

TWO ESSAYS ON INDONESIA: AIRPOWER AND SOVEREIGNTY IN REVOLUTION;
CAMBODIA AND THE INDONESIAN CONNECTION

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by

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ABSTRACT

“Airpower and Sovereignty in Revolution” addresses how the Indonesian Republican government used foreign pilots to acquire meaningful airpower during its struggle for independence. Samuel Crowl (2009) argued that the Indonesian revolution was successful because the Republican government carried out “an unprecedented ‘diplomatic revolution’” by attracting international support beyond Europe and the United States. Without airpower the Republicans would not have been able to maintain their diplomatic revolution in the face of increasing Dutch Isolation. This essay explores how the Republicans acquired and employed airpower.

“Cambodia and the Indonesian Connection” argues that the events in Cambodia since its independence are better understood by examining the relationship between Indonesia and Cambodia from 1955 through 1975. By examining this relationship one can better understand 1) the neutralist course Prince Sihanouk attempted to pursue, 2) the path to the Cambodian genocide, and 3) the importance each state played in the other’s foreign policy.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David Bell was raised in Southern Oregon and graduated from Crater High School in 1997. Following graduation he attended Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. During his studies at Brigham Young, David enrolled in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps and enlisted in the Utah National Guard. David took two years off from his studies at Brigham Young to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Thailand from 1999 to 2001. David graduated from Brigham Young in 2004 and commissioned as an Infantry officer in the United States Army.

As an Army officer David has served as a platoon leader, company executive officer and company commander. He was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. From 2011 to 2012 he attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California and completed the Basic Indonesian Language Course. In August 2013 he enrolled at Cornell University in preparation for his future service as a United States Army Foreign Area Officer.

For my family.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CALI	Commercial Airlines Incorporated
GANEFO	The Games of the New Emerging Forces
IOC	International Olympic Committee
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PRC	People's Republic of China
US	United States

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CHAPTER 1

AIRPOWER AND SOVEREIGNTY IN REVOLUTION

As the British withdrew from Indonesia in 1946, and the Dutch stepped up their attempts to isolate the young revolutionary Republic, the Republican government responded by pursuing ways to maintain and strengthen its sovereignty. One of these ways was through the use of airpower. In pursuing its own airpower, the Republic sought to bring foreign aircraft and pilots into its skies. From February 1947 to December 1948 foreign pilots and planes, particularly American, Australian and British were an essential tool in the young Republic's efforts to assert its sovereignty in the face of Dutch isolation. During this period, increased naval patrols by the Dutch, which increasingly isolated Republican held territory, and the *de facto* sovereignty granted to the Republican government through the Linggajati Agreement created the conditions that drove the Republican government to pursue airpower. Prior to this period neither the British nor the Dutch had significantly restricted Republican movement, and after this period the Republican government was effectively prisoners of the Dutch following the Second Dutch Military Action in December 1948. Without airpower during this period the Indonesian Revolution would have been seriously hampered because the Republican government would have been isolated from the international political and economic community and would have been unable to successfully press its cause on the international stage due to the geographic remoteness of the territory it held. Furthermore, its geographically fractured parts, particularly on the islands of Java and Sumatra, would have been increasingly isolated from each other as the Dutch cut off the movement of people and goods between them.

Samuel Crowl pointed out that in addition to the standard argument that the Indonesian revolution succeeded because of "unyielding Indonesian armed resistance against re-occupation

and significant U.S. pressure on the Dutch,” the Indonesian Republican government defeated the Dutch through “an unprecedented ‘diplomatic revolution,’” which relied heavily on international support beyond the United States (US) and Europe. (2009: 238-39). According to Crowl, the Linggajati agreement gave the Republic the framework it needed to pursue its diplomatic revolution (245). However, The Linggajati agreement, which was formally signed in March 1947, came at a time when the Dutch were solidifying their control over access to Republican territory. For the diplomatic revolution Crowl describes to have continued the Republic needed its own airpower. Without airpower the Republic would have been unable to sustain the momentum it had built prior to the signing of the Linggajati agreement and the course of the revolution would have been very different.

Having airpower that it controlled benefited the Republican government in several ways. First, it provided the Republic with secure communications between its fractured parts and to its officials stationed abroad. The Republican government had a long-range radio capability, but this was easily monitored by the Dutch and did not allow for secure communications on sensitive matters between officials. With its own air capability the Republican government could quickly dispatch an official to communicate sensitive information or send timely written instructions without the risk of Dutch interception. In addition to secure communications, airpower also provided the Republic with a secure means of trade for high value items embargoed by the Dutch. With airpower the Republic could move items such as quinine and opium to market and obtain weapons and military equipment necessary to continue its struggle for independence. Its own airpower was necessary for secure communications and trade given the increasing Dutch control over movement into and out of Republican held territory.

Republican controlled air assets also provided the republic with increased speed and flexibility to address challenges that arose. At the onset of the revolution the primary mode of transportation connecting the Republican government internally and externally was ship. The distance from Jogjakarta in Java to Bukittinggi in Sumatra was more than 800 miles, and it was a similar distance to Singapore. The trip from Central Java to Singapore by boat took more than ten days (Darusman 1992:24). With airpower the trip could be accomplished in a little over five hours. Manila, 1700 miles from Jogjakarta, could be reached in about twelve hours. For the Republic to press its diplomatic revolution it needed to maintain independent and responsive connections to the international community. From Singapore, Manila and Bangkok Republican officials could continue to all parts of the globe to press their cause. Without airpower the Republic's ability to affect international events in its favor would have been severely degraded. Additionally, it needed to maintain effective internal connections to demonstrate its sovereignty to the international community and its own people. In the face of Dutch isolation, it needed its own meaningful airpower to accomplish this.

The international movement of Republican planes also provided a means for other states to validate Republican sovereignty by allowing them to enter from and depart to Republican held territories, despite Dutch opposition. For Republican officials and cargos to arrive and depart foreign airports, customs and immigration procedures had to be adapted or even invented to meet the bureaucratic and legal needs of various countries. These arrangements had the effect of recognizing the Republican government's right to control the international movement of its people and resources, which amounted to international recognition of its sovereignty.

Initial Conditions

From the time Admiral Mountbatten's mainly British-Indian troops arrived in Indonesia in October 1945 and until they handed control over to the Dutch in December 1946 they made almost no effort to restrict the flow of Republican goods or personnel to the outside world. Mountbatten had neither the troops nor the temperament for such efforts, and he did not sympathise with Dutch desires to return to their colonial past (Cheong 2003:14). Demonstrating their lack of concern, in March of 1946, the British sold surplus naval landing craft in Singapore to traders in an effort to encourage trade with other islands. With landing crafts traders could load and unload cargos virtually anywhere (Yang 1998:211). British actions created an environment that facilitated the movement of Republicans and their goods. The Dutch for their part saw any trade between Indonesia and other nations, which they did not control, as smuggling but could do almost nothing about it (196, 214).

Besides providing badly needed funds and supplies to the Republic the smuggling trade also served as a representation of its sovereignty to the outside world. A good example of this is found in an article published in the Washington Post on February 23rd 1947. In the article the Republican Minister of Economic affairs in Sumatra declared himself "the biggest smuggler in Southeast Asia." The article goes on to explain the scope of the situation:

Since last March the republic, in addition to Java, has controlled all of Sumatra except the slender Allied (now Dutch) bridgeheads here, at Medan and Padang. Here the new government found itself with an area of 162,000 square miles, which is larger than California. It had 8,500,000 people to administer—and it controlled the source of most of the Netherlands East Indies' oil, rubber and other valuable products ("Smuggling Enlivens Trade" 1947).

The article continues by explaining how the Republic had a regularized customs duty collection system on imports and exports. It also required ships calling on its ports to arrive full of consumer goods if they expected to take out shipments. Interestingly, in the closing lines of the article the writer notes:

The smugglers have proven useful during the republic's first months but their day is just about over. The first normal commercial vessel recently cleared from Palembang carrying 200 tons of cargo (all that

happened to be available). For that the republic will receive foreign exchange, something which it has not received in the past (“Smuggling Enlivens Trade” 1947).

This comment seems to signal to the reader that through smuggling the Republic has been transformed from a rebel creation into a legitimate functioning state and can be expected to continue to further expand its sovereignty. Significantly, on the same day the article was published the first chartered Republican flight arrived in Jogjakarta from Singapore.

The Linggajati agreement, which was drafted in November 1946 and signed in March 1947, also expanded Republican notions of sovereignty. As the handover of power from the British to the Dutch quickly approached, Republican and Dutch officials negotiated at Linggajati trying to obtain the best economic and political position for their sides (Cheong 2003:18). At the time Sjahrir was the prime minister and foreign minister of the Republic. Sukarno and Hatta had put him forward as the face of the government because he had not collaborated with the Japanese. His clean credentials, it was thought, would make the Republican leadership more palatable to the arriving allied forces. As it turned out Sjahrir was also far more willing to cooperate with the Dutch and come to a mutual understanding than other Republicans. Sjahrir saw the Dutch as part of the larger capitalist world and cooperation with them as necessary for Indonesia’s development (16). The Dutch however, feared that once the British departed more nationalist forces might rise up and challenge their already fragile control of the archipelago. This fear provided a significant motivation for the Dutch to conclude an agreement with the Republic (17). In the rush to conclude the Linggajati Agreement both sides chose to leave the terms vague in a hope they could use them to their advantage in the future (19).

The Linggajati Agreement recognized “the Government of the Republic of Indonesia as exercising *de facto* authority over Java, Madura and Sumatra” (qtd in Taylor 1960:464). From this recognition the Republican leaders “took the view that the Linggajati Agreement conferred

sovereignty on the Republic.” With this sovereignty the Republic felt it could take open measures to overcome the Dutch blockade. Additionally, through the Linggajati Agreement the Republican government created a legal framework to present itself to the outside world (Cheong 2003:19). It could now provide corporations and states with an internationally legible, legal justification for conducting business and trade with it.

As the Republic was formalizing its sovereignty, the Dutch were trying to erode it. Leading up to and throughout the Linggajati negotiations the Dutch were attempting to further isolate the Republican government. Under the British they had been unable to take measures to curtail Republican trade and financing through operations on land so they turned to their Navy. In mid 1946 the Dutch Navy began seizing ships it deemed as smugglers, which significantly raised the costs of trade in Republican controlled areas (Yang 1998:210). Shortly after the departure of the British the Dutch moved to further restrict trade by announcing the Import-Export Trade Regulation of January 28th 1947. This regulation made illegal (in Dutch eyes) “any import-export activity that did not comply with any of the rules”. The rules included the requirement that all ships call on certain specified Dutch ports and submit to inspections for illicit goods. The rules also required a Dutch license to trade in any produce that could have possibly come from an estate whether it did or not. For example, no local rubber could be exported from the northern third of Sumatra or from anywhere in Java without a license obtained in a Dutch port after submitting to an inspection. Additionally, “goods suitable for military purposes or suitable for the manufacture of goods for military purposes were prohibited from being imported” (223). These regulations were merely a formalization of the Dutch blockade policy (Cheong 2003:146). Through them the Dutch attempted to further isolate the Republic and

deny it its sovereignty (Yang 1998:224). To strengthen its sovereignty and overcome the Dutch blockade the Republic turned to foreign pilots and their planes.

Building an Air Force

At the start of the revolution the Republic had no meaningful air capability. Under Dutch rule there had been one Indonesian bomber pilot, one pilot of a reconnaissance plane and no civilian pilots. Under the Japanese no Indonesians were trained to fly (*RI 002* 2009:36). When the Japanese surrendered they left numerous broken fighter and bomber aircraft, but they left only a few small biplanes and single engine reconnaissance planes that were able to fly (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:18). These planes were extremely limited in cargo capacity and range. Despite this weak position the Republic decided to pursue the development of an aviation sector. Efforts included, attempting to cobble together the various parts of planes into working planes, building a plane from the parts of six old Harley Davidson motorcycle engines, and training new Indonesian pilots to fly using Indonesian built gliders (13-14). These efforts met with very little success. If the Republic was going to use airpower in a meaningful way, it would need outside support.

