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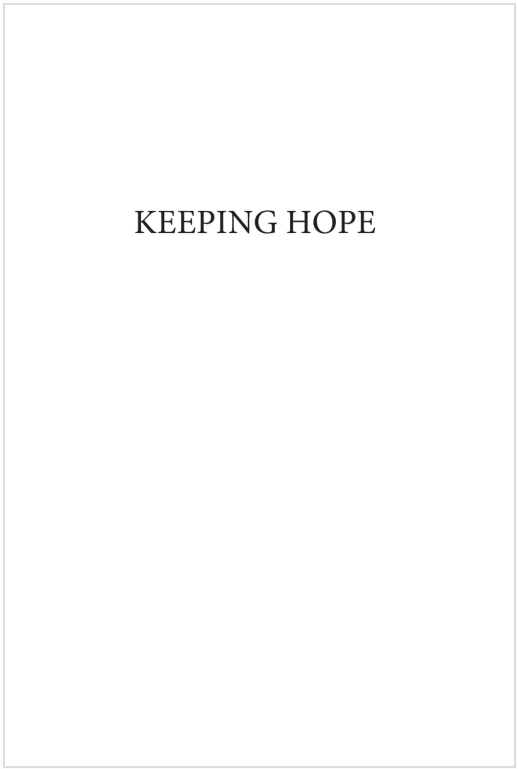

Keeping Hope: Seeing Indonesia's Past from the Edges

by Baskara Tulus Wardaya

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KEEPING HOPE

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Seeing Indonesia's Past from the Edges

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Baskara T. Wardaya, SJ

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For TS—so far yet so close

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The best way to predict the future is to create it.

—Abraham Lincoln

Prologue

It is not rare that people, both in the academic circles and the general public, question the relevance of discussing the past for the sake of present. For many of them everything beyond yesterday is the past and there is no use to talk about it since we should focus ourselves only in what is going on today—without realizing that within 24 hours this "today" will become another yesterday, to be followed by being the day-before-yesterday and so on. Such a view needs to be re-evaluated. While many past events have no direct connection with what we are doing today, many others are important to be discussed and to be debated, even if the events occurred many years before today or yesterday. A good example was the case of the idea to republish a book that had been published many years earlier.

When the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, Germany, was planning to republish Adolf Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) in 2016, the plan generated public controversy. The controversy came about despite the fact that when being republished the book was going to be very heavily annotated, with about 3,700 critical footnotes on Hitler's remarks.[2] Besides, the first edition of the book had actually been published in 1925—or 90 years earlier. The question is: why is it that republication of a timeworn book that is already 90 years old and critically footnoted still generates controversy today? The answer is: because the book has a lot to do with history.

As we know, *Mein Kampf* was written (through dictation, beginning in 1923) by Adolf Hitler, the future leader of Germany's Nationalist Socialist

German Worker's Party (or the NAZI) and was responsible not only for the outbreak of the Second World War but also for the killing of millions of Jews and others, known as the Holocaust. In the book Hitler expressed his hatred for the Jews which later helped many Germans became easily provoked to annihilate the Jews and many other "undesired" groups.[3]

Considering the author and the content of the book, a group of people were trying to stop the re-publication, while another group supported it. Interestingly enough, both groups were using the same basis in justifying their positions, and that is *history*. The former group believes that the re-publication of the book would only make history repeat itself, i.e. would regenerate hatred toward the Jews and other categories of people. Meanwhile the latter group maintains that precisely in order to avoid history from repeating itself, people should read Hitler's book and learn from how hatred and intolerance could lead to disastrous mass murder.

Regardless of our view on the two groups' positions, the controversy provides us with a clear example on how an event or events that took place many decades ago (in some cases even many centuries ago) still have strong influence in the life of the people today. Events that happened way in the past not always automatically disappeared in the dustbin of time. To the contrary, they often significantly influence what is happening today. The above case was just an example. Clearly, history matters.

The book currently in your hands that you are about to read is an attempt to share the idea that many past events and thoughts in the history of Indonesia continue to be relevant for us today. As we will see many events that took place in the past do not only belong to the past, but also part of our present. They could even be the locus where we can find explanation to what is happening in the present—and perhaps some clues to prepare for our collective future. As we all know, in many human affairs there are always a strong links between the present with the past and the future. Meanwhile, as the common saying goes, those who don't learn from the past are condemned to repeat it.

