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Copy of letter from Sjafruddin Prawiranegara to:

Mr. Edwin L. Fox
P.O. Box 3512
Des Moines, Iowa.

Djakarta, August 5, 1965

Dear Mr. Fox:

I have been following with the greatest interest the course of events in Viet Nam, especially after the new, but now relatively old, turn which it has taken since the U.S. decision to extend the war, at least the air-raids to North Vietnam.

But what fascinates me even more than the new course of the war in Viet Nam, is the vehement debate among politicians, journalists, and academicians which the policy change has aroused throughout the U.S. The fact that so many not only intelligent and well-known but also bona-fide college professors and journalists - bona fide in the sense of not belonging to any group politically opposed to the present Government in power and who can therefore be regarded as quite sincere with regard to the motives for the promulgation of their views and the beliefs in the justness of their arguments - are taking part in this national debate, makes it the more fascinating but also .. perplexing!

Perplexing, because those bona-fide intellectuals are criticizing the U.S. Government along lines of argument based upon the belief that the United States is unable to win the war in Viet Nam and thus has to quit the country as soon as possible, even if it would be compelled to leave it as a prey to the communist Viet Cong and ultimately to North Vietnam. For - following their line of thought - continuing the war means not only that the U.S. cannot win the war in Viet Nam, but also that it will generate a third nuclear world-war in which ultimately no one will be the winner because of the wide-spread devastation and annihilation caused by nuclear weapons.

These views are especially perplexing to those - to whom I belong - who are equally sincerely convinced that the U.S. is following the only right path which leads, if not to a decisive military victory, at least to a necessary containment of aggressive communism within the borders as delineated by the existing international agreements (on Korea, Vietnam and Laos).

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Why is their defeatist, even if sincere judgment so perplexing to me? Because I believe, one needs not to be an Asian to know that to win a war one must first of all have the will to fight and win. This is not only true for small, weak nations, but also for mighty world-powers like the U.S.

But before waging a war one must first be convinced of the justness of the motives to engage upon such a war. And here we are touching on a moral or (religious) belief. I believe - and I don't think that one must be an Asian or a non-Christian to adhere to this belief - vis. that wars are justifiable only in case of self defense or the defense of law, i.e. international law and agreements. Not only are wars engaged upon in self-defense or for the protection and right functioning of international law and agreements justifiable, but in the face of aggressive atheism like communism, or any other aggressive ideology, wars in self-defense or for the protection of international law and agreements, are very often necessary. For these aggressive ideologies do not believe in God, human dignity and honor as the basis of law and agreements, but they believe in power and self-interest as the motor of human action. Thus, the abstention on the side of democratic nations - out of humane considerations - from the use of force to uphold agreements entered upon with the communist counterpart, will be regarded as a weakness by the latter and only invite them to further violations!

It should be noted that many leaders of countries which have just been liberated from colonial rule, tend to regard their former masters and their likes merely as imperialists whose actions are only motivated by self-interest and power. Therefore they become very often an easy prey of communist propaganda.

In "Time" of July 2, 1965, I read: "Above all", said General Mark Clark, "the 'Reds' must be made to feel the brunt of overwhelming force." Communists, he added, respect force and stop, look and listen when they see it."

I am glad that not only a general, but also a civilian like Mr. Averell Harriman, who knows the communists so well, is of the same, nay, even stronger opinion, as may be clear from the same Time issue

Dear Mr. Fox, as an Asian who has fought for the independence of his people and has suffered and is still suffering, together with untold millions, from the abuse of it by unscrupulous fellow countrymen, and whose main hope - I do not say only hope - lies in the willingness and capability of the United States to perform its obligations and to (help) win the war in Viet Nam - either by a complete military victory or by a

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political solution (agreement) with firm guarantees for the containment of the communists within the borders as assigned to them according to the Geneva agreements. I would like to ask the following questions to those who so vehemently, even if sincerely, criticize the U.S. Government.

Is the U.S.' presence in Viet Nam and the ensuing war against the Viet Cong, started long before the decision to extend the air raids to North Vietnam, due to "imperialistic" purposes of the U.S., or in fulfillment of its international obligations, especially its obligation towards the South Vietnamese people?