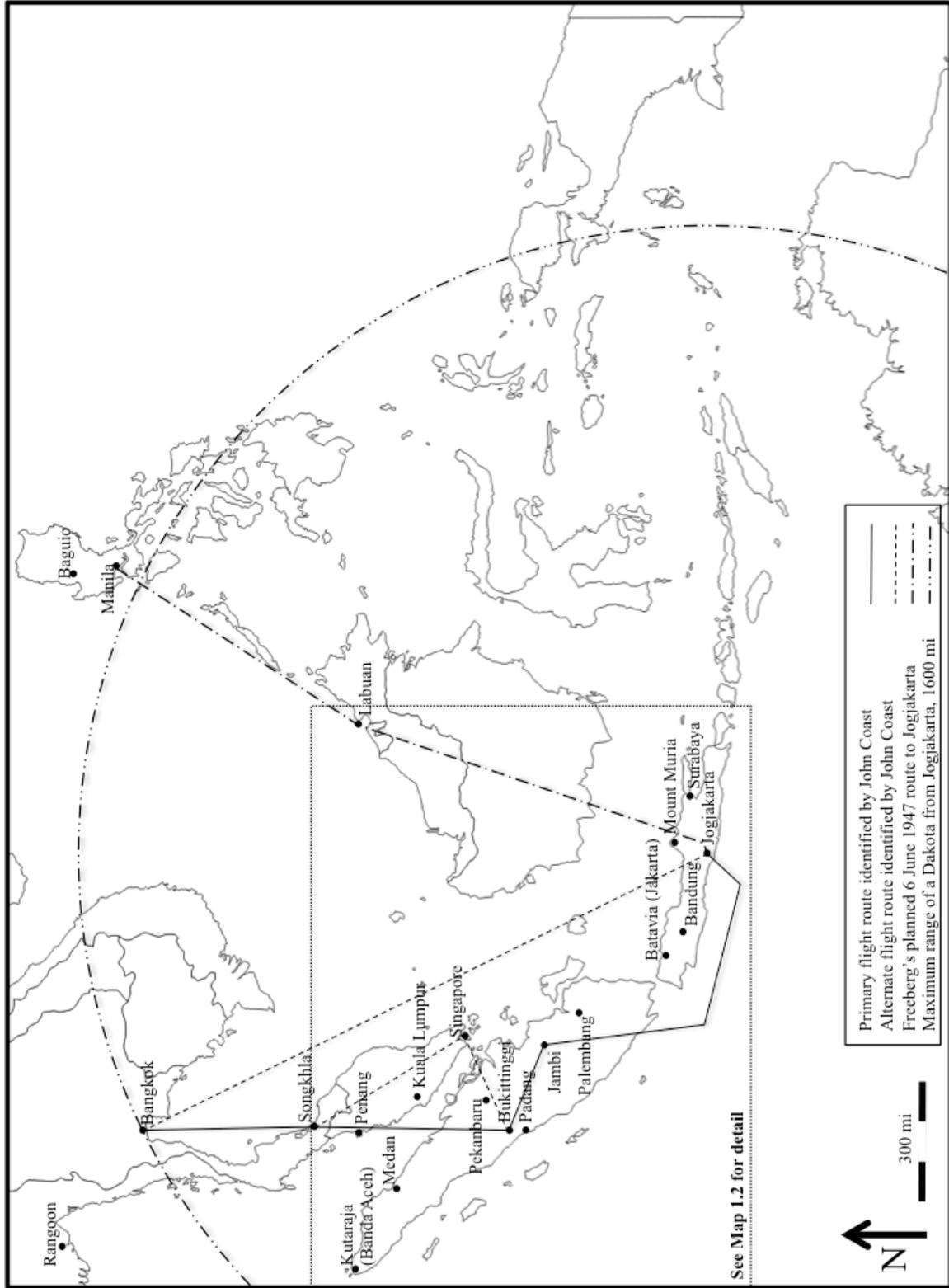
Petit Muharto, a Republican Air Force officer, is credited with developing the air option to overcome the Dutch control of travel and trade. At the end of World War II the world was full of excess aircraft and experienced pilots who had gained a taste for flying and adventure (Darusman 1992:21). Some of them after returning to their homes still wanted to fly, but they were unable to find jobs in the Western civilian aviation world, so they turned to Southeast Asia (Montlake 2010). Muharto came to aviation from a different direction. He had no flying experience but desperately wanted to fly. As a child he was fascinated with planes and wanted to

become an aeronautical engineer but had been unable to fulfill his dream (*RI 002 2009:35*).

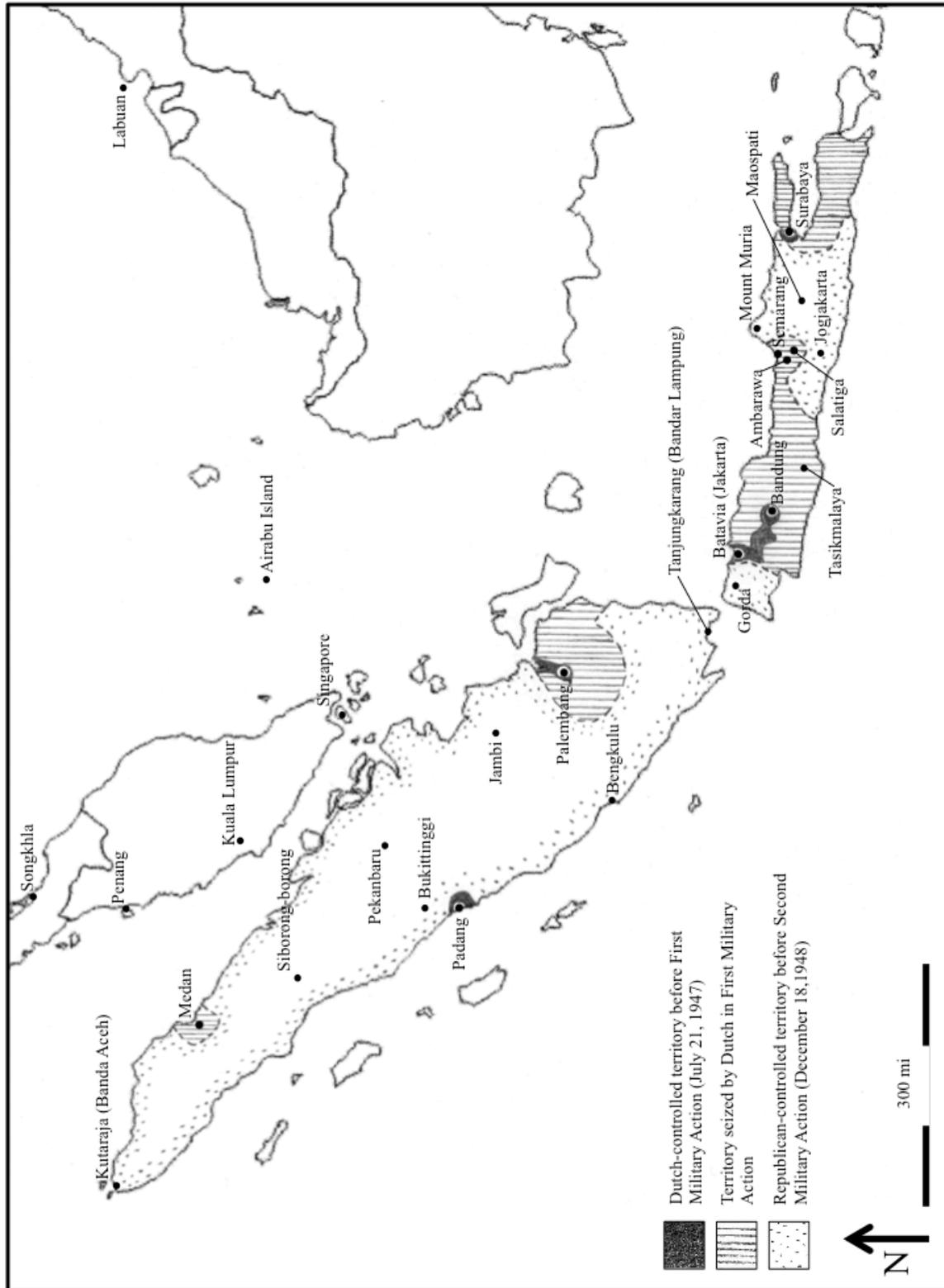
When the revolution broke out Muharto was a schoolteacher. The teachers and students of the school where he taught were initially formed into fighting units, but eventually they were disbanded and informed they would be retrained by the Army. In February 1946 Muharto unexpectedly saw a red and white Republican plane flying over Jogjakarta and was overwhelmed with emotion. From this experience he decided to leave the Army and become an Air Force officer, despite being told not to expect any flight training (36). While on his way to an assignment in Australia he became stranded in Singapore and began to work on developing the air option to overcome the Dutch blockade (Darusman 1992:21). From Singapore he also traveled to Manila, and between the two locations he was eventually able to convince a number of foreign aviation companies to make flights to Republican Indonesia (*RI 002 2009:37*).

Commercial Air Lines Incorporated of the Philippines (CALI) flew the first blockade running flight on February 23th 1947 from Kalang Airport in Singapore to Maguwo Airbase in Jogjakarta, despite objections from the Dutch. An American piloted the first CALI flight with a Filipino co-pilot and crew, complete with flight attendant. There were five passengers on board including Petit Muharto. The plane was a US made C-47 “Dakota.” (Darusman 1992:21).

The arrival of a Dakota into the Indonesian revolution was a momentous event for the Republican resistance. Dakotas were the most important and successful transport aircraft of World War II. They had a range of 1600 miles (see Map 1.1) and could carry as much as 7000 pounds of cargo (“C-47 (aircraft)” 2013). Several other Dakotas eventually flew for the republic, including one that flew exclusively for the Republic and was designated RI-002. Dakotas provided the Republic the means to press their diplomatic revolution. By bringing Dakotas into their struggle, and one under its exclusive control, the Republic could pass key



Map 1.1 Republican Air Connections. (Note – John Coast's routes are based on a map provided in the inside cover of his book *Recruit to Revolution*. The base for this map was obtained from http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=297&lang=en the complete URL is provided here in compliance with the terms of use)



Map 1.2 Territorial Control and Significant Locations. (Note – For the depiction of territorial control this map draws on a map found in Alastair M. Taylor's *Indonesia and the United Nations* (1960:46) The base for this map was obtained from http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=297&lang=en the complete URL is provided here in compliance with the terms of use)

government officials, personnel, and supplies virtually unopposed over the Dutch blockade. Confidential communications by courier or face-to-face leader meetings were suddenly possible with only a minimal amount of advanced notice. Additionally, resources and personnel could be moved tremendous distances in a matter of hours instead of weeks or months. This ability to move freely, between its fractured parts and outside its territory, was a direct display of the Republic's sovereignty. With its own airpower, capable of long-range flight, the Republic moved from being completely dependent on other states to a state that could begin to chart its own course.

The first CALI Dakota flight was quickly followed by a second. These flights demonstrated the feasibility and benefits of using the air as a means of connecting the Republic with the outside world and binding the separate parts of the Republic together. If, however, the use of the air was going to expand more airfields were needed. Specifically more airfields were needed in Sumatra. Therefore, the Republic targeted Gadut Airbase near the town of Bukittinggi for expansion of its air operations. Gadut was chosen for its strategic location and because it was close to town. The problem was, however, that the airfield had fallen into disrepair and was in no condition to receive aircraft. Before aircraft could land there serious preparations needed to be made (*Sejarah TNI 2004:100*).

Given the Dutch naval blockade, the Indonesian government was having trouble moving personnel between Sumatra and Java, so it was decided to have two Indonesian Air Force officers, Sudjono and Soekotjo, jump onto the airfield and organize local efforts to make the necessary preparations for future flights (*Sejarah TNI 2004:100-02*). If one stops for a moment and contemplates the risks inherent in a parachute jump, and the fact that the amount and quality of parachutist training available to the Republic was minimal, the audacity to insert personnel

into Bukittinggi by parachute is truly amazing. This jump was a bold step in strengthening Republican sovereignty.

Aside from being audacious from a military perspective the jump seems to have turned into a community event as well. According to an official Indonesian Air Force history on March 20th 1947 the republican radio station announced that there would be a parachute jump over Gadut airbase on the 24th. For several days in advance people gathered at the airfield in anticipation of the jump. On the 24th at ten in the morning, the third CALI flight piloted by Bobby Freeberg (the future pilot of RI-002) circled the airfield a few times then Sudjono and Soekotjo jumped. Both landed safely, although one apparently drifted into some banana trees. The successful parachute operation led to the opening of Gadut as planned with the assistance of locals. The opening of Gadut set off a chain of airfield openings as the Air Force moved to open all the airfields in Sumatra (*Sejarah TNI* 2004:101-02).

In order to broaden its market beyond Manila and Singapore the Republic employed the services of John Coast. John Coast was an Englishman who had become enamored with Indonesia while detained as a prisoner of war in Thailand during World War II. After his release he found himself drawn to support the Republican cause and eventually left the British Foreign Service to assist in advancing the cause of the Republic. For his first assignment he was asked to arrange for ten contract flights from Bangkok to Jogjakarta (Coast 1952:68). His experiences arranging and flying on these flights provide a valuable glimpse into the hazards that companies, pilots, and planes faced flying in Indonesia during the revolution.