All of the materials in this book are taken from the author's articles that were originally written for different occasions—seminars, conferences,

keynote speeches or journal articles. Hence the diversity of the topics of each of the piece. To lessen the sense of disconnectedness of the topics to each other, this author tries to categorize them into different parts, and within each part there are sections. The term "chapter" is purposely avoided here, since normally chapters in a book indicate the sequential nature or close connection with each other, while the essays in this book were not originally written as a book.

Despite the diversity of the topic, each topic of the sections were written with the general emphasis on the relevance of history for the current affairs. Some of them were already published and some were not, as they are explained in each of the sections. Some sections are longer, others are much shorter—as required by the occasion of the original writing. The idea of the republication of these writings into a single book is to try to find a common thread in them that might be useful in discussing and debating the present for the sake of the future. Each of the sections of this book intends to offer some views on the history of Indonesia, which probably different from the official or mainstream views—hence from the edges. However, since the sections of this book had been written for different circumstances there is a possibility that some parts are being repeated or overlap with each other, and for that the writer humbly apologizes. Despite all the book's shortcomings the writer hopes that the reader will find it useful and enjoyable to read it.

Asked about using the republished and annotated *Mein Kampf* as part of teaching materials for the students, the president of Germany's teachers' association Josef Kraus said: "Professional treatment of excerpts in class can make an important contribution to inoculating young people against political extremism."[4] It is our hope that generating love of history among young Indonesians will not only prevent them from any form of political extremism, but will also help deepen their love for knowledge and for their nation—and their nation's future.

Endnotes

1 Portions of this prologue was published in the ISRSF (Indonesian Scholarship and Research Suport Foundation) annual publication proceeding (Jakarta, 2015).

2 *Financial Times*, December 5, 2015, p. 11

3 Cristopher R. Browning. *The Origins of the Final Solution*, William Heinemann, London, 2004.

4 *The Times of Israel*, January 8, 2016.

Acknowledgement

As you certainly know, academic writing is usually a long, arduous and often lonely process. However, despite all the challenges, the process of academic writing becomes much easier when there are many helpful hands—near and far. The responsibility of the work that you are about to read is solely mine, but this book was not merely the fruit of a personal work. Throughout the long, arduous and often lonely endeavor many people have been lending their helpful hands to make the present work moves from just merely scattered ideas into a united reality.

That is why I would like to thank the many friends, colleagues, students, staff, family members and others who have been directly and indirectly helpful to me in producing this work. The officials and volunteers at PUSDEMA (*Pusat Kajian Demokrasi dan Hak-hak Asasi Manusia*/Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies) of Sanata Dharma University (USD), Yogyakarta, Indonesia, are particularly very helpful in the discussion and technical process of preparing the draft. Dr. Yoseph Yapi Taum, Dr. Yerry Wirawan, Dr. Antonius Herujiyanto, Drs Y.R. Subakti M.Pd, A. Sumarwan, SJ, Hendra Kurniawan M.Pd, Dyah Merta, Kevin Rinangga and Clara Monica Susanto, thank you for all your support and assistance. Also supportive are my fellow members at the Bellarminus Jesuit Community, Yogyakarta. P.S. Hary Susanto SJ and Y. Sarju SJ are particularly very supportive. I would like also to thank my colleagues and staff at the Religious and Cultural Studies

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Part 1
Loving Indonesia

Introduction

Following the end of the Second World War many formerly colonial territories declared independence, especially in Asia and Africa. One of them was Indonesia. Indonesia's declaration of independence, however, was both exciting and challenging. It was exciting because after centuries of being under different colonial masters, eventually Sukarno and Hatta, in the name of all Indonesians, were able to declare that beginning on August 17, 1945 a new nation-state was born, and it's called The Republic of Indonesia. It was challenging because, not long after the declaration, one of Indonesia's former colonial masters, namely the Dutch colonial government, with the help of Allied forces, intended to forcibly re-colonize Indonesia. Indonesia rejected. What followed next was four years of fierce war of independence before eventually the Dutch recognized Indonesia's independence. Even after the Dutch recognition, however, there were other challenges that threatened the new nation's existence, such as political instability and regional rebellions. Despite all the challenges, and despite—or perhaps thanks to—its geographical, religious, lingual, ethnic diversity, today Indonesian remains standing and remains strong.