If the U.S.-presence in Vietnam and the ensuing war against the Viet Cong and its further extension to North Vietnam, the true Master of the Viet Cong, is due to the fulfillment of its international obligations, then a pulling out of the U.S. from South Vietnam without first establishing the necessary conditions to safeguard the peaceful continuation of South Vietnam (or its peaceful association or unification with North Vietnam) will undoubtedly be regarded:

(a) Throughout the free world as a breach of promise of the U.S. towards the Vietnamese people. This will most probably cause irreparable damage not only to the prestige of the U.S., but also to the foundations of such for the security of the U.S. and world peace so vital organizations as the Nato, Seato, etc. and

(b) Throughout the communist world and the newly independent countries which have recently been forced from colonial rule, as a great weakness of the U.S. which will considerably advance the influence and power and stimulate the aggressiveness of Chinese communism and its followers like the Indonesian communists.

Apart from the moral question, whether it is right for the U.S. to abandon the South Vietnamese people in violation of its treaty obligations, and the practical question whether the consequences of such an act would not be quite the reverse of what the critics of U.S.-policy in Vietnam probably expect from such a retreat of the U.S. from Vietnam, - viz. To prevent a much greater loss of American lives and property and to secure the safety of the U.S. -- the question may be put to those critics, what plausible reasons they can muster for their belief, that the U.S. cannot win the war in Vietnam.

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Nobody in the world, if he has a little knowledge of its history and the present national and international conditions, can or will believe, that the most powerful nation in the world, that has won the second world war, is not able to (help) win the war in Vietnam, except, if it is unwilling to fight further.

And as to the fear that further U.S. involvement and escalation of the war could generate an inhuman, devastating nuclear war, if this argument is earnestly accepted, then the U.S. might well stop to produce nuclear weapons, nay, it should immediately start to destroy its existing stock of nuclear arms. For that would be the best way and the only one to prevent the possibility for the outbreak of a nuclear war. Any present or future war contains necessarily the possibility of a nuclear ending, if it is indeed the serious intention of the nations in possession of nuclear arms, to make effective use of them in case of necessity.

The tragedy for mankind is not that it has now to face the possibility of nuclear wars, but that, in this 20th century, it is still plagued by the facts and possibilities of wars as such. But alas! so long as there are still nations, lead by individuals who do not believe in God, human goodwill and brotherhood as the basis for an effective rule of law in human affairs, either in national societies or between nations, the peace-loving nations have to accept the old adage: *si vis pacem para bellum*, even if it must be a *bellum atomicum*!

It is a tragedy that mankind is still haunted by the spectre of war, but it would be a still greater tragedy if powerful nations like the U.S. were not willing to use its power, actually or potentially, to its full effectiveness for the maintenance of peace through the functioning of international law and agreements.

With regard to the role and the use of power in general and by the U.S. in particular, I have the greatest admiration for the views of Mr. George McBundy as exposed in the "Time" issue of June 25, 1965. I think the fundamental idea in his view is based upon the well-known truth, that law, for its effective functioning needs the backing of force. Lack of such a backing by force makes law the target of abuse and ridicule. On the other hand, the use of force without the backing of law, makes such an act a barbarous violation of human rights. This is not only true for national law but is especially so for international law which lacks the backing of an adequate international force and thus,

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in many cases, might with more propriety be called international lawlessness:

As long as the United Nations, originally created to provide for the necessary power to enforce international law and thus to maintain world-peace, has not yet succeeded and apparently will not succeed under the prevailing international conditions, to attain its lofty aim, it is the duty of the United States and all peace-loving nations -- preferably within, but if necessary outside the scope of U.N. activities -- to check barbarism and preserve human values, i.e. human dignity and civilization, even at the risk of a nuclear war!

That sounds rather paradoxical if one takes into account the real possibility that in case of a nuclear war wide areas of the earth, including the big cities, will be wiped out, thus leaving not much of our civilization, while a great deal of the human race, especially the intellectually and economically advanced nations, will be considerably reduced in number.

