

# INDONESIA: THE THIRD PLOT

Jack Woddie

ON May 12, 1958, *The Times* Singapore correspondent calmly wrote: 'Reliable information here shows that Indonesia has not been able to produce proof, even in private, of intervention by Americans'.

This breath-taking assertion would be laughed out of court not only in Indonesia but throughout Asia, where the facts of the U.S. plot against Indonesia are as familiar as the day's rice. But in Britain, unfortunately, one can still get away with such claptrap.

In February and again in April this year, *Labour Monthly* published two articles outlining, in some detail, evidence of U.S. intervention in Indonesian affairs and the plot to organise a Sumatra-based revolt against the central Government. Since then, a flood of fresh evidence of U.S. complicity has come to hand.

This evidence is of two kinds. First, there are press reports, Government statements, declarations from Army officials, and other forms of what we might call circumstantial or second-hand evidence.

The second kind of evidence is material. This includes documents, weapons and individuals captured by the Indonesian Government. This evidence can be laughed off by no one, not even Dulles or Fleet Street.

In order that the evidence can simply be presented in a factual form, practically without comment, it would be best to sum up first what has happened since the April *Labour Monthly* article.

After the American-inspired revolt broke out in Sumatra on February 15, 1958, the rebels were quickly chased by the Indonesian Army first from Padang, and then at the beginning of May, from their 'capital' Bukittinggi. On May 4 the rebels moved to North Sulawesi (Celebes) and set up their new 'capital' at Manado.

This commenced what is known in Indonesia as 'the second plot'. The first plot was to use the Sumatra revolt to overthrow the central Government or bring about such changes in it that would result, in effect, in the setting up of a pro-American, pro-SEATO Government.

When the rebels were pushed out of Sumatra, the second plot was put into operation. This was to use the North Sulawesi base to tear away East Indonesia from the Republic and set up a SEATO base there.

Western press commentators had previously made the point that the rebels obviously lacked aircraft. After their move to Menado aircraft 'appeared' on the rebel side. The evidence we give below shows that the aircraft was American, that it was arranged via U.S.-controlled Taiwan, that the U.S. air base at Clark airfield in the Philippines was used as a take-off base for air attacks, and that U.S. pilots flew at least some of the aircraft. Chiang Kai-shek troops from Taiwan took part in the land fighting, and flew some of the planes.\* The U.S. Navy also intervened in the fighting; Admiral Frost intervened politically to put pressure on the Indonesian Government and at the same time maintained contact with the rebels in Medano.

First, statements of Indonesian Army Leaders:

On May 20, Army Chief-of-Staff Nasution revealed that over 10,000 pieces of arms had been airdropped to the rebels; that ships, bombers and fighters had been supplied to them; and that American and Chiang Kai-shek pilots were flying rebel planes attacking the Indonesian Republic. He also charged that foreign troops and aircraft had landed in Sulawesi and Halmahera. On May 27, Lieut.-Colonel Herman Pieters, Commander of the Maluku and West Irian military area, told reporters that during the recovery of Morotai the Indonesian Government forces had captured many brand-new American-made arms, including anti-aircraft guns of the latest type. These modern weapons, he stressed, had not been available to the Government forces. He showed pressmen articles used by a captured American pilot, all of which he pointed out were standard articles used by the U.S. Airforce. He said he was informed that many American pilots helping the rebels took off from the U.S. Clark airfield in the Philippines. He also showed the reporters important documents carried by the captured pilot.

Secondly, statements by Government leaders:

On April 30 the Premier Djuanda stated that United States and Chiang Kai-shek pilots had bombed a number of places in Indonesia, adding that the Indonesian Government had sufficient proof of this. The Government, he said, also had proof that between April 25 and 30 a number of automatic shoulder-borne weapons and fighter planes were smuggled in from Taiwan. On May 2 President Sukarno, in a speech in Bandung, said that there were tens of thousands of U.S.-made weapons and several hundred U.S.-manufactured heavy weapons in West Sumatra, which the rebels could not afford to purchase. He added that airplanes piloted by

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\*See the U.S. Ambassador's telegrams, February *Labour Monthly*.

Americans and people from Taiwan had raided Indonesian soil. On May 3 the Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio summoned the American Ambassador to Indonesia, Howard Jones, and confronted him with evidence of the attack by American and Chiang Kai-shek pilots on Indonesia. In a statement to the press after this meeting, the Foreign Minister said it was clear that arms, airplanes and pilots employed by the rebels were all provided by the United States and Taiwan.