The sections in this part will remind us that Indonesia's independence was a hard-won independence and that despite all the paradoxes it possesses, the Republic continues to be a country that deserves to be loved and respected. The diverse nature of its territory and people should be regarded as an asset to be not only a great nation but also a nation that actively contributes to the world. The last section of this part shows that even barely ten years after its declaration of independence Indonesia already offered its contribution to the world by uniting fellow new nations of Asia and Africa to fight against unilateralism of the more powerful nations.

***

1. Making Indonesia, Indonesia[1]

When the country's founding fathers declared independence from Dutch colonists in 1945, the declaration read, in its entirety: "We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare the independence of Indonesia. Matters relating to the transfer of power etc. will be executed carefully and as soon as possible." Indonesia has been working on that "etc." ever since. —**Elizabeth Pisani**

INDONESIA, AS YOU can see and feel every day, is a nation of interesting paradoxes. It comprises of more than sixteen thousand islands with hundreds of ethnic and linguistic communities, but it is one nation with one official language. It is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, but it is governed under a democratic system, and it is one of the largest democracies on the planet. It is a nation known for being rich in natural resources since colonial times, but today refined oil and gas are imported. It is full of houses of worship, but corruption runs through its administrative system, often from the highest to the lowest level. It is an island-nation surrounded by sea water, but for its daily consumption of salt the country said to be importing from other countries. In its early days Indonesia declared itself a democratic republic, but the first two presidents intended to rule as long as they wished, just like a hereditary king.

Yet, despite all the paradoxes, today Indonesia remains one nation. Any attempt in the past in which a certain territory tried to separate itself from the Republic always ended in failure. That is Indonesia. It is a nation full of paradoxes. Compared to other nations it is quite unusual.

Challenges and difficulties

In fact, even from its very beginning as a nation-state, Indonesia was established rather unusually. When the country's independence was proclaimed, for instance, it was not proclaimed in a peaceful and well-prepared situation. It was proclaimed in the midst of a global war, namely World War II. Its declaration of independence was drafted and announced rather hastily, following serious differences among the freedom fighters themselves, which involved threats and kidnapping.

When Sukarno and Hatta—the two most prominent founding fathers of the Republic—declared Indonesia's independence, actually Indonesia as a nation-state was not really there yet. As we all know, before and during the colonial period there was no "Indonesia" as a fixed political entity except in the minds of its political activists. At the time of the independence proclamation most members of the new nation never met each other, never communicated directly to each other, except in their imagination.

While its independence was proclaimed in haste following the Japanese surrender at the end of World War II, the text of the independence proclamation itself was rather brief and quite unclear. As noted by Pisani (2014), in the text it was even said *"dan lain-lain"* or *"et cetera"* without any further specification on what *"dan lain-lain"* meant and who would be in charge of specifying and listing the *"dan lain-lain"*.

Shortly after the declaration of independence it fought against a much mightier European army—supported by its Second World War allies—mostly only with sharpened bamboos and the shouts of *Merdeka*.

Geographically the new nation encompassed a very large area—almost as wide as the area of the continental United States—, its people spoke more than 300 different local languages, making it almost unimaginable to put the territory under one central government, let alone a democratic one. Javanese was the language of majority of its population, but Javanese was not made as the national language, opening a risk that the Javanese ethnic group would be disappointed and would create problems for the new nation.

In the early days of President Sukarno's rule there were major rebellions against the central government almost everywhere, including in South

Moluccas, West Java, Central Java, and South Sulawesi. In late 1950s the western and northern parts of the country were troubled by armed rebellions led by regional military commanders and supported by Western nations and their Asian allies. During the Cold War Indonesia was targeted by superpower nations which tried to pull it to each of their respective ideological camps. Attempts were even made to balkanize Indonesia alongside the communist versus non-communist line. In mid-1960s Indonesia was torn apart by political tensions that led to the murder of top Army generals in Jakarta, which was followed by massive and bloody massacres that spread to many parts of the country.

