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EA/IND:RGRich, Jr:es
(Drafting Office and Officer)

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: December 12, 1967

SUBJECT: Papuan Independence and the West New Guinea Plebiscite

PARTICIPANTS: Marcus W. Kaisiepo - "President in Exile of the Government of West Papua"
A.F. Poulus-Obinaru - "Secretary of the High Court of Chamber of Representatives of West Papua"
Francis T. Underhill - Director of Indonesian Affairs, (EA/IND) Department of State

COPIES TO: Robert G. Rich, Jr. - EA/IND

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Mr. Kaisiepo explained that he had called to set forth the situation in West New Guinea (West Irian) and the wishes of the Papuan people. He proceeded to do so in fluent and erudite bahasa (which Kaisiepo referred to as the "Malayan" language). These were his main points:

- a. The Papuan people were not consulted when agreement was reached in 1962 between the Netherlands and Indonesia on the transfer of administrative control over West New Guinea. Both the Netherlands and Indonesia are foreign countries and so regarded by the Papuan nation and people. Although they had not themselves been consulted, the Papuans recognized that a peaceful agreement was preferable to war as a means for settling disputes, and were reassured by the Article 18 commitment to hold a United Nations supervised ascertainment of the wishes of the Papuan people before the end of 1969 to determine their future political status. Today they continue to count heavily on the just implementation of this commitment.
- b. The new Indonesian Government has this year made several statements acknowledging its responsibility under the New York Agreement to carry out a plebiscite. If heard only

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in the context of international relations abroad, these statements sound fine. If compared with Indonesian actions within West New Guinea, however, they sound hollow.

- c. The reality is grim. Indonesia is oppressing the Papuan people. At the time the Dutch withdrew, there was freedom of speech and movement, expanding educational opportunity, and great hope for the future. Now there is no freedom of speech, no freedom of movement, and forceful oppression is the rule. The foreign Indonesian rulers tell the people bluntly not to put any hope in a 1969 referendum. Any Papuan who talks about the referendum is put in jail.
- d. Last March Indonesia used a naval, air and land bombardment against Papuan patriots in the Manokwari area. More than 2,000 were killed. The Indonesian Government pooh-poohed this and claimed only 40 persons had died, but later admitted that there were at least 1,000. Both physical and spiritual oppression continue, robbing the Papuan people of their spirit as well as their physical freedom.
- e. All we ask for is that Indonesia honorably carry out her obligation, as a member of the UN and as a signatory of the New York Agreement, to make preparations for and conduct an honest and fair referendum. No such preparations are underway. Instead there are only oppression and threats.
- f. Papuans do not want to be dominated by a foreign power, or be sucked against their will into the intrigues of mainland Asia via Indonesia. Papuans in West New Guinea feel a natural affinity for their brothers to the East who are approaching independence (with Australian assistance) and look in the future to a united and free nation comprising all of New Guinea and the adjacent Melanesian islands. This desire for freedom and independent nationhood is felt both by the educated and the uneducated, by the coastal dweller and the more isolated peoples of the mountains.
- g. We ask the attention of the United States Government to this situation. We know that you have many other problems to deal with, but as the mediator which brought the Netherlands and Indonesia to agreement in New York, as well as

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a nation which respects democracy and shows humanity to others, we hope you will see to it that the New York agreement is implemented fairly.

Mr. Underhill thanked Mr. Kaisiepo for his clear presentation and made three points: 1) It is not possible now to say what position the United States will take on this situation; 2) Mr. Kaisiepo and his colleagues should look to Holland in the first instance for insuring the fair implementation of the New York Agreement since it is a signatory thereof and the United States is not; and 3) In attempting to bring influence to bear on Indonesia in this matter, it would be useful to get other Asian or African countries interested, since in any problem involving colonialism the views of the "white" nations would tend to be arbitrarily dismissed.

Kaisiepo said that the Dutch position was that they would insist on implementation of the New York Agreement and the holding of the referendum, but that they had taken no steps to insure that such a referendum was fairly conducted or that the Papuan people had the means for freely expressing themselves. The Front National Papua had done considerable lobbying with Asian and African delegations at the United Nations but was completely disillusioned of any hope that they might be helpful. The Afro-Asian nations were blinded by the 1955 Bandung meeting and would do nothing to criticize Indonesia. The Papuans had come to the conclusion that only the older democracies, with their commitment to principle and freedom, could offer the assurance that the voice of the Papuan people would be freely heard as had been promised.

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