The Obstacles and Risks of Flying for the Republic

Despite the large profits that could be made flying for the Republic there were numerous reasons not to fly. While the Republic felt the Linggajati agreement gave them sovereignty they still had to convince other states and businesses that it did. Thailand and British controlled Singapore for example were sympathetic to the Republican cause, but initially they were not prepared to openly recognize the Republic as a separate sovereign entity. This led to a great deal of uncertainty. Commercial charter flights from Bangkok, landing in Singapore to refuel, risked not being allowed to continue to Republican territory if the civilian aviation authorities were not in the right mood. If they departed under the pretext they were going elsewhere and then flew directly to Republican territory they risked having their landing rights for their other more regular flights to Singapore revoked (Coast 1952:75). Another concern related to sovereignty was customs procedures. While there generally were no customs procedures at airfields in Republican Indonesia they were an expected part of the arrival and departure process for Thailand and Singapore. To meet their need for proper forms Thai customs authorities created a special form “to be completed by persons going to and returning from ‘countries where Siamese [Thai] consular officials do not exist’” (120). Another issue was passports. As one Republican government official, who flew from Jogjakarta to Singapore on “an old Dakota piloted by an American ex-bomber captain,” explained: “our passports were just pieces of paper with President Sukarno’s signature and our names and a description of our physical characteristics.” According to the official he was never asked to produce his passport in Singapore (Hanifah 1972: 217-18). Despite uncertainty, Singapore too turned out to be a fairly reliable departure point for Republican flights (Darusman 1992:21).

Technical obstacles were another impediment. For security reasons most planes wanted to takeoff and land in the dark. Landing on an unlit runway was not a feasible option, so the

runways were illuminated with flares (Coast 1952:193). The runway surfaces were also not the best. It appears that Maguwo in Jogjakarta, with its metal runway, was the only airfield that was much better than a bumpy grass strip (85). In heavy rains grass runways could become dangerous imposing additional risks (129). Even if runways were no problem, fuel was. In Republican held territory there was only 90 octane fuel not the 100 octane fuel the large transport aircraft required (74). The lower octane fuel could combust prematurely and cause engine failure in the hot tropical climate during takeoff. Once the plane reached a cooler altitude the lower octane fuel would perform sufficiently well, but first the plane had to make it to a cooler altitude (McNiven 2013). To overcome this problem pilots would save a reserve tank with the necessary high-octane fuel for takeoffs (Coast 1952:75). This meant any time they chose to fly lower to avoid Dutch detection they would have to burn the fuel they would need to get off the ground again.

The austere conditions of Republican airfields compounded the effects of minor mishaps and maintenance issues and led pilots to take additional risks. If aircraft needed to be repaired while in Republican controlled territory the pilot was the primary mechanic and long waits could be expected for parts since most parts had to be acquired on the international market and then brought to Republican airfields. Not willing to wait pilots would attempt risky repairs. While preparing to depart from Bukittinggi on its way to Siborong-borong Airbase in North Sumatra to continue fuel delivery for Sukarno's tour, the crew of RI-002 found themselves taking one of these risks after its landing gear inadvertently collapsed (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:80). John Coast was on hand and provides a vivid description of the event:

Just as R.I. 001 [sic] started to rev. up the first of her engines, we observed the uncanny spectacle of the plane's port under-carriage gently buckling under her, while the whole plane tipped slowly over, leaning, it seemed, on the port wing. The engine stopped immediately and we, together with dozens of Indonesians, ran over to the strip.

Bob, leaning out of his cockpit window and, rather flushed, explained, "Christ, that's what comes of taking a chance with your hydraulic gear—took the pins out [of the landing gear] too soon. Ninety-nine times out

of a hundred you'd get away with it. It sure looks as if the President will have to use a United Nation's plane now!"

During the next two hours, swearing redly in the open sun, Bob directed a gang of porters who, lacking anything in the nature of a jack, lifted the plane by the sheer strength of their arms and backs on to a wedge of wooden baulks that they slipped, one by one, under the planes wing close up to where it joined the plane's body. Only two of the three blade-tips showed traces of mud; furthermore, the ground was remarkably wet—too wet, in fact, for take-off under normal flying regulations.

During that whole afternoon Bob worked on the hydraulic gear in order to lower his under-carriage again, and by night-fall declared himself satisfied. The wing itself showed ripples, though only faint ones, along most of its length, but on walking along it and feeling here and there with his foot, Bob had said there was nothing serious to fear; and as the pile of wood grew under the plane's body so that the wing-tip came out of and up from the ground, the dents appeared to straighten out of their own accord.

When the following morning we drove down for the take-off of our own plane to Jogja, we found Bob once more running his engine. He grinned at us, "I don't know why I do this, I'm not that foolish really; or that young." And half a minute later, despite Dave Flower's strong disapproval, the plane gathered speed down the runway, made a clean take-off and flew straight up to Tapanuli [Siborong-borong], in North Sumatra. Such was Bob Freeberg (1952:128-29).

Another serious impediment to participation in the Republican air market was the uncertainty of the schedule. Due to the risk of Dutch interception there was hesitancy on the part of pilots and the Republican government to establish a regular, predictable flight schedule, but to meet their other obligations airline companies needed schedules. Charter companies flew regular scheduled routes in addition to their Indonesian flights. This meant they needed to work their Indonesian trips into and around other regular service without disrupting their regular schedules. In the case of flights from Thailand the risks of a regular schedule was overcome by alternating refueling stops and arrival destinations to make themselves less predictable (Coast 1952:74-75, 122). Another scheduling problem was Republican leaders tendency to try and change the schedule mid flight. For example, on the first flight from Thailand republican leaders wanted a significant change in the schedule once the flight had begun nearly derailing the entire relationship with the airline (79-80). The concern over Dutch interception was not without justification.

As the First Dutch Military Action unfolded in late July 1947, Republican Air Force leaders contemplated how to respond. Most of their aircraft were destroyed while on the ground during the opening hours of the attack. A few planes however were spared at Jogjakarta because of bad weather over the area. In the early morning hours of July 29th 1947 the Republican Air Force was able to put three of these planes in the air. One of these planes was a Japanese dive-bomber that had been cobbled together from broken planes and spare parts left by the Japanese at the end of World War II. It was outfitted with one 400 kilogram bomb. The other two planes were small biplanes retrofitted to carry two 50 kilogram bombs. The dive-bomber struck Semarang. At the same time the biplanes struck Salatiga and Ambrawa. These attacks immediately brought Dutch aircraft to Maguwo in Jogjakarta to retaliate. After their initial strike the Dutch sent out periodic patrols throughout the day to monitor the situation at Maguwo (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:40-46).

Despite the heightened activity, in the early afternoon, a Republican Dakota charter flight with the Indian registration number VT-CLA left Singapore for Maguwo. An Indian businessman who was planning on donating the plane to the Republic provided the Dakota. Its pilot was Alexander Constantine, an Australian who had flown in the Royal Air Force. The rest of the crew consisted of a British copilot, Indian flight engineer, and Indonesian radioman. Just before departure a shipment of medical supplies provided by the Malayan Red Cross arrived at the airport and several passengers had to be removed from the flight to accommodate the supplies. In the end when it left Singapore there were five passengers on the plane including Constantine's wife and two Indonesian Air Force Generals returning from meetings in India. As it approached Maguwo and was preparing to land two Dutch fighters appeared and shot it out of the sky. It crashed about two and a half kilometers from the runway, and only one Indonesian

passenger survived (Darusman 1992:37-38). This event served as a potent reminder of the potential risks involved in flying in support of the Republic.

Bobby Freeberg and RI 002

Bobby Freeberg, a former US Navy Bomber pilot in the Pacific during World War II and the pilot of CALI's third flight to Indonesia, became the most important pilot in the Republican Air Force during the revolution. Freeberg was important for several reasons. As previously mentioned he delivered the paratroopers to Bukittinggi, which played a key role in opening up Gadut Airbase and numerous other airfields in Sumatra. Another thing that set Freeberg apart from other pilots that the Republic recruited was his commitment to the Republican cause. In a letter he wrote to his family he shared his feelings about the Republic:

It isn't generally known but the Dutch are saying one thing and doing another. They are still trying to keep the Indonesian people conquered but I think it impossible for the Dutch to ever again do that. The people are all very strongly united against the Dutch and everywhere you go they shout their slogan of, "Merdeka" (freedom). The people are poor and haven't proper clothing, transportation nor weapons o [sic] wage a war but they will stand to the last man against the Dutch. It is pretty wonderful to see a people believe in the freedom we Americans enjoy ready to fight for the achievement of this view. I for one believe that the Dutch should be stopped because they are still using the policies of oppression toward the people of Indonesia. Apparently, they have forgotten how bitterly they hated being subjects to the Nazis (qtd in *RI 002* 34-35).

Once during a refueling stop in Labuan the local Dutch consul nearly succeeded in convincing the British military authorities to detain Freeberg's Indonesian passengers, but Freeberg vehemently objected. Freeberg's passengers included six Indonesian Air Force cadets on their way to Manila to attend flight training on the Mustang fighter. Freeberg apparently used his record as a veteran World War II pilot and threats of "over my dead body" to persuade the British soldiers to let him and his passengers continue unmolested (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 75-76). Freeberg's attitude and action did not go unnoticed by the Indonesian people. During his stays at the Hotel Merdeka in Jogjakarta, according to John Coast, "the staff

hero-worshipped him and embarrassed him by giving him specially prepared food.” Coast also pointed out that despite routinely being owed large sums of money by the Republic for his service Freeberg continued flying (Coast 110).

According to John Coast, Freeberg had a reputation as “a great racketeer who, by his blood-curdling stories of Republican dangers, endeavored to dissuade other flying-men from entering his Indonesian preserves.” Coast, however, rejected this assessment and found Freeberg to be “one of the best of men and the most excellent ambassador for the US in Indonesia” (1952:110). Whether Freeberg was “a great racketeer” or a genuine partisan, from Coast comments, it is clear that his willingness to fly for the Republic drew the attention of his fellow foreign pilots and likely paved the way for others to join the Republican cause as direct hires instead of as part-time charters.

His reputation as a racketeer and teller of “blood-curdling stories” may have evolved out of the circumstances surrounding his first independent flight to Indonesia. During his CALI flight Freeberg was accompanied by Muharto as a guide. Muharto, however, was not able to accompany Freeberg to Manila and therefore gave him some simple instructions to find his way back to Maguwo Air Force Base outside of Jogjakarta. Freeberg was told to fly to Labuan in British Northern Borneo; head south across the Java Sea until he came to the North coast of Java; watch for Mount Muria on the right (West); keep heading South until the train tracks and follow the track West until he came to Maguwo Airbase outside of Jogjakarta (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:72-73). While Freeberg apparently had a reputation for being fearless and knowing “every island and inlet in the Pacific” he was, nevertheless, not without defect because he failed to find Maguwo Airbase on his first try (*RI 002* 2009:34, 38).

On the other hand perhaps the circumstances under which he assembled his crew were to blame. According to several sources Freeberg was the owner of the plane he contracted to fly (Coast 1952, Montlake 2010, *RI 002* 2009). Initially however, he was likely not the sole owner of the plane. The most detailed account of Freeberg's entry into Indonesian service is found in an official Indonesian Air Force history compiled from a conference consisting of many of the Indonesians involved in Freeberg's recruitment and missions. This account asserts that Freeberg was only a part owner of the plane he proposed to use. According to this history, the plane was jointly owned with other pilots. The pilots had apparently purchased a Dakota for 10,000 US dollars from a war surplus facility at Clark Air Base on Luzon in the Philippines (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:72). Owing to the detail with which events are described and the individuals involved in compiling this account it is likely the most accurate. Air Force Major Petit Muharto, Freeberg's recruiter, guide, most regular copilot and close Indonesian friend, for example, was a contributor as were several other Indonesians that would have known Freeberg well.

According to this history Freeberg's plane was "hidden" by his partners at Kalagan Airport in Manila to prevent him from flying it to Indonesia. Upon locating the plane Freeberg, deceptively, convinced two Filipino flight engineers to accompany him on a nighttime "test flight" and was off to Maguwo Airbase. As planned, Freeberg stopped and refueled in Labuan and continued south. Freeberg never located Mount Muria or the railroad tracks, and he found himself running out of fuel over the South coast of Java near Tasikmalaya about 150 miles west of Jogjakarta and was forced to make an emergency landing on the beach in the Sub-district of Cibeureum on June 6th 1947 (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:73).

Fortunately, Freeberg's plane sustained no serious damage. Unfortunately, the plane began to sink into the soft sand and was soon quite stuck. Aside from providing fuel for Freeberg's plane, local officials in Cibeureum radioed Tasikmalaya, which in turn contacted Maguwo in Jogjakarta. An undoubtedly surprised Muharto was soon in a biplane on his way to Tasikmalaya to assist in Freeberg's rescue (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:73-74).

