is impossible that there is no connection with this affair among elements of the air force." Suharto said he conveyed the sentiments of "patriots who are members of the army" that "air force patriots will purge such members (of the air force) who are involved in this adventure."

11. A few hours later, General Sabur in his capacity as Secretary General of the Supreme Operations Command (KOTI) broadcast an account of Sukarno's 4 October admonitions to the generals, combat commanders, and all commanders of the armed services. According to Sabur, Sukarno had ordered those present, and inferentially all Indonesians, not to permit themselves to be "set off against each other" since this would "harm our struggle and weaken our potential." Sabur said settlement of the 30 September incident would be handled personally and soon by the president. He quoted Sukarno as warning military leaders "not to fall into the trap of (garble—probably imperialist or neocolonialist) tactics in view of their latest activities for weakening us from inside as a prelude for their attacks against us." He specifically ordered combat commanders to "realize the danger of intrigue of our adversaries," to "remain vigilant and continuously enhance unity." Sukarno did manage to say that those who fell victim to the "30 September Movement" were heroes of the revolution, and he invited prayer for their souls.

12. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), after indicating its support of the "30 September Movement" through its official newspaper *Harian Rakjat*, has now largely lapsed into silence. Communist Party leaders apparently are in seclusion or actual hiding. According to a clandestine source, party policy is to disavow the "30 September Movement." Party members caught with arms or found in other ways to be supporting the rebellion will be regarded by the PKI as misguided adventurers.

13. The leftist press in Medan, North Sumatra, has continued to publish, and probably is setting the line the party plans to take when its leaders emerge again. The pro-party press in Medan expresses a hope for increased solidarity between the army and the people "particularly in settling the 30 September affair strictly along lines set out by President Sukarno."

14. Many questions remain unanswered about the "30 September Movement." Most revolve around Sukarno. Did Sukarno have prior knowledge of the "30 September Movement" and its intentions? Was he taken into protective custody by members of the movement or did he, as he publicly announced, visit Halim Air Force Base—the headquarters of Air Force Chief of Staff Dani and probably the headquarters of the 30 September group—of his own will on 1 October because he thought it wise to be near an airplane? Or was his presence there an indication that he, like the air force and the Communist Party, openly and briefly endorsed the movement? Or was this part of the escape route, reportedly engineered by General Sabur, to get Sukarno out of Djakarta to Bogor? Did Sukarno's appearance of illness during an address on the evening of 30 September motivate the events of 1 October—events which seem to have been previously but perhaps incompletely planned?

15. Other questions pertain to Lt. Col. Untung and Communist Party leaders. Most reports claim or assume that Untung was merely a dupe; according to one source, he is a strict Moslem who was outraged by the high living and corrupt practices of high-ranking army officers. If he was only a tool and a front man—and this seems plausible—who did the actual planning? Or did several plans by various elements become entangled, with one being used to justify another?

16. It has been reliably reported that the Communist Party in August had reviewed contingency plans which would be put into effect if Sukarno died within the next few days or weeks. These apparently involved the seclusion of top Communist leaders and moves to protect Communist assets by members of the Communist youth front and the party's special security force. There is at least one report that Sukarno had agreed to the arrest—by whom was not reported—of the anti-Communist generals but that he did not know of plans to kill them and, had he known, would not have approved them. A high-ranking army source (one of Sukarno's physicians and a key figure in army communications), who has occasionally been candid about internal matters, stated on 3 October that among Untung's sponsors were armed Communist cadres who had been armed and uniformed. He said Untung's troops had been among those who had gone to the generals' houses but that it was not clear who had done the firing—implying that uniformed Communists had also been part of the group.

17. A plausible view of the immediate background of the "30 September Movement" is that Sukarno, Subandrio, and perhaps Communist leaders close to them had considered the arrest of certain army generals. Sukarno and Subandrio have repeatedly and publicly warned the armed forces in recent months that individual leaders must cooperate with the "revolution" or be "left behind." More recently they have even implied some sort of action against them. With the knowledge of this possibility, militant Communist cadres both inside and outside of the air force (and it seems well-established that such were involved) may have used it to justify action against the generals to Untung, and may have played also upon his resentment of high living among the brass. Young militants are known to be chafing against the peaceful united front tactics espoused by top Communist leaders and the latter's strong support of Sukarno. The timing of their action could have been influenced by reports on Sukarno's illness on the night of 30 September and by partial or garbled knowledge of Communist contingency plans in the event of Sukarno's death. The militants—probably impetuous, zealous, and none too clear in their thinking—would have assumed that the swiftness and decisiveness of their actions—the death of the generals and the formation of a new government—would force Sukarno and thereby the rest of Indonesia to fall in behind them.