Under President Suharto's New Order government democracy was just a name, without any clear intention from the part of the powers-that-be to put it into practice. Military presence was everywhere; freedom of speech was strongly limited; while extrajudicial killings were a common secret. Following the end of Suharto's authoritarian rule in 1998 the country was beset by communal violence and acts of terrorism from end to end. In 1999, when East Timor voted for independence, there was great fear that the country would be undermined by acts of secession, just like what had happened in the post-Tito Yugoslavia.

Remains one nation

Yet, today—many decades after its proclamation of independence—Indonesia remains one nation under one government, a democratically elected government. As mentioned earlier, in terms of democracy it is now the third largest democracy in the world, after India and the United States of America. Its economy remains relatively strong, making it one of the members of the G-20 nations. Its regional and international prominence is rising as—to some extent—shown for instance in the commemoration of the 1955 Bandung Conference's 60th anniversary in 2015.

Not only do the people of Indonesia willingly unite themselves as one nation-state, but also tend to be reluctant to live abroad. Most of the students who study in foreign countries generally prefer to return home and work in

Indonesia upon the completion of their studies. True, there are millions of migrant workers from Indonesia who work in other countries, but most of them would return back to Indonesia when their work contracts end.

The question is: why? Why is it that despite all the difficulties and challenges Indonesia is able to stay as one nation? Why is it that a country which has so many islands, so many people, so many ethnicities, so many local languages, remain one country? What is actually the *"benang merah"* or the "red thread" that connects and binds Indonesians together? In short, what makes Indonesia *Indonesia*? What makes Indonesia the united Indonesia as it is today?

Remains standing

There are certainly many possible answers to such questions. Perhaps the answer is because the people of Indonesia have strong sense of history and well-preserved cultural heritage. Or, perhaps because of its superb political arrangement or religious tolerance. Perhaps because of the ability to keep its many well-guarded *adats* and other local traditions. Or, perhaps its principle of *"gotong royong"* or mutual help, a traditional principle shared by many Indonesians, especially in Java. Or, may be what makes Indonesia *Indonesia* is the combination of all these and other factors. But one thing is quite clear here: up to this day Indonesia remains standing as one nation-state, and as Indonesians we should be proud of it and should be grateful for that.

Homework

As Indonesians we need to be proud of the fact that the country stays strong as one nation. We should also be grateful that despite all the challenges in the past and at present Indonesia is moving to the right direction. At the same time, there are still a lot of homeworks to do to make Indonesia *Indonesia*, especially to make Indonesia a better *Indonesia*.

As we all know, we have problems with regard to economic distribution. Corruption, as mentioned above, is still a big national concern to be overcome. In the meantime, despite all the encouraging words, religious

and ethnic relations and majority-minority affairs remain possible sources of communal violence in Indonesia, as shown in the recent past. Radicalism, poverty and health care remain causes of apprehension in the nation.

We hope that Indonesians from all walks of life will help the nation not only to find the answers to the question "what makes Indonesia Indonesia?", but also will help all of us in finding out what should we do to make Indonesia continue to be Indonesia, and if possible to make Indonesia a continuously better Indonesia.

Note:

1 Originally delivered as a keynote speech at the Fulbright Departure Orientation, Yogyakarta, May 21, 2015.

2. Smile, Laughter and Human Rights[1]

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To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity. —**Nelson Mandela**

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BEFORE WE DISCUSS further the book interestingly called *Stormy with a Chance of Fried Rice: Twelve Months in Jakarta* by Pat Walsh (2015), let us read from a paragraph or two of this small but rich and inspiring book. The first paragraph is about crossing the street in Jakarta: "Currently human head is not made for Jakarta's traffic. It can only function across 180 degrees and in stages. The ability to see in all directions at once—to see not just the motorbike on your right in the one way lane but the one coming against the traffic in your left, the one coming straight at you through the intersection and the one coming from behind—is an overdue evolutionary imperative. The meerkat has adapted to a hostile environment by learning to stand tall and monitor the landscape virtually 360 degrees with rapid head movement. Why not us?" (pp. 30-31).