The rescue of Freeberg's plane is a testament to the determination of the local populace to assist the new Republic. The sand on the beach was too soft and despite several attempts Freeberg was unable to fly his plane free even on a makeshift runway of palm fronds (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:74). Finally, with the help of 15 villages weaving strips of bamboo into a 300-meter runway Freeberg was able to get back in the air (*RI 002* 2009:38). Once airborne Freeberg headed to Cibeureum Airbase about 30 miles away in Tasikmalaya to finish refueling his plane and take on a load of quinine. From there he continued on to Jogjakarta and arrived on June 9th 1947 (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:74).

At Maguwo Airbase in Jogjakarta Freeberg added vanilla beans and passengers to his load and on the 10th after the Indonesian Air Force officially designated his plane RI-002, Freeberg and crew were on their way to Manila (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:74). Freeberg's plane was the first officially designated plane in the Indonesian Air Force but was designated RI-002 (*RI 002* 2009:38). RI-001 was reserved for the future plane of the President of the Republic (Montlake 2010). For the trip to Manila Freeberg's crew included Muharto as "co-pilot" and the two Filipino flight engineers who began their journey under the auspices of a nighttime test flight. Additionally, Freeberg's passengers included two Indonesian Army officers from Bandung's Siliwangi Division tasked with selling the quinine.

This flight to Manila is another reason Freeberg was the most important Republican pilot. With his plane designated RI-002, this flight marked the first international flight for a Republican designated plane. Upon arrival in Manila RI-002 and its cargo were detained by the local authorities in response to a request from the Dutch. The Dutch asserted that the quinine was stolen from a Dutch owned factory in Bandung and wanted to recover it (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:74). After several weeks of legal wrangling and in large part due to the sympathetic attitude of the Filipinos towards the republic, the Filipino authorities released the plane and cargo (*RI 002* 2009:38). In the end, RI-002's arrival in the Philippines provided the Philippines an opportunity to recognize the Republic's sovereignty and keep the issue of its independence alive in the Philippine press.

Aside from added publicity Freeberg provided real value to the development of Indonesian airpower by willingly providing flight and technical training to numerous Republican airmen. After his first flight Freeberg's crew seems to have been made up of Indonesians who were routinely changed out several times during missions to give other airmen the opportunity to gain experience with flight operations (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:80). Frequent changes in crewmembers, however, increased the risks during flights. A cohesive and well-trained crew would have been much better prepared to respond in emergencies. Keeping the same personnel would have had the benefit that all members of the crew would better understand and execute their duties. Each member through experience would have known exactly what was expected of him by his fellow crewmembers. Certainly, as an experienced naval aviator this would not have been lost on Freeberg. Despite this there seems to be no account of Freeberg trying to change the situation, which greatly benefited the Republic.

Clearly, the Republican Air Force understood the need to have as many experienced crewmembers as possible if it was going to move from contract aircraft to state owned aircraft. RI-002 and Freeberg provided the Republic with an indigenously controlled training asset that once again allowed it to move boldly toward this goal. Freeberg also helped make this goal a reality by carrying President Sukarno on a tour of Sumatra in July of 1948 to raise funds for the Republic's own Dakota, which would carry the designation RI-001 (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:88).

Sukarno's tour of Sumatra to raise funds for RI-001 was wildly successful and demonstrates the unifying affect airpower had on the Republican cause. The plan was to target the population centers of Sumatra. To support his efforts, a workshop at Maospati Airbase created 25 miniature Dakotas for Sukarno to give as gifts to the local committees responsible for fundraising efforts. It was hoped that the models would increase their enthusiasm for the project. Sumatra was targeted because of its better financial position. After Sukarno's first speech at the Hotel Aceh in Kutaraja a committee was formed to assist in raising the funds and within two days it raised 130,000 Straits Dollars. By August all the necessary funds were raised and the officials responsible for purchasing RI-001 assembled in Singapore with the funds, which consisted of cash and 20 kilograms of gold (*Sejarah Perjuangan* 1979:5). Most of the funds came from Aceh (*RI 002* 2009:39).

Purchasing RI-001 however, took longer than planned. It was assumed once the funds were available a quality plane could be purchased immediately in India. As it turned out it took three months. In addition to the plane, spare parts including an extra engine were purchased. RI-001 was christened "*Seulawah*" (Golden Mountain) in honor of the contribution made by the people of Aceh (*Sejarah Perjuangan* 1975:5-6).

About the time RI-001 was available for service Freeberg and RI-002 disappeared. On September 29th 1948 it took off on its last flight. Having just returned to Maguwo from six weeks of maintenance in Manila (Coast 1952:210). The plan was to fly a route beginning in Jogjakarta to Gorda in West Java, Tanjungkarang in Lampung, and end at Gadut outside of Bukittinggi. At Gorda it picked up 20 kilograms of gold from the Cikotok mines to be used to purchase another Dakota. In Tanjungkarang a second copilot and radio operator were picked up to give them flight experience. All went as planned and RI-002 left Tanjungkarang Airbase heading to Bukittinggi without incident. An hour later RI-002 failed to make its scheduled radio check and was never heard from again (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:80-81). Immediately, it was assumed that RI-002 had been forced down and was being held by the Dutch. A US Senator and family friend is reported to have told Freeberg's family that he was being held captive and negotiations were underway for his release (Montlake 2010). The Dutch however denied claims of involvement and no evidence has ever linked them to RI-002's disappearance.

The Espina Affair

Another event that demonstrates the way international air connections helped gather support for the Republic and keep its cause in the press began after RI-002's first international flight to Manila in June 1947. While RI-002 was in Manila, the Philippines Army Intelligence organization began to warm to the cause of the Indonesian revolution and offered training assistance and weapons sales. Training assistance was provided in the form of an officer named Captain Ignacio Espina. Captain Espina was said to be an expert in guerrilla warfare. He was trained in the US and had fought a guerrilla campaign against the Japanese during World War II.

His daily duties in Indonesia were to include training the *Tentara Pelajar*, a student-paramilitary organization, in jungle fighting and survival. Additionally, Captain Espina brought a radio which was set up to maintain a continuous two way connection between Manila and Jogjakarta and a chrome plated “tommy-gun” as a gift for President Sukarno (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:75). Most likely, the Philippine military also saw his service as a way to closely monitor developments in the new republic and stay informed on the communist situation there. No matter the Philippine’s reason for sending Captain Espina to Indonesia, RI-002’s presence in the Philippines provided an opportunity to gain additional support for the Republic.

According to the Indonesian account, several months later on December 23rd 1947 as RI-002 was about to depart to Baguio in North Luzon Captain Espina committed suicide. Reportedly, Captain Espina was expected to send a report to his supervisors in the Philippines and had forgotten to bring it to the airfield. Then while he was on his way to get the report RI-002 departed. This in some way led to Captain Espina emotionally breaking down and attempting to kill himself. The older brother of Muharto, Freeberg’s co-pilot, attempted to intervene and was killed in his struggle with Captain Espina. Captain Espina then succeeded in killing himself. This information was relayed by radio to a Republican representative in Manila. Upon the arrival of RI-002 Muharto was informed, and because he had taken responsibility for Captain Espina safety in Indonesia he was given the task of informing Captain Espina’s supervisor of his death. Muharto’s explanation of the circumstances surrounding Captain Espina’s death was met with intense skepticism and interrogation. From the Philippine Army perspective, a communist agent murdered Captain Espina, and they demanded his body be returned for burial in Manila immediately (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:74-75).

RI-002 quickly departed the Philippines for Jogjakarta, but before returning with the body of Captain Espina RI-002 was tasked with flying several VIPs and 20 Air Force cadets to Pekanbaru in Sumatra. As a result RI-002's planned route was Jogjakarta-Pekanbaru-Labuan-Manila. Sometime after midnight on December 29th 1947 RI-002 left Jogjakarta with four crewmembers, twenty-five passengers and a coffin containing the corpse of Captain Espina (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:78).

This was the first for flight engineer Sunaryo. According to him, earlier in the day he was part of a student army in Cepu about 120 miles from Jogjakarta and was preparing to board a train to another location when he was handed an telegram labeled "*Dari AURI – Penting*" (From the Air Force of the Republic of Indonesia – Important). Muharto, a close friend sent the message and requested he urgently report to Jogjakarta. Unsure what his assignment could be he informed his supervisor and headed for Jogjakarta on the next train. Sunaryo was asked to serve in the Air Force's intelligence operations, but his first assignment was as the flight engineer on RI-002. Having no previous flying experience he was given a few minimal instructions on emergency procedures as he rode in a car out to Maguwo airfield with Muharto (Sunaryo 1992:115-16).

Sunaryo describes feelings of fear and pride as he flew through the dark and the Dutch blockade in RI-002. His feelings of fear were compounded by the awful stench of rotting flesh, the incessant grind of the engines, the jostling of the plane from the weather and the cold of the 10,000 foot flight with nothing but his light tropical cotton uniform to keep him warm. He describes feeling very sick as a result, but for want of a place to throw up he managed to suppress the urge. As RI-002 approached Pekanbaru the sun finally began to rise and the suffering, but proud, Sunaryo took comfort in seeing that his fellow passengers appeared as

miserable as he felt. RI-002 circled over Pekanbaru for nearly an hour trying to find the airfield through the clouds. It was unable to find the airfield, so it was finally announced they would have to divert to Singapore before RI-002 ran out of fuel (Sunaryo 1992:114-19).

RI-002 landed at Changi Royal Air Force Base in Singapore at around seven in the morning. Changi was chosen because the British troops stationed there were generally more supportive of the Republic's cause than the civilian authorities at Kallang Airport (Darusman 1992:41-42). Permission was initially given to refuel the plane and send it on its way, but shortly after refueling began word arrived that the civilian authorities at Kallang Airport demanded to exert their jurisdiction over the flight. The civilian authorities had received word from the Dutch consul that weapons were hidden in the coffin. Thus, RI-002 was ordered to fly to Kallang and was subjected to a thorough inspection and three weeks of legal maneuvering (42). Fortunately, Captain Espina's body was moved to a refrigerated morgue while it waited for RI-002 (Cheong 2003:115). Finally near the end of January 1948 RI-002 was granted permission to leave for Pekanbaru. RI-002 initially headed in the direction of Pekanbaru, but eventually changed course for Labuan and then on to Manila with the long awaited corps of Captain Espina. At Manila intelligence officers inspected the corpse and were convince enough to consider the matter closed (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:78). Similar to RI-002's first arrival in the Philippines this event provided additional yet slightly more interesting press coverage for the Republic.

Other Pilots and Planes

Six months after RI-002 entered service the Republic tried to expand its fleet by purchasing its own transport plane. RI-003, an Avro Anson, was purchased from its Australian

pilot-owner in early December 1947 with 12 kilograms of gold from Aceh (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:82). An Avro Anson was a British built plane. It was originally intended as a coastal reconnaissance plane, but was primarily used as a training aircraft during World War II. It had a range of about 790 miles and could carry about a quarter of the weight of a Dakota (“Avro Anson” 2013). It could take off on shorter runways than a Dakota, and the Republic hoped to use it to carry about 8 passengers (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:82)

The owner flew the plane to Bukittinggi from Thailand. After providing some basic instructions on how to fly the aircraft to an Indonesian pilot named Iswahjudi, the original owner and Vice Commodore Halim Perdanakusuma flew back to Thailand. On December 14th 1947 Halim and Iswahjudi departed Thailand. They did not arrive in Singapore as planned. RI-003 crashed in the South China Sea off the coast of Malaya. Halim and Iswahjudi were killed (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:82-83).

Halim’s loss was a significant blow to the Indonesian Air Force. He was one of their only experienced aviators. When World War II broke out he was attending naval training in Surabaya. Fearing a Japanese invasion the Dutch evacuated all of the students and instructors to more secure locations. Halim eventually went to the US and attended additional training there. During the war He served in both the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Royal Air Force and flew 44 missions as a navigator on Lancaster and Liberator Bombers in Europe and Asia. (“Halim Perdanakusuma” 2012).

A smaller Stinson L-5 Sentinel was purchased for 13,500 US dollars as a “replacement” for RI-003 (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:34). The only similarity between the two planes was their ability to take off on short runways. The Sentinel was a small reconnaissance plane capable of cruising at 90 miles per hour with a range of 360 miles and could carry only a

minimal cargo (“Stinson L-5 Sentinel” 2013). It would have been only slightly more useful than the operational planes left by the Japanese. On July 7th 1948 it disappeared with its Republican crew on a flight between Jambi and Bengkulu (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:34).

