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## Roeslan Abdulgani Becomes an Opponent of "Sukarnoism" &amp; BPS

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Summary

Ruslan Abdulgani, the Coordinating Minister for Public Relations and a leading figure on the right wing of the PNI created the slogan "Sukarnoism" last May as a cover for building a mildly anti-PKI doctrine that hopefully would stem the Communist advance by enlisting Sukarno's sympathies for the non-Communists. After Sukarno made clear in his Tavip speech of last August and its aftermath that his sympathies were with the Communists and their allies, "Sukarnoism" passed over increasingly to the leadership of Chairul Saleh and the Marba Party, which tried to institutionalize this incoherent defensive philosophy through formation of a "Body to Support Sukarnoism" (BPS). Ruslan Abdulgani seemed to be allied behind the scenes with the BPS inner circle but his role had become secondary. More recently, Ruslan has joined the rest of the PNI leadership in denouncing "Sukarnoism" and the BPS. This report examines this background and such information as is available concerning Ruslan's motivations. In essence, the reports point toward a combination of personal pique over the greater role assumed by other politicians in the "Sukarnoism" movement and of the requirements of internal PNI politics and other opportunistic political factors.

Early Background

1-22-65  
Ruslan Abdulgani, the Coordinating Minister for Public Relations and Fourth Chairman of the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI), has recently made a number of public statements strongly attacking the



BPS (Body for the Support of Sukarnoism) and the alleged misuse of the word "Sukarnoism" by agents of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. This position places Ruslan Abdulgani in the company of the PKI and its allies against the anti-Communist BPS led by Chairul Saleh and Adam Malik and is a reversal of Ruslan's early advocacy of "Sukarnoism" beginning last May.

Actually Ruslan Abdulgani's initial prominence as a spokesman for "Sukarnoism" had already given way by the time of President Sukarno's August 17 TAVIP speech to a behind-the-scenes supporting role. The conversion of the vague "Sukarnoism" of Ruslan's speeches of late spring into a more broadly based movement required a greater political base than was available to Ruslan and accordingly he apparently began working with the Murba-Saleh forces to this end. Sajuti Melik, a PNI journalist with a Murba and ex-PKI background, who thus served as a sort of right-wing PNI-Murba link, became the chief spokesman of "Sukarnoism" and the pro-Murba papers Berita Indonesia and Warta Berita became the central forum for "Sukarnoist" views along with the independent Merdeka whose editor, B. M. Diah, had a personal history that was also close to both Murba and the PNI.

After TAVIP, Ruslan faded more and more into the background of the Sukarnoism movement as the latter sought to institutionalize itself and to gain momentum under the leadership of Adam Malik. Ruslan's public utterances from September to November were much more cautious than those of the self-proclaimed new leaders of "Sukarnoism" although they seemed to afford the BPS peripheral support through emphasis on "Pantja Sila," religion and other anti-PKI standbys. (This cautious behind-the-scenes approach was also characteristic at that time of Chairul Saleh, whose political vulnerability was, like Ruslan's, extremely great by virtue of his being a target of Sukarno's TAVIP speech and an intended victim or partial victim of the late August aborted cabinet purge.)

#### The PNI Lembang Conference

In mid-November, the PNI held a Party conference (meeting of the First Working Body of the PNI Congress - Sidang Badan Pekeraja Konggres PNI ke-1) at Lembang near Bandung. This meeting issued a declaration that strongly defended Marhaenism as the ideology of Indonesia and defined the latter as "nothing other than Marxism adapted to the historical development of the society, situation and condition of Indonesia" and endorsed a speech by Party leader Ali Sastroamidjojo that implicitly attacked "Sukarnoism." An Indian Embassy source said to be close to the PNI leadership has said that Ruslan Abdulgani advocated the adoption by the PNI of a neutral attitude toward the BPS at this time. According to this source, the leader of the so-called moderate faction of the PNI, Hardi, was just as opposed to the BPS as was Ali Sastroamidjojo, the PNI General Chairman whose political position is now almost always a close reflection of the PKI positions. This Indian Embassy source stated that Ruslan Abdulgani continued to debate PNI policy regarding the BPS with Hardi for several weeks after the Lembang conference but that Hardi was unmoved.