18. Despite *Harian Rakjat's* brief espousal of the movement it does not seem likely that party chairman Aidit would have approved the murder of the generals or even the change of government. The Indonesian situation, both foreign and domestic, was highly favorable to the Communists and—barring Sukarno's immediate death—showed every sign of becoming progressively more so. Possibly a few militant members of the Central Committee approved the plan; future internal party developments may so indicate. The motivation of Air Force Chief of Staff Marshal Dani remains an open question. He has assumed an increasingly leftist position during the past year.

19. With the army's counteraction and Sukarno's subsequent moves, many of the questions pertaining to the promotion of the "30 September Movement" become almost academic. The principal point now is whether the army will go along with Sukarno in papering over the situation and returning to the political status quo prior to the events of 1 October.

20. The previous record of the army seems to indicate, that despite frustration and rage over the murders of six highly regarded generals, most officers will continue to support Sukarno. Although there is considerable individual and collective doubt among the officer corps as to the wisdom of Sukarno's policies, there is also enormous reluctance to oppose him. Sukarno has so presented his position that any specific action against the Communists would be considered an anti-Sukarno

act. It now appears that only if Untung can develop a following in Central Java and renew armed action—and at the moment this does not appear to be a strong possibility—would Sukarno tolerate a significant move against him and his allies.

21. In the aftermath of the "30 September Movement," however, the army temporarily will retain a political ascendancy. This is based in the martial law still obtaining in Djakarta, in the army's physical control of most of the country, and in the present policy of seclusion being followed by Communist leaders.

22. Should Sukarno move too rapidly in favor of the left during this period, he could cause a sharpening of feeling between himself and most army leaders. This could promote a stronger public and political anti-Communist stand by the army than it has maintained in the past year and weaken the political position of the party. Such a development, however, is highly speculative.

23. Sukarno's health continues to be a major factor in determining the course of events. The army is far more likely to act decisively if the president dies or is disabled than if he remains reasonably vigorous. Sukarno's continued seclusion is not necessarily an indication that his health has further deteriorated; he will probably defer a public appearance until he feels that it is to his political advantage. Meanwhile he apparently is holding frequent meetings with various military and civilian officials.

150. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Under Secretary of State (Ball) and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Helms)¹

Washington, October 7, 1965, 12:05 p.m.

Helms asked Ball if he were deadset to get the dependents out of Indonesia. Ball replied that he could foresee a real civil war in Indonesia, however, this request had come in from Green himself. Ball said we were trying to get them out as inconspicuously as possible on commer-

¹Source: Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia, [4/12/64-11/10/65]. No classification marking.

cial airlines.² Ball informed Helms there were several companies in Indonesia. Ball asked Helms if he had doubts.

Helms said in light of the sentiments he guessed this was the right thing to do. The President would be disturbed if there were street fighting.

Ball said he thought the communists would go underground and the country could go up in flames. Ball said he would feel better if the women and children were not there. In three weeks all dependents would have departed. Helms asked if we were keeping them in the area. Ball said we had told them to come on home but we don't really care where they take them.

Helms told Ball he was with him on this.³

² In telegram 401 to Djakarta, October 6, the Department instructed the Embassy to begin moving of U.S. families out of Indonesia by international air carriers. In order to make the operation unobtrusive, the Embassy could explain at least at the beginning of the process that these were routine transfers for home leave, medical reasons, and so on. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-1966, POL 23-INDON)

³ At 5:30 p.m. on October 7, Ball talked on the telephone with McNamara about the possibility of sending the evacuation task force back to home ports. Ball worried that there could be a civil war in 2 or 3 days, but he agreed with McNamara that the evacuation force could return slowly. (Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia, [4/12/64-11/10/65])

151. Telegram From the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State¹

Djakarta, October 10, 1965.

Unnumbered. For Assistant Secretary Bundy from Ambassador Green.

