

PRESS REPORTS ON
INDONESIA

1. Merdeka 10 June 1976

The item gives a full report of Lieutenant General Ali Murtopo's speech to a National Press Gathering, and answers to question.

Answering a question from a participant about the solution of the Buru tapol (ed. shortened form of the Indonesian words Tahanan Politik, meaning political prisoner) problem which involves the question of human rights recently raised abroad, the Deputy Chief of Bakin first said that Western Europe, which is said to be anti-communist, may at some time turn communist. Explaining why communism was now developing in W. Europe, he said this was because of their liberal social structure and policies. As a result of this, they were unable to distinguish between communist concepts and national concepts. This was fertile ground for the development of international communist infiltration which will in due course pose a threat....

He went on to say that every day he received letters from people calling themselves members of Amnesty International from here, there and everywhere and in all kinds of languages. They used various formulations to say that they had no political ambitions at all but were basing themselves solely on humanitarian principles; and in these letters they asked him to give attention to the people still in detention, regardless of their involvement in the G30S/PKI (1965 coup attempt) incident in Indonesia.

In these letters they also raised the question of those who, according to their information, had not yet been examined before a court of law; they demanded that these people should be released or brought to trial immediately.

Amnesty International's principles - international human rights - were a manifestation of the attitude of a liberal society, aiming to create a mechanism in the course of their struggle in an honest and good way, to be able to defend the interests of mankind whether within or outside their own territory. They were striving together with citizens elsewhere to create social justice for people throughout the world.

Ali Murtopo said that, taking account only of the contents of these letters, they were fine. But if one considered it overall, (it was clear that) Amnesty International is basically afflicted with an ideological sickness. He pointed to the fact that some AI organs in various countries such as Japan, Chile, the United States, London and Europe and most recently in Singapore had been discovered to have communist leaders who had been publicly (sic) arrested.

As for voices raising the question of the Buru tapols, he said that he himself has adopted the best possible approach. He had held direct discussions with the top leadership of Amnesty International which has its headquarters in Switzerland (sic) as well as with their director-observer in the United States. He had stressed to them that they should be willing to know what is happening in Indonesia. As regards basic human rights in Indonesia, this is actually a very fundamental matter because the Free Indonesian nation is based on the fundamental rights to determine their own fate as a free nation through the process of national struggle....

In the ecology of the Indonesian nation, there are two aspects of the human being; the aspect of the individual, the Belief in One God, and the foremost factor is humanitarianism in the framework of basic rights.

He had told AI officials that the decisions taken, for instance court verdicts, were based on the fact that standards of justice in Indonesia were based not only on administrative factors but also on the factor of responsibility in the cause of justice to Almighty God as justified by moral standards.

The national concept of the Indonesian nation does not encompass racialism not does it create classes within its inhabitants. But from all the talks he had had with AI, he had not been able to obtain a reply as to what AI's concept really was. In fact, he had gained the impression that AI was only seeking to compete with the national concept of the Indonesian nation. By adopting such a position, AI will be completely in error.

(This is not the end of the article but the rest is not directly of interest)

2. Interview of Craig Spence with Mr Adam Malik in the Japan Times 17 Aug 1976.
Extracts

Question There have been charges that Indonesia is detaining people without trial. Amnesty International has criticized your government on this score. What is your comment, Mr Minister?

Answer Let us consider the whole story of this detention. Ten years ago we put maybe 500,000 to 600,000 people in jail. Ten years later, we are still detaining between 30,000 to 40,000. Of course everybody would like to see those people released from jail or from Buru island. They are a big burden on the government. But if they really were involved in the attempted coup of 1965 then they must be brought to justice....To keep them all in jail is against our basic five democratic principles and also against common humanity. We hope that little by little they can join society on Buru island and then maybe we can move them to another island, or other islands later. But they must come back to society in the near future.

Question What is your opinion of the Amnesty International? Some people say it has been infiltrated by communists. What is your view?