The next paragraph is about President Suharto's political prisoner in Bandung and his carving of a *jamu* lady (a lady that sells herbal medicinal drink): "I sense the artist enjoyed making her [a small statue of a *jamu* lady]. Rejected, trapped in a tedious but hostile, violent world and facing a future of frightening uncertainty, including death, he was able to transcend his circumstances during the hours he spent molding her lovingly with his fingers. She was also his statement of protest. He would defy his fate and be remembered not as someone evil but as the creator of something lasting and beautiful" (p. 33).

Crossing a street, looking at a statue, going to a sidewalk *warung*, talking to a maid, flying on a small plane, riding a taxi, eating *nasi goreng* (fried rice) on a *kakilima* eatery, talking to a coffee shop attendant, seeing wild cats, reading emails, visiting a government office, or may be editing a manuscript, etc. are probably just a few of the many usual things that people do while living in Indonesia. But in the eyes and the mind and the hands of Pat Walsh, those usual things become unusual and even precious moments which could teach us precious lessons of life. The passages that I just read to you are just two examples.

The first one was a funny take and reflection on the personal experience of the act of crossing (and surviving) the super busy streets of Jakarta. Normally crossing a street should be as easy as doing other daily chores such as buying a cigarette in a kiosk or flagging a taxi. But in Jakarta it becomes a very difficult task and sometimes if you are not careful enough you might risk your personal safety not to mention your survival. This is in part because of the unpredictability of the vehicles' coming. For Pat, this makes him think of the need for a further human evolution so that we can be as swift as meerkats in sensing the danger around us.

The second quote was taken from a chapter about a statue that Pat had bought in Bandung in 1969 for about AUD 4.00. The statue itself was rather small, copper-colored and made of papier-mâché. It's a special and precious statue because it was made by a political prisoner. Although we would never know who actually the political prisoner was, his incarceration reminds us of thousands of other similar political prisoners who were arrested and incarcerated in the second half of the 1960s. They were arrested during the political upheaval that took place in Indonesia beginning in 1965 and cost at least half a million lives.

The ability of Pat Walsh to see things beyond their physical appearances is quite amazing. Just by observing a small statue he is able to see (and to bring us to) the human uncertainty and suffering but also the endurance of a political prisoner, in this case the political prisoner of the Suharto government.

Here are a few other examples. One day, Pat Walsh's email was hijacked. As we can imagine, it caused some problems and a bit frustration for Pat. Yet from the experience he could draw a lesson of not being easy to panic. He then quote the hotel manager in the 2011 film *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* by saying: it will work out in the end, and if it hasn't worked out it's not the end (p. 89).

While working in his study Jakarta Pat was able to make friend with a black bull-ant he called Bandung. From the way the many-legged little friend's hard work and perseverance to find food, Pat was able to draw a lesson for himself (and for his fellow-species) that just like Bandung we should work industriously and consistently because "the virtues of consistent effort [has] its handsome rewards." (p. 41). Meanwhile he was also impressed by Dewi, a 43-year-old housemaid who works tirelessly so that her children will have what she has not had (pp. 18-21).

The book itself contains Pat Walsh's personal notes on his stay in Jakarta between 2013 and 2015, a total of roughly twelve months. Focusing on his time in Jakarta, through this book Pat wants to present the Indonesian capital as a city "rich in humanity and history" (p. Xii).

And in case you are wondering why during those twelve months Pat was in Jakarta, the main reason (as you can see in the Introduction of the book and on page 64-80) was because he was preparing "Timor Leste's massive truth commission report called *Chega!* For publication in English by the Indonesian publishing house Gramedia" (p. Xi).

As we all know, on December 7, 1975 Indonesian military forces invaded the eastern half of the island of Timor, a former Portuguese colony. The invasion turned out to be the beginning of brutal occupation which lasted for the next 25 years and in which East Timorese suffered greatly. Almost one third of the territory's population died during the military occupation.