Wade Palmer, a Scotsman, began flying for the Republic with his Avro Anson in April 1948. On June 1st 1948 he sold his plane to the Republic, but continued his service as a Republican pilot. Once sold, his former plane was given the registration number RI-004 (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:83). He started flying for the republic in revenge for the death of his friend Alexander Constantine the pilot of VT-CLA (Coast 1952:106). RI-004 was primarily used for short intra-Sumatra flights and as a trainer. It also made occasional flights to Malaya to pick up supplies (82). In addition to Palmer, Indonesians also occasionally piloted it. It was sent to Maospati for a maintenance overhaul on the July 10th 1948, but never flew again. The Dutch destroyed it there during their Second Military Action in December of 1948 (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:83-84).

While all pilots most likely participated in transporting Opium for the Republic at some point, Ralph Coble was probably the most involved of the known Republican pilots. At the end of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia about 22 tons of crude Persian and Turkish opium were left in Batavia. The Republican government quickly secured this and sold it as a means of financing its operations. Its high value relative to its size made it an extremely attractive commodity to export by plane particularly after the Dutch effectively crushed the overland opium trade through Batavia in August 1948 (Yang 1998:199).

Coble owned a PBY-5A “Catalina” and in July 1948 after meeting with the Indonesian Air Force Chief of Staff in Jogjakarta was given the registration number RI-005 (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:85-86). A Catalina is an amphibious plane, meaning it can land

either in the water or on land. They were used during World War II for marine patrol. Catalina's had a range of about 2500 miles, 900 more than a Dakota. Additionally, they had about the same capacity as a Dakota and could carry around 15,000 pounds including fuel and crew ("PBY Catalina" 2013). Loads, crew, fuel and range always needed to be optimized because an increase in one would necessitate a decrease in another. More cargo resulted in less fuel and less range.

The Catalina's ability to land on water or land made it an extremely attractive smuggling vessel for rebel causes in Southeast Asia. Every inlet, lake or calm river in the region could potentially provided a point for goods to change hands. In the most notorious case British and Dutch authorities near Airabu Island caught one in September 1948 loaded with 40 cases of weapons and ammunition ("Singapore Gun Runners Caught" 1948). The arms were probably either destined for Indonesian Republicans or Malayan communists. Cobby's use of the Catalina as a smuggling vessel became so notorious the Australian government refused to sell three to an Australian businessman trying to open an Australia Jogjakarta line fearing they would become involved in opium smuggling (Coast 1952:186).

Cobby was quite outspoken about his illicit activity and connections with Chinese traders (Coast 1952:120). Cobby was known to have flown cargos of opium to islands in the Riau group where the opium was off loaded to waiting boats and taken to Singapore (183). Opium was generally smuggled wrapped in sheets of smoked rubber and disguised as normal commodities (Cheong 2003:128). Unlike other Republican registered craft there is no mention of Indonesians participating in RI-005's flight operations. Cobby was noted for his negative attitude towards Asians, particularly Burmese who he blamed for the death of his brother (Coast 1952:157). RI-005's smuggling days came to an end when it suffered engine troubles and had to remain in Jambi for several weeks for spare parts (192). When the Dutch attacked during the Second

Military Action in December 1948 it was still there waiting on parts. RI-005 tried to avoid capture by attempting a one-engine takeoff. In the attempt Cobley struck a boat and RI-005 sank killing pilot and crew (“Pilot Killed” 1949).

The last plane to enter Republican service was RI-006, also a Catalina. It was piloted by one of its owners an American named James Fleming (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:87). Fleming’s business partner was an American named McGowan. Together they owned several Catalina’s including the one that was caught off Airabu Island (Coast 1952:156, 217). RI-006 also, does not seem to have ever had any Indonesians participating as crewmembers. It was primarily involved in a smuggling arms and ammunition, but also transported personnel internationally. In the early morning hours of December 19th 1948 RI-006 was flying between Jogjakarta and Tanjungkarang when it was intercepted by Dutch aircraft and forced to return to Jogjakarta. Once on the ground the Dutch detained Fleming and his crew (*Sejarah Operasi Penerbangan* 1980:87). RI-006’s capture effectively ended air operations in support of the revolution.

Conclusion

From February 1947 until the Second Military Action in December 1948 foreign pilots and planes supported the Indonesian revolution. Through their arrival and departure in Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines they provided a means for goods and people to quickly and easily cross the Dutch blockade. Through them Republican leaders could quickly reach all parts of the globe to press their diplomatic revolution. Planes loaded with valuable commodities such as opium and quinine provided a means to sell high value goods at reduced costs. This brought badly needed funding to the Republican cause. Through their internal use they allowed

Sukarno and other leaders to move between Sumatra and Java to keep the Republican camp united. Finally, they provided an opportunity for other states to recognize Republican sovereignty by allowing their departure and arrival in the face of Dutch opposition.

Foreign pilots and planes, particularly American, Australian and British were an essential tool in the young Republic of Indonesia's efforts to assert its sovereignty in the face of Dutch isolation. They are not a separate European or Western component of the revolution, but were an integral part of the domestic history. Understanding how they contributed to the Indonesian revolution helps better understand the revolution itself. These pilots and planes were an available asset employed to meet the operational needs of the Republic and keep its revolutionary cause moving forward. They provided the Republic with secure communications, secure trade for high value and essential items, speed and flexibility to address changing situations, and a tangible means of interacting with other states that required the recognition of its sovereignty. Without their cooperation and support the young Indonesian Republic's revolutionary efforts would have been significantly hampered because the Republic would have been increasingly isolated and divided as the Dutch moved to cut it off from the outside world. With them the young Republic was able to maintain and assert its sovereignty and keep its cause alive on the international stage.

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CHAPTER 2

CAMBODIA AND THE INDONESIAN CONNECTION

At first glance Indonesia and Cambodia do not seem to have much in common. Today Indonesia is a country of nearly 250 million people and nearly 90 percent Muslim making Indonesia the fourth most populous state and home to the largest Muslim community in the world. Cambodia by comparison, with about 15 million people, is the 68th most populous state and 97 percent Buddhist. Indonesia has vast natural resources and is tremendously linguistically and ethnically diverse. Cambodia on the other hand has comparatively few natural resources and the overwhelming majority of its people are ethnic Khmer (*The World Factbook* 2014).

Indonesia emerged from colonial rule through a war for independence against the Dutch, but Cambodia obtained its independence through a more cooperative relationship with the French.

Despite their differences, their modern histories have interacted in interesting ways that have significantly influenced each other. In this essay I argue that one cannot fully understand events in Cambodia from 1955 through 1975 without understanding the Indonesia-Cambodia relationship of the same period. Beginning with the Bandung Conference in 1955, President Sukarno of Indonesia and Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia united in a personal and political friendship while following similarly disastrous economic and political policies. This friendship helps explain the erratic course of Cambodian neutrality and set the stage for future Indonesia-Cambodia relations. Sukarno's policy of non-alignment allowed Sihanouk to attempt to chart a neutralist course by providing an international partner and a role model to follow. However, as Sukarno's own position became untenable, and Sihanouk saw the unraveling of Sukarno's position, Sihanouk began to shift to the right in an attempt to shore up his domestic position and secure continued support from Indonesia in his struggle against domestic

communism and Vietnamese encroachment. Sihanouk's shift to the right is best explained by the increased importance of the Indonesian relationship and his attempt to maintain it as Suharto came to power. If the Indonesia-Cambodia relationship was unimportant to Sihanouk he could have abandoned the right completely and thrown his unconditional support behind communism in an attempt to shore up his position. Ultimately, however, Sihanouk's own political position became so untenable that he was removed from office by the right and was forced to join with the communists.

Additionally, an examination of both Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge's comments about Suharto's destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) helps to shed some light on Cambodia's path to genocide by highlighting that people in Cambodia were considering their own fates in terms of the Indonesian genocide. This is not to say that the Indonesian genocide led directly to the Cambodian genocide, but it is apparent that the Indonesian genocide served as an example of one possible course for the struggle between the left and the right. Most likely, it led to the Khmer Rouge's decision to begin their armed struggle and may have affected their decision to carry out their political genocide.

Lastly, the continuity in the Indonesia-Cambodia relationship, as heads of government changed in both countries, highlights the importance of the Indonesia-Cambodia relationship to both sides. For Cambodia Indonesia provided a possible patron to assist in maintaining itself in the face of internal and external threats. For Indonesia, Cambodia was important for reasons of image, opportunity and personal connections. Since independence the Indonesian government viewed Indonesia as destined to become a significant player on the international stage. To fulfill this vision of its international role, Indonesia needed places and issues it could hope to influence given its limited capabilities and resources. As one of the smallest countries in Southeast Asia

and in the absence of a strong colonial patron, following the conclusion of the First Indochina War, Cambodia was one of the few places Indonesia could hope to have real regional influence. Once Sukarno established his friendship with Sihanouk, the Indonesian government became engaged in a relationship that needed to be maintained as a symbol of Indonesian influence in the region. Additionally, the relationship was likely fairly easy to maintain because of the numerous connections between the Indonesian and Cambodian government that had been established during the years of Sukarno and Sihanouk's friendship.

The Bandung Conference and Cambodian Neutrality

Immediately following independence, Cambodia began to align with Indonesia through its attendance at the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955. The conference, also commonly referred to as the Bandung Conference, arose out of a proposal Indonesia presented at a conference of the foreign ministers of Ceylon, Burma, India and Pakistan held in Colombo in April 1954. Indonesia proposed that a conference of Asian and African states be held for the purpose of deescalating the tensions of the Cold War and to continue to confront colonialism. The conference was a huge success for Indonesia. It was attended by nearly 30 states and more than 400 journalists. The success of the conference helped lift Indonesia to a place of respect in the international community and also served to strengthen its claim to an independent and active foreign policy (Leifer 1983:39-40).

As the Bandung Conference approached, Norodom Sihanouk was still the King of Cambodia. However, he was by no means in the political driver's seat. The 1954 Geneva Conference required that elections for a new Cambodian government be held in 1955. As the king, Sihanouk was not a member of any political party. To his dismay, the Democratic Party,

which had been responsible for reducing his powers in the 1947 constitution, was poised to do very well in the 1955 elections. Additionally, a number of the Democrat's younger members were critical of what they saw as Sihanouk's pro-US policies following the Geneva Conference. They called for Cambodia to follow a neutral foreign policy. Furthermore, a newly formed pro-communist party, known as the People's Group, also called for a neutralist foreign policy. Together these two parties were expected to secure a majority of the Assembly seats in the 1955 election. In early March 1955, likely fearing a serious decline in his position and believing that he was more popular than any of the parties, Sihanouk decided to abdicate and organize his own political party (Chandler 2000:176, 187-88).

Having just abdicated and launched his domestic political campaign, the Bandung Conference was a success in the eyes of Sihanouk because he was able to receive guarantees of non-interference in Cambodian internal affairs from the People's Republic of China's (PRC) leader Chou En-lai and North Vietnamese leader Pham Van Dong, in exchange for agreeing to pursue a policy of neutrality (Pradhan 1985:48). Additionally, international giants such as Sukarno and Chou En-lai showered him with praise. This allowed Sihanouk to coopt his domestic political opposition's neutral stance and greatly assisted his election victory in 1955 (Chandler 2000:189). Indonesia's initiative in the non-aligned movement provided a springboard for Sihanouk to propel himself to power and a seemingly viable path of neutrality to follow. This is not to say that Sihanouk would not have ultimately pursued a neutral path. Nevertheless, Indonesia's decision to host the Bandung Conference provided a timely and organized forum for Sihanouk to solidify his decision to pursue a neutralist foreign policy by bringing all the leaders of the region together and focusing them on reducing tensions.

Sukarno and Sihanouk

For the course of Indonesia-Cambodia relations, the most significant event of the Bandung Conference was the blossoming of a friendship between Sukarno and Sihanouk. This friendship set the stage for future cooperation between Indonesia and Cambodia. Following their first meeting, Sukarno and Sihanouk visited each other's countries numerous times. These visits undoubtedly led to connections between various government officials including military officers, as matters of policy, logistics and security were coordinated. Additionally, as Sukarno and Sihanouk's activities in each other's countries were reported in their own domestic press an increased public awareness of the events and conditions in one another's countries would have flowed back and forth.

Before Sukarno and Sihanouk met they had much in common. During World War II they both collaborated with their Japanese occupiers. They both were the first leaders of their newly independent countries. Sihanouk was of royal birth and Sukarno implied that he was. They were both playboys, and they both had theatrical inclinations. After they met they pursued a similar political path. They both pursued failed and irrational economic policies, which included haphazard nationalization of businesses and a rejection of crucial economic aid from the US with little advanced planning to make up for it. They both tried to maintain a delicate balance between the right and the left by playing one off the other. They both became increasingly confrontational with the US, and in the end they shared similar political fates. They were both deposed by rightist military coups, and their relationships with communists ended in genocide.