But we must not forget that ultimately the most important thing is not the preservation of the entire physical human race or the entire visible civilization, but the maintenance of human values, the salvage of human i.e. divine dignity.

The duty of every human being who regards himself as the child or creature of God, is to resist evil even at the risk or the cost of his own death or annihilation. For ultimately, the preservation of the physical human race is not our task, the task of God's creatures, but God's own task, the task of the Creator who created us from "dust" or "nothing". Let God take care of his creation, and let man do his duty: to preserve, and if necessary, to fight for human dignity.

What is true for individuals is also true for nations: God-fearing, peace-loving nations should not shrink from their duty to protect the law in order to preserve peace and human dignity from fear for the terrible consequences of a nuclear war.

Out of the ravages of the second world war we saw the emergence of prosperous, democratic nations in Germany, Italy and Japan in the place of former totalitarian societies. So we need not doubt from suffering and death will emerge new, human life, if we are only willing to fight for its preservation like the Allied Nations have done in the second

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world war. If Hitler had won, nobody can tell what would have been the fate of mankind. It would surely have been a serious regression towards primordial barbarism. But that would be contrary to God's intentions and plans as we understand them in our conception of evolution (vide: Leconte Du Nouy, Human Destiny). Thus, the allied Nations were destined to win the second world war, because they carried the banner of human dignity and human values.

Therefore, I am convinced that the U.S. will continue to accomplish its historic duty in South Vietnam, like it has done in the past, in two world wars, in accordance with the course of Evolution. It must, and it will win.

Dear Mr. Fox, this is no flattery, but I have indeed the greatest confidence in your nation under its present leadership.

I don't know whether you share the views of the U.S. Government's critics like Walter Lipmann and Prof. Morgenthau, or agree with Mr. Johnson's policy. I guess and I hope that you endorse the Government's policy out of conviction. But if you happen to be opposed to it, then I hope that any arguments as outlined above, though far from complete, may contribute to change your mind, or in any case compel you to re-think the whole problem.

The battle in Viet Nam is in my opinion decisive for the security and future not only of the South Vietnamese people and the neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, but of the United States as well, nay, of all mankind. If the United States can convince friends and foes alike that it is prepared to use its entire power, including its nuclear "force de frappe" to meet and eventually defeat the North Vietnamese aggression, begun as a Viet Cong subversive infiltration, in violation of existing international agreements, then the chances are very real, that not only the Russians, but also the Chinese communists will grudgingly accept the rule of living in peaceful coexistence with others, non-communist and even capitalist countries. Thus the dangers for an outbreak of a nuclear war will be greatly checked.

The seemingly stubborn unwillingness of the North Vietnamese communists, backed by the Chinese and Russians, to enter upon peace-talks, despite the escalation of the war, and their threats to carry on the war for an indefinite period, should not deceive us. It belongs to the usual display of bluffs, threats and invectives which must necessarily

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accompany the political activities of ideologies which have only respect for power and look with the greatest disdain upon such human values as decency, honesty and humanity.

I am convinced, if the United States sticks to its present policy, and makes it abundantly clear that its sole purpose is to stop North Vietnamese aggression, but for that purpose is prepared to crush North Vietnam, and if necessary, use its entire military and economic power, then sooner or later, and I think rather soon than late, the Communists will accept President Johnson's offer to talk about peace.

As I have said before, upon the outcome of the battle in Vietnam depends the future world peace, the crucial question whether the communists, especially the Chinese Reds, will accept the rule of peaceful coexistence with non-communists, particularly capitalist countries.

If such a coexistence between communist and non-communist countries lasts long enough, the salient ideological and structural differences between communist and capitalist societies will gradually diminish: communist societies will become more human and open, and capitalist societies more socialized. In other words, in communist societies the rights and freedom of the individual will become increasingly acknowledged and respected, whereas in capitalist countries the State will gradually assume more powers toward the individual, especially with regard to property rights.

