

July 30, 1965

**Memorandum from Thomas L. Hughes to the
Secretary, 'Recent Indonesian Statements
Concerning Nuclear Weapons'**

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Summary:

Statements by Indonesian authorities notwithstanding, INR analysts did not "believe that Indonesia possesses the facilities, personnel and radioactive material necessary for producing an atomic device with any speed."

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To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Thomas L. Hughes

Subject: Recent Indonesian Statements Concerning Atomic Weapons

Although recent Indonesian statements have forecast the acquisition of a nuclear capability, we do not believe that Indonesia possesses the facilities, personnel and radioactive material necessary for producing an atomic device with any speed. Nor is it likely to receive aid from Communist China or elsewhere that would enable it to attain such a capability in the near future. Nevertheless, especially as long as Sukarno lives, Indonesia can be expected to aspire to the development of nuclear weapons, which Sukarno views as the visible signs of a national greatness and the military regards as essential for military strength.

Hartono's Bravado. General Hartono, Director General of the Indonesian Army Logistics Command, stated on July 28 that Indonesia would explode its first atomic bomb in November of this year, after the Second Afro-Asian Conference. Hartono made similar predictions of an explosion in 1965 in November 1964 and in February 1965. Hartono, however, is particularly given to statements demonstrating patriotic zeal with little regard for reality.

Sukarno's Announcements. Unlike Hartono, Sukarno, who has made two recent references to nuclear weapons, set no date for a nuclear explosion, but merely stated his intention that Indonesia would develop and possess such weapons. Speaking before a conference of Indonesian Muslims on July 24, Sukarno stated that:

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Indonesia would increase its technical ability so that within three years Indonesia could produce its own airplanes, "and, God willing, in the near future we will make our own atomic bombs." He stated that Indonesia would not make atomic weapons "to turn ourselves into aggressors but for the protection of our fatherland." In his letter to the International Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, Sukarno stated that all nuclear weapons should be destroyed, but that as long as imperialism continued to pose a threat to world peace, "the oppressed people had the right to defend themselves even with nuclear weapons." He drew a distinction between the possession of nuclear weapons by an "imperialist country ... which uses them to make war and bring destruction" and a "new emerging force" which "uses them for defending peace and freedom."

Indonesia's Nuclear Status. The only nuclear reactor now in operation in Indonesia is a small US supplied Triga Mark II which went critical last October and is used at the Bandung Institute of Technology for isotope production and training. A second reactor, a Soviet IRT-2000 (two megawatt pool type reactor using uranium), is under construction at Serpong, West Java, and is unlikely to be completed until late 1966. A Soviet supplied sub-critical assembly has been used for several years for training Indonesian technicians, but has been inactive since late 1963 because the Soviet Union has not supplied the necessary fuel replacement.

Indonesia has few personnel trained in nuclear sciences and no developed sources of radioactive materials. The Institute of Atomic Energy, established in 1959, aims at overcoming Indonesia's shortcomings over a fifteen-year span.

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The Institute is currently conducting training courses in handling radioactive isotopes, operating nuclear reactors, and providing protection against radiation. It is also conducting a survey of nuclear raw materials in Indonesia. The Indonesian Supreme Command (KOTI) has shown considerable interest in nuclear development and on June 24 the Defense Ministry established a special bureau to deal with "nuclear, biological and chemical affairs."

Outside Aid. The Soviet Union has shown little enthusiasm over the past two years in furthering Indonesia's nuclear potential, and has procrastinated in fulfilling its contractual obligations for the Serpong Reactor and the sub-critical reactor. In early 1965, as the result apparently of conversations between low-level Indonesian and Communist Chinese officials, five Indonesian scientists and engineers were sent to Communist China for training in the development of fissionable materials. Communist China has, however, shown no interest in extending any aid beyond the limited training facilities it has already provided.

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