

Letters to The Times

Indonesia's Claim Backed

New Guinea Is Declared Integral Part of Republic

The writer of the following letter was formerly Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

I am unpleasantly surprised to read your Dec. 3 editorial "Sukarno on a Rampage."

My simple aim here is to clarify the confusion surrounding the issue in the dispute over Irian Barat (which the Dutch call New Guinea). It is most regrettable that your editorial seemed to have completely accepted the Dutch argument of self-determination, without questioning the applicability of this principle to the specific case of Irian Barat.

Let me put it on record here that, as far as Indonesia is concerned, the principle of self-determination, even though a very noble principle, is not the issue here. Indonesia's claim on Irian Barat is based on her sovereign rights on all territory that, prior to the proclamation of Indonesian independence on Aug. 17, 1945, was known as the Dutch East Indies. And this claim dates back to the very early days of the Indonesian national movement for independence.

Goal of Movement

It should be stated here as a matter of history that the Indonesian national movement for independence, when it first became active in the beginning of this century, proclaimed its goal to be the creation of an independent Indonesia that should comprise the whole territory then constituting the Dutch East Indies, no more and no less. It should also be pointed out that Irian Barat at that time was already part of the Dutch East Indies.

This goal formed the very dynamic driving force of the Indonesian national movement for independence, and also forms the very *raison d'être* of the Indonesian Republic. It is therefore self-evident that neither the Indonesian national movement for independence nor the Republic of Indonesia could ever consider its task completed as long as a part of the former Dutch East Indies has not yet become part of the Indonesian Republic.

It is also equally evident that President Sukarno, representing the will of the entire Indonesian people, including those in Irian Barat, is doing everything within his power to bring back Irian Barat into the lap of the Republic of Indonesia.

I feel that the danger of your editorial lies in the fact that it gives the erroneous impression that Indonesia's claim on Irian Barat is not a national claim supported by the whole Indonesian nation. I also feel that your editorial seemed to minimize the strength of Indonesian nationalism as a force in present-day politics.

Question of Sovereignty

History has too often shown that a failure to appreciate the reality could only result in tragic consequences that nobody really desires.

With regard to the principle of self-determination I would like to remark that Indonesia, as a loyal member of the United Nations, has never repudiated it. What she did object to in the past and no doubt will object to in the future is the wrong notion that this principle of self-determination should be applied to the question of Irian Barat, because such application is inconsistent with the sovereignty of an independent nation.

I write on behalf of the Indonesian community here in Cambridge.

SOEMARMAN.

Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 4, 1961.