Sihanouk and Sukarno seem to have been instant friends. In Sihanouk's memoirs he recalled that during his initial meeting with Sukarno they were able to converse easily in French without an interpreter. Sihanouk remembered Sukarno as a "man you simply could not dislike"

(1990:64). Sihanouk described a deeply personal relationship with Sukarno and seems to have been attracted to the lavishness of his life and personality. He declared that their relationship was one of deep friendship and that Sukarno allowed him to be privy to the intimate details of his personal life. Sukarno for his part, according to Sihanouk, loved Cambodia and its people. Sukarno was a more frequent visitor to Cambodia than any other head of state. He visited Cambodia six times in five years. Sihanouk returned every visit. (63-74). Though the specific evidence is sparse, the friendship of the two leaders, the frequency of these visits and the coordination for them would have created many connections between the various government officials of the two countries. Additionally, the diverse nature of both Sukarno and Sihanouk's own political coalitions would have allowed for many connections to remain even after they were both removed from power. For example, as Sihanouk's political influence declined the state apparatus around him leaned increasingly to the right, and Sukarno continually maintained an uneasy balance with the PKI and anti-PKI forces.

Milton Osborne has suggested that Sihanouk and Sukarno were not particularly close and that Sihanouk even disliked Sukarno. In a radio broadcast on September 26th 1967 Sihanouk reportedly referred to Sukarno as "a scatter-brained old man, fond of virgins" (1994:10). Osborne points out that Sihanouk's negative comments may have stemmed from Sukarno's request to marry Sihanouk's favorite daughter Bopha Devi (12). In Sihanouk's memoirs however he seems to admire Sukarno's lustfulness rather than condemn it. Furthermore, he is critical of Bopha Devi's romantic relationships claiming that her "specialty was to change husbands as often as a grand prix driver would switch the tires of his car" (1990:68). It is more likely that in September 1967, with Sukarno out of office, Sihanouk was laying the groundwork for a continued relationship with Indonesia. Additionally, by September 1967 Sihanouk had moved

solidly to the right and the last of the political left's leadership was leaving to join the Khmer Rouge (Becker 1986:105, Osborne 1994:194-95).

If, however, Osborne is correct and Sihanouk and Sukarno were not close friends the amount of time they spent courting each other strengthens the argument that Indonesia and Cambodia needed each other. Sukarno needed all the additional leverage he could muster to keep from being overwhelmed by the communist Chinese backed PKI. Domestically he relied on a delicate balance between communist and anti-communist forces to maintain his position. One way to strengthen his position was to appear to be lifting Indonesia's image, and Cambodia because of its own weak position was one of the few places that was possible. By making and receiving numerous state visits between himself and Sihanouk, Sukarno could lend credence to the idea that he was actively engaged in an international struggle against colonialism. Furthermore, on the international stage, especially with the PRC, he could appear to be having real influence in a region becoming increasingly important to the PRC's own political goals and use that influence to insure he was not suddenly deposed by communist forces.

For Sihanouk Indonesia provided another potential patron in Cambodia's historical struggle against Vietnamese and Thai encroachment. Since the fall of Angkor Cambodia's borders had been shrinking, which caused Cambodia to look outwardly for a patron to protect it against invaders. When Thailand was strong Cambodia turned to Vietnam for help, and when Vietnam was strong Cambodia turned to Thailand. Eventually, with both Thailand and Vietnam attempting to control Cambodia the Cambodian monarch appealed to the French for help, which they eventually obliged by taking control of Cambodia themselves (Chandler 2000). With Cambodia's historical enemies, Thailand and Vietnam, aligning with opposing international blocks, and France no longer a viable means of support, Sihanouk needed a new foreign patron.

Even though he could provide little material support, Sukarno's credentials as a neutralist and leader of the non-aligned block gave Sihanouk just the boost he needed to try and chart his neutralist course.

The Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) held in Jakarta in 1963 and in Phnom Penh in 1966 provide an example of the way Sukarno and Sihanouk's politics and friendship interacted. GANEFO was Sukarno's response to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) banning Indonesia from its organization. Indonesia hosted the 4th Asian Games in 1962, but refused to grant visas to Israeli and Nationalist Chinese athletes. Sukarno viewed both states as neocolonial creations and refused to recognize their right to send athletes to the games. Previously, the IOC had never expelled any of its members and offered to allow Indonesia to return if it would apologize and assure the IOC that the incident would not be repeated. Sukarno was unrepentant and declared that politics and athletics could not be separated and that he would organize his own international athletic event with athletes from states and organizations sympathetic to his cause (Pauker 1965:172-73).

GANEFO I was well received throughout the socialist world. In all "more than 2,200 athletes and officials from 48 countries and regions" participated in GANEFO I in November 1963. Most athletes, however, were not of Olympic caliber because of fear of being banned from Olympic competition. A major exception was the PRC, which sent 238 participants, broke two world records and dominated the games (Lutan and Hong 2007:31). The PRC sent its best athletes because it did not fear IOC sanction, having withdrawn from the IOC in the 1950s (Field 2011:10). Exactly how many Cambodian athletes participated in GANEFO I is unclear, but Cambodia was one of the 12 founding members of GANEFO and had at least seven swimmers suspended from Olympic competition because they competed in GANEFO I (30).

The success of GANEFO I led to the decision to hold GANEFO II in Cairo in 1967, with Beijing slated as the alternate site. The PRC saw that GANEFO was an opportunity for it to exert its influence in Asia. In September 1965 at the second Council of GANEFO held in Beijing an Asian GANEFO committee was formed with a representative from the PRC as the chair. The committee decided to hold an additional Asian GANEFO in Phnom Penh in December 1966. The PRC underwrote the costs for the games and helped to build the stadium for the games (Lutan and Hong 2007:32). Ironically, the stadium became known as the Olympic Stadium despite its anti-Olympic birth.¹ Just days after the decision to hold the Asian GANEFO in Phnom Penh the events that brought about Sukarno's downfall and the annihilation for the PKI began to unfold in Indonesia. Despite the changing political winds Indonesia still attended and participated in Asian GANEFO. Suharto's decision to not immediately abandon the games hosted in Phnom Penh despite their clearly communist Chinese origins highlights the importance Cambodia had come to represent in Indonesia's attempts to exert its regional influence. Indonesia's relationship with Cambodia had become an important part of its international image. Not attending Asian GANEFO would have effectively abandoned Cambodia to the PRC.

The slogan selected for Asian GANEFO seems to provide solid evidence for the closeness Sihanouk still felt for Sukarno at this time. Prior to his downfall Sukarno was pursuing a policy of confrontation or *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia over the incorporation of Northern Borneo into its new configuration. Sukarno viewed the incorporation of British Northern Borneo into Malaysia as a neocolonial plot to keep Indonesia down. *Konfrontasi* amounted to mostly

¹ Asian GANEFO was not the stadium's most historic event. On April 17th 1975 it became the site of a failed Khmer Republic evacuation that left Prime Minister Long Boret and numerous other government officials stranded in Phnom Penh as the Khmer Rouge flooded into the city. Lon Nol's army officers were rounded up, brought to the stadium, and executed. Long Boret and other elite were taken to the Cercle Sportif and beheaded on the tennis courts (Becker 1986: 160, 192-93).

small skirmishes along the border separating Indonesian Borneo and British Northern Borneo. In *Konfrontasi* Sihanouk took the side of Indonesia and in August 1964 after a weeklong visit to Indonesia he said that he completely approved of Sukarno's policy ("Cambodia OK's" 1964). One of Sukarno's favorite *Konfrontasi* slogans was "Onward, No Retreat" ("Sukarno Declares" 1964). As Sukarno was pushed from power by Suharto this slogan was adopted and used as the slogan for Asian GANEFO held in Phnom Penh in November and December 1966. It has been suggested that this slogan was a play on the Asian Games slogan "Ever Onward", which were being held near simultaneously in Bangkok (Foisie 1966), but it seems much more likely that the slogan originated with Sukarno and was adopted and maintained as a show of support for Sukarno. As host, one would expect that had Sihanouk desired he could have changed the slogan to something much less directly connected to Sukarno. Phnom Penh's support for GANEFO, the choice of the slogan for Asian GANEFO and Indonesia's decision to still attend Asian GANEFO despite Sukarno's fall from power demonstrate the enduring influence Sukarno and Sihanouk's friendship had on the relations between the two countries.

Turbulent Times: 1965-1970

Following what was officially described by the subsequent Indonesian government as an abortive communist coup, in 1965 the Indonesian military and vigilante groups produced a wave of bloodshed and carnage that led to the deaths of over a half a million people. At the start of the killings the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI) was the third largest communist party in the world. By the end it, it effectively ceased to exist (Kiernan 1985:ix). Prior to the destruction of the PKI the US government was seriously concerned that Indonesia was on the verge of becoming communist. Dean Rusk, the US Secretary of State at the time, cautioned that "before long

Indonesia may be for all practical purposes a Communist dictatorship” (qtd in Simpson 2008:146).

In the early morning hours of October 1st 1965 six of the top Indonesian Army generals were killed in what is often described as an abortive communist coup attempt. Allegedly, the killers of the generals acted to protect president Sukarno from a pending US backed coup, which the generals were planning (Elson 2001:100). The exact motivations of the coup plotters and those involved may never be clear and numerous competing theories have been put forward (110). What is clear is that on the morning of October 1st 1965, as the commander of the Indonesian Army’s Strategic Reserve Command, General Suharto was commanding the only military unit capable of resisting the coup plotters. Suharto responded vigorously and was able to send the coup plotters running with limited initial bloodshed. In the aftermath, however, Suharto and the Army launched a massive campaign of murder and detention against anyone alleged to be a member of the PKI. President Sukarno’s political power diminished, and he was eventually pushed from power in March 1966. Suharto, cast himself as the savior of the nation and essentially took complete control in March 1966. In March of 1967 he became acting President and in March of 1968 he was appointed President. Sukarno died under house arrest in 1970 three months after Sihanouk was overthrown.

From the beginning of 1964 Sihanouk had allowed military equipment from the PRC to be shipped from the port of Sihanoukville on the Gulf of Siam across Cambodia to Vietnamese communist forces in South Vietnam (Osborne 1994:172). Sihanouk placed Lon Nol, the Chief of the Cambodian Armed Forces, in charge of the program. Lon Nol was deeply suspicious of communist Vietnamese intentions and skimmed a substantial amount off the incoming shipments to arm his own forces (Becker 1986:102). In 1963 Sihanouk rejected US aid and the Cambodian

Armed Forces took a direct hit because at the time the US was paying the Cambodian Armed Forces. In the absence of a patron the Cambodian military's effectiveness declined (Chandler 2000:200). Sihanouk hoped the benefits the military derived from smuggling operations would make up for the lack of American aid. Ultimately, however, these smuggling operations moved Sihanouk one step closer to disaster (Osborne 1994:172). It also does not appear to have been enough to maintain Lon Nol's unquestioning support, most likely because it led to an increased Vietnamese presence in Cambodia, and Lon Nol viewed the Vietnamese as having a spiritually corrupting influence on Cambodia (Chandler 2000:203). Despite any reservations Lon Nol may have had, and possibly without his knowledge, by 1966 Sihanouk had moved closer to North Vietnam by entering into a secret formal agreement that allowed North Vietnamese forces to use Cambodian lands as a base of operation (194).

In the run-up to the September 1966 elections Sihanouk was having increasing trouble maintaining his grip over the various factions in his Sangkum Party. Additionally, at the time Sihanouk was becoming increasingly isolated from the right and the left. He was unable to support the left in the face of mounting opposition, but was also unwilling or unable to go all in with the right either. He refused to give up his economic and social policies that were despised by the right. Having given up US aid he was no longer able to balance his budget and had drastically cut the military budget (Becker 1986:101). As the elections approached French President Charles de Gaulle was scheduled to visit Cambodia. Completely overwhelmed, Sihanouk decided to devote his attention to De Gaulle's visit and opened the election to all-comers.

The opening of the party list led to 425 candidates from Sihanouk's Sangkum Party competing for 85 assembly seats (Chandler 2000:194). According to Becker: "The rich,

conservative candidates bought votes and won overwhelmingly” (1986:102). This directly led to Sihanouk’s downfall in 1970 because none of the elected assembly members owed their seats to Sihanouk. Prior to the 1966 election Sihanouk had essentially handpicked all the Assembly members since 1951 (Chandler 2000:191).