1. Following is Ambassador Green's comments on Secretary Bundy's message re pattern of UK actions on Kalimantan and how we should handle with Indonesians.²

¹ Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL INDON-UK. Secret: Eyes Only. There is no time of transmission on this telegram, which was received in the Department of State at 2:46 p.m., October 10.

² Not further identified.

2. I generally agree with your suggested approach. At same time I question contention in Deptel 413³ that "we should credit Indo military with sufficient sophistication to realize that British would not stab Indo army in back while it was dealing with PKI." Latter contention overlooks suspiciousness of hard-pressed army and its poor communications. We just cannot leave to chance that Indos will understand British restraint.

3. In latter connection, Colonel Ethel was told today by his Indo army contact (who is close to Suharto and Nasution) that Indo army hopes British will not escalate Malaysia confrontation at this time because it would weaken army position. Source believes US only nation which could bring pressure to bear on British on this matter. Later on in conversation, source stated that Indo army leadership feels it has situation well in hand and will win this time, provided British do not interfere by escalation.

4. I therefore recommend that Ethel reply to his contact just about along lines Secretary Bundy suggests. This would of course require that British desisted from any kind of aggressive patrolling but it should not involve any weakening of UK defensive position.⁴

5. Colonel Ethel hopes see contact tomorrow.⁵

³ In telegram 413 to Djakarta, October 7, the Department told Green it "had serious reservations on wisdom proposal that British convey to Indonesia military willingness to refrain from attacks as long as Indo Army continues to press PKI." No matter how discreetly passed, it would saddle the recipient Indonesian with the danger of "exposure as traitor to nation." The Department then suggested that the Indonesian military was sophisticated enough to realize that the British "would not stab Army in back while dealing with PKI" without being specifically informed. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-1966, POL INDON-UK)

⁴ In telegram 437 to Djakarta, October 10, the Department agreed with Green's recommendation, but asked that the Embassy withhold action until the matter was cleared with the British. (Ibid.) In telegram 1918 to London, repeated to Djakarta as telegram 446, the Department reported that Berger had suggested to a British Embassy official that the United States pass the following message to the Indonesians: "First, we wish to assure you that we have no intention of interfering Indonesian internal affairs directly or indirectly. Second we have good reason to believe that none of our allies intend any offensive action against Indonesia." (Ibid., POL 23-9 INDON) The British agreed, but asked that the phrase, "to initiate," be included between "allies intend" and "any offensive action." (Telegram 447 to Djakarta, October 1; *ibid.*)

⁵ Printed from a copy that bears no signature.

152. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the
Under Secretary of State (Ball) and Secretary of State Rusk¹

Washington, October 12, 1965, 5:40 p.m.

Ball told the Secretary that he went over with Berger and Cuthell as to what we propose to say to the army in Indonesia. One telegram which we are sending to London for approval is telegram of assurance that we do not propose to interfere in their internal affairs.² The harder question is their request for our assessment of the situation. Ball continued that he is going into detail with Cuthell and he (Cuthell) has great fears and doubts of our expressing encouragement, etc. This is a complex power fight that is going on and we do not know who is on top and we do not know, for instance, whether the army might resolve this by declaring a war on imperialists and we would be left on the limb by the army moving in and exploiting anti-American feelings. The Secretary thought this a very far-fetched likelihood. Ball said *this is not an ideological fight but a power fight*. Ball thinks that any indication that we are giving army help in its dealing with PKI could be misused.³

The Secretary stated that the telegram to London should go but that he wished to discuss the other⁴ further tomorrow.

¹ Source: Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia, [4/12/64-11/10/65]. No classification marking.

² See footnote 4, Document 151.

³ At 10:30 a.m., October 12, Ball and Fulbright discussed Indonesia on the telephone. Fulbright asked is the "Sukarno situation as good as it appears to be represented in the papers?" Ball answered that for the first time the army was "disobeying Sukarno." The generals were asking if they might be the next victims. Although they were afraid to move directly against Sukarno and the PKI, they were encouraging the Muslims and other groups to do so. Ball guessed that Sukarno would never regain the power he had and the PKI would have to go underground, but he did not want to underestimate Sukarno. Any U.S. interference could be a serious mistake. (Johnson Library, Ball Papers, Telephone Conversations, Indonesia, [4/12/64-11/10/65])

⁴ Apparent reference to Document 153.