In August 1999, under the administration of then-Indonesia's president B.J. Habibie a referendum was held and the people of East Timor opted for independence and decided to establish an independent nation called Timor Leste. Angered by the option and helped by local militias the Indonesian occupying forces burned buildings and killed people as many as possible

before they reluctantly left the former colony following the referendum. As a result, approximately 1,400 East Timorese were killed, while 300,000 more were forced to seek refuge by crossing the border with West Timor, which is an Indonesian territory.

In order to deal with gross human violations that occurred from 1974 to 1999 an independent commission was formed in East Timor in 2001. The commission was called Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, and the acronym in Portuguese is CAVR. CAVR was led by seven Timor Leste commissioners and was tasked with truth-seeking for the period of 1974 to 1999, to facilitate reconciliations, to produce a report on its finding and to make recommendations. In October 2005 the commission submitted a report and recommendations to the Timor Leste government. The report is called *Chega!* which means Enough! or *Cukup Sudah!*

As mentioned earlier it was for the purpose of preparing the publication of the English translation of the report that Pat Walsh was staying in Jakarta during those twelve months. About his works Pat Walsh writes: "Though technical, the *Chega!* Project was essentially an exercise in human rights advocacy. My basic purpose was to ensure that the voices of those who were starved to death, tortured and raped over 25 years could be heard far and wide above the din...." (p. 66).

With regard to his task, on page 73-74 he wrote: "As I worked through the litanies of violence recorded by *Chega!*, I found it extremely difficult to remain emotionally and professionally detached from the contents of the text in front of me.... [H]ow could I not feel deeply for the Timorese woman who endured 24 hours of rape to save 11 women?... Or another woman who told CAVR she had endured exile on Atauro island for exactly 4 years, 7 months and 7 days? Or another victim who, with equally vivid precision, testified: 'I was with this man for 3 months and 16 days'...Or the woman told by her persecutor: 'This is the rule of the gun. We are free to rape Fretilin supporters....Or the fate of Angelica de Jesus ... who, 18 years [old], pregnant and presumably preparing to welcome her own little Angelica into the world, was shot and hacked to pieces with a machete by Mahidi militia..." (pp. 73-74).

By working on the CAVR report he reminds himself (and the rest of us) of what Rev. Martin King Luther Jr. once said: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that" (p. 64) while hoping that the CAVR report will be that light driving out the darkness in Indonesia. And while working on copy-editing the 3, 200-page report Pat Wash observed and took notes on what he saw and experienced in Jakarta, and this wonderful little book *Stormy* is the result of that observation and note taking.

This book is almost as important and interesting as the main product, namely the English version of *Chega!* If *Chega!* teaches us how a military occupation and injustice can produce such unspeakable human sufferings and because of that it should not be repeated, *Stormy* teaches us on how to live daily life with a sharp eye to find meanings beyond the surface. If the chapter on *Chega!* could make the reader feel that the Indonesian and East Timorese skies are dark and cloudy with history of violence and injustices, other chapters give us plenty of chances to smile, to laugh, but also to desire working for justice for those who are less privileged than us.

Pat Walsh is fortunate because he has two sharp eyes, or in Tetum *taur mata ruak*, which happens to be the name of the third president of Timor Leste. That way he can see things beyond how they look on the surface and draw lessons of life from them. It is hoped that all of us can learn from Pat how to train our eyes and hearts so that we can see things beyond their physical appearance and draw lessons of life from them.

Note:

1 Originally notes and comments on the occasion of the launching of the book *Stormy with a Chance of Fried Rice: Twelve Months in Jakarta* by Pat Walsh (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2015) in Yogyakarta, 26 February 2016.

3. Winning Freedom for All[1]

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The secret to happiness is freedom…. And the secret to freedom is courage. —**Thucydides**

THE MONTH OF August is a very special month for Indonesia. As we all know, August is the month when the nation celebrates its independence day. For weeks people hold many public events to celebrate the special day, which falls on the seventeenth day of the month. Signs and shouts of *"Merdeka!"* can be seen and heard almost everywhere. This was because during the revolutionary war, the slogan "*merdeka*" or "to be free" was a unifying cry in the fight for the country's freedom and independence.

It was many decades ago that Indonesia declared its independence in 1945. During those decades Indonesia has achieved many praiseworthy accomplishments. At the same time much works still need to be done in order to make the freedom and independence more meaningful.