Becker describes Sihanouk’s near paralyzation “by the external and internal forces working against him” as the leading cause for his opening the election field (1986:101). Chandler suggests that additionally, Sihanouk was distracted with De Gaulle’s visit (2000:194-95). Certainly both are correct, but another contributing factor to Sihanouk’s paralysis and distraction was likely the events unfolding in Indonesia. Sukarno, who Sihanouk was like in so many ways, was slipping from power. In explaining Sihanouk’s paralysis Becker points out that the year before Sihanouk had attempted to host an “Indochinese People’s Conference”, but he only invited the communist government of North Vietnam and the communist shadow governments of Laos and South Vietnam to attend. Naturally, the right had not been impressed (1986:102). She does not mention, however, that in a show of support Sukarno flew to Phnom Penh to observe the conference (“Sukarno Urges” 1965). Just six months prior to the conference Sihanouk claimed to have obtained a promise from Sukarno to help defend Cambodia (“Reds Line Up” 1964). This claim does not seem too far fetched given that at the time Indonesia had recently received commando training from the North Vietnamese and was in the process of bringing Laotian forces belonging to neutralist Kong Le to Indonesia for training (Conboy 2002). Given the circumstances it seems completely reasonable that some of Sihanouk’s paralysis came from a fear that, similar to his political partner Sukarno, he was headed for political disaster because of his attempts to use the left to secure himself against the right.

Additionally, Sihanouk may have thought he was losing an important international ally in the neutralist camp because as Sukarno slipped from power he attracted the ire of Suharto by harboring a fugitive Indonesian Air Force General named Omar Dani. Following the abortive 1965 coup Sihanouk gave refuge to Dani who had voiced his support for the coup through a nation wide radio address. Suharto wanted Dani returned, but Sihanouk refused. Infuriated, the Indonesian Army infiltrated five commandos into Cambodia through the port of Sihanoukville in early 1966. For cover they posed as crewmen of a shipping company. Once in Cambodia they passed word to Dani that he could return to Indonesia on his own, or be forcefully repatriated. The threat had its intended affect, and Dani returned to Indonesia to stand trial on April 20th 1966 (Conboy 2003:153-54).

Following the September election, in an attempt to maintain some control over events Sihanouk backed Lon Nol in his bid to become Prime Minister (Osborne 1994:188), Sirik Matak, a royal political rival of Sihanouk's who was also close to the US, was elected Deputy Prime Minister. At this point Lon Nol was still considered to be loyal to Sihanouk (Chandler 2000:195). Previously, he had served in several cabinet positions and even as Deputy Prime Minister. Despite his loyalty, like most of the military, Lon Nol leaned to the right and filled his cabinet with "some of the best-known older conservatives." Sihanouk's reaction was to form a counter shadow government to give voice to opposition policies and begin to directly challenge the man he had just backed for Prime Minister. Lon Nol in turn offered his resignation in late October 1966, but Sihanouk rejected it (Osborne 1994:188).

In January 1967 Sihanouk left Cambodia for his annual European vacation in the midst of political turmoil. Once he was out of the country Lon Nol and his government began to dismantle Sihanouk's programs and specifically targeted peasants through forced rice collection

to meet the central government's needs for revenue. This led to repressive government violence, which, instead of condemning, Sihanouk took full credit for by comparing the violence to Suharto's activities in Indonesia. Thus, instead of distancing himself from Suharto he embraced his methods. In a speech responding to students protesting against the repressive actions of Lon Nol, Sihanouk said the following:

Do not forget either, *Messieurs les rouges*, – and this is a reminder to you not a threat – that it is Sihanouk to whom you owe the privilege you enjoy at present of carrying out all your activities without fear of ending your days. Is there any need to remind you that in Indonesia there was not great difficulty in wiping out seven hundred thousand communists, and to point out that it is enough for me, not even to give the order but simply remain silent and you, who are only a few hundred, will disappear even more quickly? [Laughter and applause] We do not lack our Suhartos and Nasutions in Cambodia [more applause].

I would also inform you that I have other radical methods of destroying your illusions, namely if I leave the country – temporarily – and leave you face to face with our Suhartos and Nasutions [more laughter]. Leaving the country without anyone knowing is something I am capable of, since I *have tried it* – successfully – by flying out two months ago without your knowledge [more laughter] (qtd in Kiernan 1985:252).

Shortly after this speech Sihanouk began to make good on his threat in response to events in the village of Samlaut. On April 2nd 1967, villagers killed two soldiers near Samlaut in western Battambang Province. The soldiers were killed in reaction to the forced rice collection scheme they had been ordered to carry out. The year before one third to possibly as much as half of Cambodia's rice harvest was smuggled out of Cambodia and sold to communist forces in South Vietnam under the watchful eye of the Cambodian Army and other government officials. At the time, peasants were required to sell all their surplus rice to the Cambodian government at an arbitrarily low price on credit. Instead however, peasants routinely sold their surpluses to Chinese merchants who paid a higher price in cash. The merchants then colluded with security and customs forces to smuggle the rice into South Vietnam (Osborne 1994:173). Two thirds of the entire harvest managed to avoid government taxation in 1966. Given Cambodia's struggling budget, as Prime Minister, Lon Nol developed a plan to reign in the rice smuggling and increase

tax revenue from the rice harvest while Sihanouk was out of the country. Previously the government had further reduced the price it was willing to pay, and now the Army was used to enforce collection at gunpoint (Becker 1986:101, 103).

Peasants around the country were outraged at the rice collection program, but as Lon Nol traveled the country to explain government actions he drew large friendly crowds, something Sihanouk thought only he should have been capable of. This brought him back to Cambodia just in time to make his threatening remarks and for the Samlaut killings (Osborne 1994:190). After killing the two soldiers in Samlaut the peasants there went on to attack other Cambodian government facilities and troops in the area. Then they took to the forest. In response Lon Nol and Sihanouk sent in more troops to crush the rebels. The rebels however were backed and organized by Viet Minh cadre that had remained in the area following the First Indochina War (Becker 1986:103-04). The peasants fought ferociously, but outnumbered and outgunned the army massacred more than 10,000 of them in the area. Sihanouk took full responsibility for the slaughter and was completely unrepentant. Sihanouk even went so far as to call for the Cambodian Army to carry out a purge of the left similar to the one the Indonesian Army had recently unleashed (Osborne 1994:191-92).

The upheaval of Sihanouk's political situation caused him to begin to reorient himself to the political conditions at home, and he was able to use this reorientation to strengthen his relationship with Indonesia. Whether his remarks about Suharto and Nasution were purely for domestic consumption or not they would have certainly made it to the ears of the Indonesian diplomats in Phnom Penh and back to Suharto. In a further show of his shifting position in September he made the previously mentioned disparaging comments about Sukarno. Finally, in April of 1968, Suharto – the man that toppled Sihanouk's "older brother" (Sihanouk and Krisher

1990:66) – traveled to Phnom Penh on his first foreign tour and was greeted warmly by Sihanouk (Roeder 1969:152, Nasution et al. 2002:32-33). Given his military background, Suharto also likely met with Lon Nol who was no longer serving as Prime Minister, but remained the Chief of the Cambodian Armed Forces. Sihanouk's warm embrace of Suharto is a clear example of the desperateness of his position and his acute need for external support to maintain himself against the increasing threat from Vietnam. Suharto's willingness to overlook Sihanouk's friendship with Sukarno and to include Cambodia in his first foreign tour demonstrates just how important Cambodia was to Indonesia's foreign policy.

Ultimately, this period marks the end of Sihanouk's ability to use the left as a political counter balance. As Sihanouk was driven to the right he was left without a role model to follow similar to the way he followed Sukarno's lead. Ultimately, the right had no use for him, much the same as Suharto had no use for Sukarno. Additionally, Sihanouk's turn to an Indonesian analogy could have only served to vindicate the ideology of the most extreme voices in the Khmer Rouge.

Kiernan suggests that events in Indonesia may have erased any doubts that the PRC and Pol Pot had about the need to begin to prepare for an armed rebellion because, ultimately, Sihanouk, like Sukarno, would be unable to protect the Cambodian communists from annihilation. Ironically, unbeknownst to each other, Sihanouk and Pol Pot were both in Beijing when the coup began in Indonesia (1985:222). Kiernan also points to a 1977 Khmer Rouge document reflecting on this period:

If our analysis failed, we would have been in greater danger than [the communists] in Indonesia. But our analysis was victorious, because our analysis was agreed upon, because most of our cadres were in life-and-death contradictions with the enemy; the enemy sought to exterminate them constantly (1985:235).

While it is not clear that the Indonesian genocide led directly to the Cambodian genocide, it is clear that as the Khmer Rouge were formulating their strategy they were thinking about events in

Indonesia, and it is easy to see how Sihanouk's threat of a communist purge similar to the one in Indonesia may have stiffened the Khmer Rouge's resolve to begin an armed struggle, which ultimately turned to genocide.

Both Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge drew on Indonesia's experience to chart their courses. Therefore, the violent repression of the Samlaut Rebellion and the Khmer Rouge response are better understood by considering how events in Indonesia shaped both sides thinking. For the right, Indonesia provided a clear path to end communism. For the left, Indonesia provided a warning that they could not compromise with the right and could not rely on Sihanouk for protection. In 1967, as the Khmer Rouge began to rise up and violence began to spread, the remaining left-leaning politicians slipped out of Phnom Penh and joined the Khmer Rouge (Becker 1986:105).

1969 was a disaster for Sihanouk and his foreign policy. In March the US began secretly bombing communist Vietnamese forces in Cambodia. Sihanouk was outraged. Then, later in the year, he moved to reestablish ties with Washington. At the same time, he gave official recognition to the Viet Cong's provisional government for South Vietnam and agreed to allow their forces to stay in Cambodia until the conflict in Vietnam was settled (Becker 1986:111-12). By early 1970 the government lost control of more than one-fifth of its territory to rebel and communist forces (Chandler 2000:203).

Suharto and Lon Nol

In late 1969 Lon Nol was on the rise and Sihanouk was in trouble. In the fall of 1969 Lon Nol made contact with Son Ngoc Thanh who was a long time Cambodian independence fighter and enemy of Sihanouk (Becker 1986:112). In November 1969 and again in January 1970 it is

alleged that a small group of Cambodian Army officers secretly traveled to Indonesia to learn about how the Indonesian Army had forced Suharto from power (“The Periscope” 1970). This seems highly likely given Suharto and the Indonesian Army’s subsequent vocal support for Lon Nol and his regime. Suharto’s apparent willingness to assist the Cambodian military overthrow Sihanouk suggests that while Suharto was willing to engage with Sihanouk to maintain the Indonesian-Cambodia relationship he was actively working to extend Indonesia’s influence in Cambodia by all available means.

In January 1970 when Sihanouk left Cambodia for his annual vacation his departure was viewed by many “as a flight.” With Sihanouk away Lon Nol’s government again went on the offensive against Sihanouk’s programs. Sirik Matak made a secret trip to Hanoi, and was shown the signed agreement Sihanouk had made years earlier allowing the North Vietnamese to use Cambodia as a base of operations. He was enraged and shipments of Vietnamese weapons across Cambodia came to an end. Matak was now ready to move against Sihanouk, even if Lon Nol may not have been (Chandler 2000:204).

In an Indonesian style twist, Matak and three army officers forced Lon Nol at gunpoint to declare his support for a vote of no confidence against Sihanouk scheduled for the following day in the National Assembly. Nearly 25 years earlier a group of Indonesian youth abducted Sukarno and forced him to immediately declare independence from the Dutch despite his personal reservations. After extracting Lon Nol’s support, the National Assembly voted overwhelmingly to strip Sihanouk from his position as chief of state (Chandler 2000:204). Just days before his death, in June 1970, Sukarno lamented that Sihanouk had end up just like him. Commenting on Lon Nol, Sukarno said, “He is the quiet type . . . Just like Suharto”(qtd in “Sukarno Marks His 69th Birthday” 1970).

Following the coup, as if sticking to Suharto's script, Lon Nol's forces slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese civilians and rounded up thousands more into concentration camps under the pretext that they were all communist supporters. Writing about these events in his memoirs and pointing to the similarity between events in Indonesia and Cambodia, a news reporter who was in Phnom Penh at the time said, Lon Nol "brought in a crew of advisers from Indonesia . . . to learn that Lon Nol was taking notes from them on the conduct of his internal security was not comforting." In another nod to Indonesia, Lon Nol announced that the desperate state of affairs in Cambodia required Cambodia to accept all unconditional foreign aid no matter the source (Anson 1989:130-31). Shortly after Suharto came to power his government made a similar plea for help. In his initial statement to the press Suharto's Minister of Economics, Finance and Reconstruction said, "we will welcome foreign economic aid without strings attached from all countries" (qtd in Leifer 1983:115). Unlike Indonesia, the mass killings led to an evaporation of overseas support for the regime (Chandler 2000:205-06). Clearly, times had changed since the international community sat idly by watching the anti-communist pogrom in Indonesia.