Thirdly, the attitude of Indonesian trade unions:

The 3,000,000-strong trade union centre, SOBSI, early in May appealed to trade union organisations in all countries for solidarity against the 'criminal intervention of the U.S.A.' On May 8, the 700,000-strong plantation workers' union said it was ready to take over American plantations and those belonging to the Chiang Kai-shek clique in Indonesia in retaliation for their intervention.

Fourthly, the press. And here again, because of space, I can select only a few of many, many examples:

On April 17, Keyes Beech of the *Chicago Daily News* wrote that 'for the last two months the rebel forces have been regularly supplied with American arms and ammunition by an organised air-drop from "unidentified" foreign planes. . . . Rebel Prime Minister Sjafruddin Prawiranegara told me that he had enough American arms to equip 8,000 troops and enough ammunition'. Beech added that the arms were airdropped on instructions from ex-General Claire Chennault, head of the American Civil Air Transport Company (CATC) in Taiwan. Beech also said there was 'evidence' that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was involved in cloak-and-dagger operations in Indonesia, and said that he knew the name of two 'foreigners' who lived in Padang before the revolt 'giving rebel officers advance information on what arms would be dropped and elementary instruction in their use'.

On April 30, the *News Chronicle* correspondent Arslan Humbaraci, wrote an article in the Indonesian paper *Merdeka*, after a fact-finding tour of the battle front in Central Sumatra. He stated that three American ships—'Steel Executive', 'Steel Fabricator', and 'Steel Director'—had unloaded arms for the rebels in Dumai, a Caltex port in Central Sumatra, on November 16, 1957, and on January 23 and 28 this year. These arms were directly transported from the United States. He went on to reveal that a member of the rebel forces had told him on April 24 that Americans connected with Caltex had constant contact with the rebel leader Simbolon,

and had informed the rebels of the time and place of the air-dropping of arms by the United States. Humbaraci states that six rebel aircraft came from Taiwan and that they used the Philippines as a base from where they carried out their raids on Indonesia. He concludes his article by stating that his purpose in writing it was to awaken public opinion in Western Europe and the United States. On June 8 the *Berita Minggu* reported that the U.S. 7th Fleet had taken part in bombarding Ambon and Balikpapan, in East Indonesia.

Amongst important material evidence known to be in the hands of the Indonesian Government there is Allen Lawrence Pope, an American pilot, shot down in a raid over Ambon on May 18. Documents captured on Pope show he was officially working for CATC, the American air line run by the U.S. ex-General Claire Chennault. (The CATC acts as an unofficial wing of the U.S. Airforce, and had previously been used during the Korean War, as well as to drop supplies to Chiang Kai-shek's marauding troops in Burma and to the French army during the battle of Dien Bien Phu.) Pope is a lieutenant of the U.S. Airforce, but was released with seven other American pilots by the U.S. command in Ryukyu, Fort Buckner, which certified that they were assigned temporary duty to leave the command in order to help the rebels. In that capacity they were transferred to the CATC as personnel 'on leave'. On his capture, Pope admitted that he had used the Clark airfield in the Philippines. The Indonesian authorities state that they captured many important documents on him.

There is also the letter sent by Rear Admiral Lawrence Frost, Chief of the U.S. Naval Intelligence Bureau, to the rebel leader, Kawilarang, former Indonesian Military Attache to Washington. In his letter, a copy of which has been published in Indonesia, Frost advised the rebels to maintain their organisations and not surrender. He told the rebels not to despair because the U.S. had issued official statements of non-interference in Indonesia's civil war. 'We will continue our assistance to you through Taiwan, the Philippines and other channels', he promised. On June 25 the Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio summoned the U.S. Ambassador Howard P. Jones and asked him to clarify this letter. The U.S. Ambassador asked for a few days before he could give his official reaction.

There only remains to add a note of warning. Plots One and Two have failed. Plot Three has begun. This is a double-edged plot, consisting of turning West Irian into a SEATO base (note: on June 30, two days after the fall of Menado, the Netherlands

Government announced Dutch troops were being sent to West Irian), and at the same time, seeking out individuals in the Indonesian political parties, the armed forces, the administration, and the mass organisations, who will play the American game, start an anti-Communist campaign, divide the national front, delay the 1959 general election, and bring about a change of Government.

With vigilance and unity, Plot Three can also be defeated.

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