Answer From an objective viewpoint, they would like to fight for the humanitarian cause, whether in communist countries or capitalist countries or Asian countries. I think that is the objective side of Amnesty International...Their main idea is humanitarianism.

3. Agence France Press 27 August 1976

Jakarta - The planned release of political prisoners in Indonesia will infallibly be influenced by the increasing communist activities in neighbouring countries, top security chief, Admiral Sudomo said Thursday.

Answering questions by the Jakarta daily Kompas, Admiral Sudomo said authorities would naturally take into account the flare up of communist disturbances around Indonesia in their plans for the release of detainees held in connection with the 1965 communist coup in Indonesia. He did not elaborate. A total of 1,500 detainees were freed last December and plans were announced for the release of 2,500 more this year.

4. KOPKAMTIB CHIEF OF STAFF TO RADIO AUSTRALIA

2,500 'B' CATEGORY G30S PRISONERS RELEASED IN 1976

Jakarta, 26 July 1976 (Sinar Harapan)

The Indonesian Government has definite plans for resolving the G30S prisoners, which were commenced in 1972 by beginning to release the ex-category 'C' prisoners, and for this year a total of 2,500 'B' category prisoners are to be released.

Admiral Sudomo, Chief of Staff of KOPKAMTIB, in an interview with Radio Australia broadcast on Saturday evening reiterated that 'B' category prisoners are ex-PKI members (Communist Party of Indonesia) and were clearly indirectly involved, that is to say, after knowing about that rebellious movement, they displayed an attitude, whether in deeds or words, of agreeing with the said movement.

"It is not correct to say that they are not guilty. They were indirectly involved, but insufficient proof is available to bring them to court. If we had let them go from the beginning, who would have been able to guarantee that they would not continue with their crimes," he said. This involves matters of ideology, of conviction, they would not retreat and would take advantage of every opportunity."

Sudomo stated that there is no state in the world that is prepared to risk its security. Every state has the right to take measures for security, to safeguard the state and nation. We have experienced rebellions by the PKI on two occasions.

Internal Affair

Sudomo said: "The question of the G30S/PKI prisoners is an internal affair, and no other state or social grouping in other countries has the right to interfere in this matter. We shall eventually resolve this question ourselves. It is a matter of time and how to reduce the security risk."

Sudomo said that the government released category 'C' prisoners in 1972. Then on 1 December 1975 it released 1,309 prisoners of the 'B' category and civil servants of the C2 and C3 categories may continue in their jobs until they reach their natural pension age provided they do not engage in activities harmful to the security of the state and nation. During 1976, it is intended to release a further 2,500 'B' category prisoners.

Amnesty International

In reply to a question, Sudomo said that there are conditions that must be met by Amnesty International in order to be allowed to visit places of detention in Indonesia, namely it must refrain from adopting a hostile attitude, it must not incite and it must not distort the facts.

Amnesty International has been infiltrated by and is being manipulated by communist elements. These elements must be cleansed and the organization must be restored to its purpose of struggling for basic human rights, "and only then shall we consider allowing it to visit our rehabilitation installations".

Admiral Sudomo mentioned that the International Red Cross has twice visited places of detention on Buru Island and elsewhere in 1972 and 1974.

'B' category prisoners who have already been released, according to Sudomo, are under supervision, and having to uphold a written undertaking that they would be on their good behaviour as Indonesian citizens, that they will not participate in activities and will abandon the communist ideology.

These ex-prisoners are getting help such as employment opportunities so as to continue their livelihood. While in detention, they were given training in vocational training courses and many of them were active during their detention in productive work, such as making toys, musical instruments, furniture, etc.

Sudomo confirmed that 540,000 'C' category prisoners have already been released. They are free to engage in any work they are capable of without restriction, except that they are not permitted to enter the Armed Forces, government service and vital enterprises. "We are not an established state. We are a developing country which is naturally not free of various challenges which confront us concerning the field of employment and the raising and distribution of incomes."