Strong Determination

As we have learned from history lessons, on August 17th, 1945 Sukarno—accompanied by Mohammad Hatta—represented the people of Indonesia in proclaiming the independence of the new nation. On that day Sukarno wanted to tell the world that Indonesia was no longer under the control of foreign rulers, be it the Dutch, the Japanese or any other country. Indonesia was now a free country, a country that upholds the freedom of all its citizens.

The proclamation itself was a difficult decision to make, considering that the Japanese was by then still a *de facto* military power in Indonesia. Yet after some difficult and complicated negotiation, members of Indonesia's youth

movements succeeded in urging Sukarno-Hatta to declare independence. The proclamation of independence was done peacefully without any military incidents.

Yet the peaceful proclamation was not the end of the story. Soon afterward, the former rulers of Indonesia, namely the Dutch colonial government, began to arrive in Indonesia attempting to re-occupy its former colony. Their arrival generated a strong reaction from the Indonesian population to defend their freedom.

In November 1945, for instance, a fierce fighting broke out in Surabaya between the forces of Indonesian youth against the British forces thought to be supporting the return of the Dutch. Thousands of Indonesians died in the fighting.

For the next four years, fighting against the Dutch continued. Jakarta was too dangerous to be the capital of the country, so President Sukarno decided to move the capital to Yogyakarta. With strong determination the Dutch wanted to re-colonize Indonesia, but with stronger determination Indonesia defended its newly-achieved freedom.

In defending the freedom Indonesian leaders of the time used a two-fold tactic called *"perjuangan"* or military struggle and *"diplomasi"* or diplomacy. And thanks to the tactic eventually in 1949 the Dutch officially acknowledged Indonesian independence. It was soon followed by official acknowledgement of other countries.

Very limited

The fact that Indonesia is free from foreign rule is indeed an extraordinary achievement that we all should be proud of and we should celebrate every year. But at the same time we always need to ask ourselves: are we truly free and independent? To answer this question we simply need to look around us.

In the last several years, especially since the fall of the Soeharto government in 1998, Indonesians have greater political freedom. We can now have public demonstration. We can now form almost any political party we want. Beginning in 2004 we can even elect our President and Vice President directly.

At the same time we realize that apparently the freedom is not enjoyed by everybody. Yes, there are many political parties, but political parties are often dominated by ambitious politicians who often busy serving their own interests. Many politicians often pay only lip service with regard to serving the interests of the people.

With regard to economic issues, while many people are happy with the construction of modern facilities such as the shopping malls or high-rise buildings, many other people are being disadvantaged by such facilities. Because of the shopping malls, for instance, many traditional traders and manufacturers suffer due to the diminishing number of customers. A great number of farmers also suffer because they are unable to sell their products. This is caused by the increasing amount of imported foodstuff allowed by the government to enter the country. Meanwhile, unemployment rate remains high. At the same time corruption is still an infectious and deadly "disease" among government officials and business circles.

A growing number of foreign companies are getting greater access to the country's economy, including the country's natural resources. Their presence and activities diminish Indonesians' ability to take charge of their own economy. This reality makes us think that a new form of colonialism has replaced the old one. Indonesians have less and less freedom in controlling their own business.

Oh, how about freedom in the field of education?! While now theoretically Indonesian citizens have greater access to education compared to the colonial time, in practice only a small percentage of the population can really pursue their academic dreams to the highest level. This is in part because of the ever-increasing cost of education. Commercialization of education is one of the major concerns in the country.

In theory, with the departure of the colonial system the Indonesian government should give greater freedom to its own citizens. But in reality government policies often remind people of the colonial period. The burning of textbooks for high school students in the past—only because some parts of the books are not in accord with the government's version—is just an example of how academic freedom is still very limited in this country.

Might change

So what should we do then? First of all we need to realize that the fight for freedom in this country did not end with the proclamation of independence in 1945. We should be aware of the fact that even long after the proclamation of independence, many Indonesians are still unable to enjoy freedom.

In the political field, we can help people by encouraging them to participate in political activities. This could be done for instance by helping people to be more critical to the campaign promises during election times. People should not be too easy in believing what politicians say.