### Ruslan Joins the BPS and Sukarnoism Critics

The PNI issued a statement on December 9 recommending that the President abolish the BPS and halt all activities of the "Sukarnoism" movement. The statement claimed that the latter diluted Marhaenism, sheltered elements of doubtful loyalty to the President and was destructive of national unity. On the following day Ruslan said in a speech to a PNI labor group that he opposed Sukarnoism because it contained "illegal hitchhikers" and might be considered as opposed to Marhaenism, the vague doctrine espoused by Sukarno some 35 years ago that is particularly associated with the PNI. The Indian Embassy source holds that Ruslan, whose base of organizational support in the PNI is meager compared to that of Hardi, came to the conclusion that he must accede to the PNI majority viewpoint.

### Other Explanations of Ruslan's Switch

An Embassy source with good political connections, Pang Lay Kim, told the reporting officer on December 29 that Ruslan's attack on the BPS was motivated by a belief that he had been prevented from playing an effective role in the subsequent development of the Sukarnoism movement in spite of his early contribution to its launching. He also reputedly felt that the BPS had carried Sukarnoism too far from the official line and made it too openly anti-Communist.

The visiting American scholar, Ruth McVey, received a similar impression from an interview with Ruslan himself shortly before Christmas, according to another scholar who discussed the interview with Professor McVey (the secondary nature of this information derives from the fact that Professor McVey departed on a three week field trip to Central Java). Ruslan responded to Professor McVey's questions at first with a rendition of his public rationale but then added that Sukarnoism had been a useful gimmick at first because of its ability to masquerade behind Sukarno's name but unfortunately it had been taken over by people who overdid the use of an effective instrument. Professor McVey reportedly received the impression that Ruslan was personally piqued because his voice in Sukarnoism had not been heeded and others had shunted him to one side.

### Comment

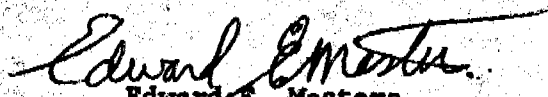
The report of Ruslan's personal pique at being reduced to a minor voice in Sukarnoism by the Marha group in general and Malik in particular is not necessarily contradictory to the Indian Embassy report that Ruslan's action was brought about by internal PNI pressures. Other factors may be present too although there is not likely to be much evidence to corroborate such speculation. Ruslan may aspire to leadership of the PNI if Ali Sastroamidjojo can be ousted, which is a recurrent theme in the PNI. Ali does not have massive organizational support and is also reportedly regarded with some disfavor by Sukarno. The latter has reportedly only hung on to Ali because



no one else can be found who would have sufficient stature and who would at the same time espouse a general political viewpoint acceptable to Sukarno. Perhaps Ruslan feels that if he mends his ways he can gain Sukarno's support to replace Ali. There is also a possibility that Sukarno has spoken directly to Ruslan at some point in a manner that would make it unalterably clear that Sukarno did not favor the continued existence of the BPS and that Ruslan, whose deviations were almost his undoing earlier this year, had better adopt a proper attitude or face a shortened career. Another related factor, and one that influences all political maneuvering now, is the question of the President's health. All the top contenders for the succession are aware that Sukarno has a health problem and will leave the scene some day but there is probably a difference in their calculations as to when that fateful day might be. Perhaps Ruslan believed that the BPS group would fail and that he should prepare for making a power play at a much later time.

Whatever the exact blend of Ruslan's motivations for turning against the BPS, his action increases the difficulties of the "Sukarnoism" group who now have to face the criticism of a superficially united PNI as well as that of the PKI and several smaller groups more closely subservient to the PKI in the public mind. Ruslan's action also shows the difficulty of maintaining a common anti-PKI front among the disparate and mutually jealous non-Communist groups.

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