Thus, the several nations of the world will in the long run grow towards each other to form one mankind, willing to live under the rule of law. This is the line of evolution as indicated and necessitated (!) by the discovery of atomic energy and the possibility of travel and adventure in the world deep outside the earth. The detection of the tremendous possibilities, but also dangers of the microcosmos as contained in the atom and the mighty attraction imposed upon the human mind and imagination by the beckoning lights of the microcosmos, has made our good, old earth too small and too dangerous to tolerate the existence of quarrelsome and bellicose sovereign nations. (De Gaulle is a dinosaurian anachronism!)

Dear Mr. Fox, I hope the outpourings of my heart, meant more as a means of giving expression and outlet to my perplexity which I indicated before, than as an effort to convince you or anyone else who happens to disagree with the current U.S. policy in Vietnam, doesn't annoy you too much.

So much is at stake with the continuation or discontinuation of that policy - also and especially for Indonesia - that I cannot keep

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ment, even if my voice is but that of a defeated rebel - but a fighter for human dignity and honor - at the mercy of his barbaric victor. Only because there is a real hope and possibility of change for the better for the suffering masses in Indonesia, if the U.S. can win in Vietnam and check the communist flood, did I decide to write you this letter to relate my view to you, even if it doesn't show you any new aspect of the problem. Maybe it doesn't contain any new argument and is therefore of no value intellectually, but as a moral support for the U.S. Government, coming from the suffering masses of Indonesia for whom I have stronger claims than Mr. Sukarno to act as their mouthpiece, my exposition may not be quite worthless - at least, if it could reach the proper responsible authorities through your intermediary.

Dear Mr. Fox, I heard that you had been transferred to Washington. If this is true, will you be so kind as to convey my highest regards to Mr. Rush? I made his acquaintance in 1955 (?) when he was still President of the Rockefeller Foundation on the introduction of Mr. John D. Rockefeller III. I believe I have mentioned this to you already.

And further, would you please also remember me to Mr. Martin, Chairman of the Federal Reserve System and convey my respects to him? It is quite a long time since I met him for the last time, but I hope he still remembers me.

There are two persons about whom my wife and I have not heard anything for a long time and of whom we have always the most pleasant memories. Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III. If you know them or happen to make their acquaintance, would you please tell them that we are always thinking of them and wondering when we would be able to meet them again and have an enjoyable chat at the dinner table.

And last but not least of all, will you and Mrs. Fox accept the sincere regards and affection of us who will never forget your kindness, generosity, help and understanding during the most difficult period of our life.

May God bless you and your family and may He give the leaders of your country the wisdom and courage required to steer the U.S. ship of State safely through the current stormy weather!

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Prawiranegara and family

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P.S. There is still one argument used to support the view that the U.S. should quit South Vietnam, which is too important to be passed without an answer. The argument runs: that South Vietnam has no stable government because it has no leader of national stature, and it has no national leaders because in fact the South Vietnamese do not constitute a nation, but is a loose conglomeration of very different ethnic and religious groups, hostile towards each other, and held together only by military power. If the South Vietnamese were given the freedom to choose between North and South Vietnam, their choice would certainly fall on North Vietnam.

This argument is unfair to the South Vietnamese and constitutes a reversal of facts. It is just because of North Vietnamese aggression and subversion that the South Vietnamese people are not able to choose their own leaders and form a government. And it is just to insure their right of self-determination that the U.S. has stepped in at the request of the legal - even if not quite representative- South Vietnamese Government, and has joined the war.

If such a freedom of self-determination will have been reached, it is absolutely uncertain, if the South Vietnamese people would be willing to join North Vietnam and accept its communist form of government. I think it more probable that they would prefer to continue their present independent status and choose their own, more democratic form of government under their own national leaders. And if then the North Vietnamese were equally free to choose between North and South Vietnam, I bet the North Vietnamese will join South Vietnam or form a similar more democratic government.

In Indonesia, too, if the people were free to choose, they would certainly prefer a more democratic government instead of the present totalitarian "guided democracy" which is ruining the country by all kinds of abuse and irresponsible experiments and adventures put together under the slogan "vivere pericoloso."

For I believe, not only is democracy more in accordance with human dignity and divine law, but just because of that, it will become the general form of government in the world of the future.

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