Indonesia's foreign policy towards Cambodia under Suharto was a balancing game between domestic political forces calling for closer alignment with the US and domestic political forces seeking to adhere to Indonesia's professed non-alignment. One side was dominated by the Army, which wanted closer relations with the US, primarily for the security benefits they perceived, but certainly sweetened by the financial benefits they hoped to gain in terms of US financial support. The other side, best personified by Indonesia's foreign minister Adam Malik, wanted US financial support, but was very concerned about keeping Indonesia's long-term options open. Malik thought Indonesia was best served by supporting a policy of non-

interference by external forces in Cambodia (Crouch 1978:330-31). These competing foreign policy approaches can be seen in the different responses of the Indonesian government to the overthrow of Sihanouk. Despite their differing approaches, both sides were seeking to enhance Indonesia's international image through engagement in Cambodia.

Suharto and the army were supportive of Lon Nol's overthrow of Sihanouk. As previously mentioned, in November 1969 and January 1970 the Indonesian military likely hosted a small contingent of Cambodian army officers who came to Indonesia to learn how General Suharto and the Army had managed to oust President Sukarno from power.

When Lon Nol came to power in March of 1970 President Suharto and the Indonesian military were quick to offer their support. In April, Indonesia along with Australia, Japan and the US, received a "shopping list" of needed equipment and supplies from Lon Nol's government (Holdridge 1970). The anti-communist Indonesian army had no qualms about supporting Lon Nol and even considered sending Indonesian troops to help secure Phnom Penh (Conboy 2003:190). More restrained voices prevailed, however, and lesser means of support were pursued. Lon Nol specifically requested that Indonesia supply his army with two or three divisions worth of small arms, but Indonesia was in no position to immediately supply such a large quantity of weapons. Instead the Indonesia Army offered to supply about one brigade's worth of AK-47s. If Indonesia was going to supply a larger quantity it need to have its weapons stocks resupplied by the US (Galbraith 1970).

Indonesia had been receiving Soviet military aid through 1966, but as Indonesia became more pro-West the Soviets demanded cash payments for ammunition and replacement parts. This was quickly making Indonesia's stock of AK-47s more difficult to maintain, so, Indonesia was eager to find a way to have its AK-47s replaced by M-16s (Conboy 2003:200). Providing

weapons to Phnom Penh was one way to demonstrate their support for a non-communist regime and gain benefits for themselves. In the end Indonesia only supplied Cambodia with one brigades worth of AK-47s gathered from an Indonesian Army commando group. This group became the first Indonesian unit to receive M-16s (190). A more significant contribution by Indonesia was not possible given its own poor economic situation and US congressional limitations on military assistance to Cambodia.

Suharto's generals, however, were not deterred in their determination to support Lon Nol and his regime. In September 1970 the Indonesian military sent an officer on a survey mission to Cambodia. Colonel Seno Hartono, a graduate of US Army Ranger School and the commander of the Indonesian commando school at Batu Jajar, was selected for the mission. For nine months he had virtually unrestricted access to the Cambodian military and its internal workings. He was provided a helicopter and traveled extensively, visiting numerous Cambodian units. His conclusion was that the most meaningful assistance Indonesia could provide was to bring 60 Cambodian soldiers to Indonesia for commando training. The participants were selected from two Cambodian units. Half the trainees came from Cambodia's best infantry unit, the 2 Airborne Battalion. The other half of the trainees came from the 5 Infantry Brigade, the only Cambodian unit made of Muslim Chams (Conboy 2003:190).

One has to wonder if Indonesia may have had ulterior motives in selecting Cham recruits or if it was merely to make the endeavor more palatable at home as a show of pan-Muslim solidarity. One can only speculate about Indonesia's intentions, but General Les Kosem the highest ranking Cham in the Cambodian Army apparently held the idea that these Cham soldiers could return and some day help lead the struggle for the reestablishment of Champa. He is

quoted as having said to the members of 5 Brigade before their departure to Indonesia “to train hard in order to continue the struggle for Champa” (qtd in Conboy 2003:200).

In Indonesia the Cambodian soldiers received a five-week crash course in Indonesian, then refresher infantry training followed by paratrooper training and nine months of commando training at Batu Jajar near Bandung. Back in Cambodia many of the new commandos served as instructors at a new training center for reconnaissance and commando operations. At the end of the war the majority of the Indonesian trained troops were formed into a new commando unit and sent to defend the canals north of Phnom Penh, where they were annihilated by the Khmer Rouge (Conboy 2003:191).

In the end, Indonesia’s military assistance to Lon Nol and his forces was not particularly significant, but it still demonstrates Indonesia’s desire to play a larger regional and international role. It also highlights Indonesia’s willingness to stand up against the PRC with whom they had broken diplomatic relations and who were the primary patron of the Khmer Rouge in their fight against Lon Nol.

In addition to the real financial constraints Indonesia faced there were also opponents to military assistance in Suharto’s cabinet. Foreign Minister Adam Malik was the most influential opponent of military assistance to Cambodia. Adam Malik leaned farther left than Suharto and his generals, but had been an opponent of the PKI.

In 1964 Adam Malik was a leader in the Murba party, a “nationalist-Communist party,” which had been formed in 1948 by supporters of Tan Malaka. The Murba party was despised by the PKI. In 1964 the Murba party moved to weaken the PKI by attempting to declare an alternate ideology to Marxism they termed Sukarnoism and by pushing for the consolidation of national parties into one conglomerate party. Sukarno, who relied heavily on the PKI to balance against

the Army, became concerned that the PKI would become too weak, and moved to crush the efforts of Murba and their associates. In the end Malik, who had previously served as Sukarno's ambassador to the Soviet Union and was currently serving as trade minister, was demoted in a cabinet shake-up in March 1964 (Crouch 1978:64-66). Prior to the shake-up Adam Malik had also played a key role in negotiations with the Dutch over West Irian. His anti-PKI credentials and his civilian standing made him an appealing choice for Suharto's Foreign Minister in March 1966 (Leifer 1983:113-14).

Upon receiving the request for aid from Lon Nol's government, Suharto was so enthusiastic about offering support that he did not consult with Adam Malik before contacting the US to ask for assistance with his weapons replacement scheme (Galbraith 1970). Once Malik was consulted Suharto seems to have tempered his enthusiasm and returned to a more focused determination to pursue a less blatantly pro-US course. To this end, Malik attempted to organize a conference on Cambodia to be held in Jakarta on May 16th and 17th 1970. Malik invited "twenty Asian and Pacific governments" to attend the conference with the intent of finding a solution to the growing conflict in Cambodia. Unfortunately for Malik and Suharto, the communist countries saw the conference as a US inspired endeavor and wanted nothing to do with it from the start. Then, shortly after invitations were sent out, the US and South Vietnamese forces launched ground combat operations into Cambodia from South Vietnam in an attempt to deny Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces sanctuary. These operations only served to strengthen the view that the Jakarta Conference was inspired by the US. In the end none of the communist and none of the other non-aligned governments attended the conference. The conference is an example of the regional role Indonesia aspired to. Indonesia had hoped that the

Jakarta Conference would lift their status similar to the Bandung Conference in 1955 (Leifer 1983:133-35).

As a result of the international community's rejection, Michael Leifer describes the conference as "virtually a non-event", which "had no bearing whatsoever on the cruel course of events in Cambodia itself" (1983:135). This view is not entirely correct. The mere organization of the conference strengthened the position of Adam Malik and curtailed the possibility of significant military support from Indonesia. At the conference when addressing how Indonesia planned to respond to Cambodian appeals for assistance, Malik said, "our response to the appeal is confined to efforts within the realm of political action and diplomacy. It is obvious to Indonesia that a negotiated settlement rather than a settlement by force is a prerequisite" (1970:69). As Leifer himself pointed out, in July 1970 Adam Malik said, "We have no arms for them. We just pray for Cambodia" (qtd in Leifer 1983:135).

From Suharto's government's attempts to support Cambodia both diplomatically and militarily one can see that despite its desire to shape events in Cambodia Indonesia lacked the capacity to provide more than cursory support. Despite this Cambodia was important enough to Indonesia in its quest for international status that it risked, and ultimately experienced, failure by trying to influence events in Cambodia beyond its means. Despite his failure to strengthen Lon Nol's position Suharto remained engaged with Cambodia.

In March of 1975, as the military situation of the his government continued to deteriorate, officials in Lon Nol's government still believed they could negotiate with the Khmer Rouge. Since Lon Nol was seen as the focus of Sihanouk's and the Khmer Rouge's anger, officials close to Lon Nol hatched a plan to remove him from the scene. Officials in his administration recommended that he travel to Hawaii under the pretext of seeking medical care and remain

there until the conditions were set for his return (Leap 1977:xi, xvi-xvii). The US, however, was unwilling to have Lon Nol fly directly to the US as head of state and wanted him to make a stop over in route where he would relinquish his official position and continue to the US as a private citizen. President Suharto, apparently still sympathetic to Lon Nol's anti-communist stand and friendly with the US, offered to serve as a rest stop (Howland 2013:262). Importantly, Suharto allowing Lon Nol to escape Cambodia left open the possibility that Suharto could avoid a complete defeat at the hands of the PRC in a regional struggle, and it allowed Indonesia to play a part in a matter of great international significance.

On April 1st 1975 Lon Nol left Cambodia accompanied by 27 members of his family and close political associates, including Prime Minister Long Boret. From Phnom Penh they flew to Utapao Airbase in Thailand. From Thailand he flew to Jakarta and then on to Bali on an Indonesian national oil company jet ("Lon Nol Lands in Jakarta" 1975). Lon Nol and his party were put up at the Indonesian national oil company's cottages in Bali. Once in Bali, Suharto paid Lon Nol a personal visit and declared his continued support for Lon Nol's government (Nasution et al. 2002:49-50). Despite the pretext of departing on a health cure it was widely understood that Lon Nol would not be returning to Cambodia and was likely going into exile (Andelman 1975). In a demonstration of just how certain Lon Nol's associates were that there was still space to negotiate with the Khmer Rouge, Long Boret and several other officials returned from Bali to Cambodia just in time to be killed by the Khmer Rouge (Holdridge 2013:264, Becker 1986:160, "Lon Nol Lands in Jakarta" 1975).

Conclusion

The victory of the Khmer Rouge on April 17th 1975 effectively ended Indonesian involvement in Cambodia until October of 1978 when Indonesia began to explore the possibility of reopening its embassy in Phnom Penh. The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, however, put an end to those plans (Nasution et al. 2002:70-71). Nevertheless, Indonesia went on to play an important role in the eventual establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission in Cambodia, and maintains an active relationship with Cambodia today through its numerous ASEAN engagements including a long standing commitment to assist Thailand and Cambodia mediate their dispute over Preah Vihear Temple (Sokha 2013).

Indonesia was never the most important of considerations for Cambodia, and Cambodia was certainly never the most important consideration for Indonesia during the time period outlined above, but examining their interactions during this period enhances our understanding of the events in Cambodia from 1955 through 1975. By examining the Indonesia-Cambodia relationship one can better understand why Sihanouk might have felt he could pursue a neutralist foreign policy, and how he chose to pursue it. The Bandung Conference helped propel Sihanouk along his neutral course and facilitated his rise to power. It also was the starting point for Sukarno and Sihanouk's friendship, which, while not the only factor, set the stage for an increased closeness between the two countries, which might otherwise not have come about. Examining the Sukarno-Sihanouk relationship helps one see that Sihanouk's shift to the right in 1967 and his ultimate down fall was linked to the events in Indonesia.

Additionally, examining the link between the destruction of the PKI and the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge helps to shed some light on the Cambodian path to genocide. The destruction of the PKI offered a path for the right in Cambodia to exert its control over Sihanouk and eliminate the left. For the Khmer Rouge, it likely steeled their decision to pursue an armed

struggle and may have even increased their determination to carry out a political genocide in the image of Suharto's utter destruction of the PKI.

Finally, the fact that the Indonesia-Cambodia relationship remained important regardless of the head of government in either capital from 1955 through 1975 highlights the importance the relationship took on for both countries. The relationship began through the friendship of Sukarno and Sihanouk, but endured because of the importance it took on and likely because of the intergovernmental relationships it generated. For Cambodia the relationship was always about finding an external patron to support the government against internal and external threats. For both Sukarno and Suharto Cambodia provided an opportunity to enhance Indonesia's international image. For Sukarno, Cambodia provided a way to extend his regional influence as a counter weight against the PRC backed PKI, and for Suharto Cambodia provided an opportunity to build Indonesia's influence against the PRC regionally and communism in general.

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