In the economic field, we can encourage people to work harder and be more creative in solving their economic problems. People should be aware of their economic rights. They also need to be more careful to individuals or groups that try to take economic advantage from them.

With regard to educational matters, students can give example to the society by studying hard or by using what they learn from school to help people around them. Helping neighborhood children in their study is just an example.

What we do might look small and very limited. But if those initiatives are taken by many people for a long period of time, the country's situation might change for the better.

Better understand

If you like and admire what our heroes of independence did, you need to continue their fight for freedom. This freedom, however, should not be freedom that is only meant for people that we like, but should be freedom for all, regardless of their religion, ethnicity or social status. Admiring our heroes is a noble thing to do. But no less noble is to continue their struggle to free the people of Indonesia from any form of subjugation, be it foreign or domestic.

As the month of August passed and as the memory of the celebratory events begins to fade each year, perhaps it is time to reflect upon the true spirit of independence. It is time to think back on what we have accomplished

and what more we still need to do. We hope that this kind of reflection will help us better understand the meaning of freedom and independence that our heroes fought for. We also hope that the reflection will enable us to contribute more to our beloved nation. *Merdeka!*

Note:

1 This piece first appeared in the magazine *Dialogue*, (Yogyakarta: Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Sanata Dharma University), 3rd edition /XXIX/2007.

4. Global Solidarity against Unilateralism[1]

Perhaps now more than at any other moment in the history of the world, society, government and statesmanship need to be based upon the highest code of morality and ethics. And in political terms, what is the highest code of morality? It is the subordination of everything to the well-being of mankind. But today we are faced with a situation where the well-being of mankind is not always the primary consideration. Many who are in places of high power think, rather, of controlling the world. —**President Sukarno**, *Opening Speech of the Bandung Conference, 1955*

WHEN PRESIDENT SUKARNO delivered the above words at the beginning of the Bandung Conference in 1955, many newly-independent countries of Asia and Africa were very optimistic in being able to "build the world anew", where colonialism would soon be a thing of the past, and independence a new path to the future. Centuries of colonialism made them realize that subjugation by powerful (western) nations had caused poverty, suffering and backwardness, and that in order to be effective in fighting against legacy of colonialism they should unite in a common struggle. Based on this realization they wish to hold a conference that would help combine their power into a united front against the long-term impact of colonialism. They also wanted to start a new course of building a future free from any form of foreign domination. Indonesia, as one of the newly independent countries, was appointed to host the conference. The Indonesian government, in turn, decided to pick Bandung, a cool city in West Java, as the site of this historic postcolonial gathering. It was in that city that the historic conference took place and became an international inspiration for years afterward.

But the Bandung Conference was of course result of a long process. Prior to the conference, initiatives for uniting Asian nations in dealing with postcolonial issues had been held before. In 1946, for instance, the government of India hosted the Conference of Inter-Asian Relations in New Delhi. The same government was responsible for the Conference of Southeast Asian Youth in Calcutta, also in 1946. The following year, in 1947, representatives from Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam met in Bangkok and founded the South East Asia League aimed at promoting decolonization of Southeast Asia. In 1954 five Asian nations met in Sri Lanka to hold what was known as the Colombo Conference, which was intended to build closer ties among the formerly colonized nations of Asia. It was during this conference that the so-called "Colombo Powers"—comprised of India, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Burma and Indonesia—agreed to ask Indonesia to host the Bandung Conference the following year. The conference was aimed at enhancing solidarity among the newly-independent nations not only of Asia but also of Africa. The idea was widely accepted and was endorsed by other Asian and African countries, including the People's Republic of China. Later that year those who supported the idea held a conference in the city of Bogor, Indonesia. As a final step for preparing the Bandung Conference, the Bogor Conference re-emphasized the need for building closer ties among Asian and African nations. Moreover, Bogor expressed a desire to seek these nations' role in building a more just and peaceful postcolonial world.

Internationally respected heads of states were invited and planned to attend the Bandung Conference. Among them were Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Gammal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Prince Norodom Shianouk of Cambodia, Pham Van Dong of Vietnam, U Nu of Burma, Mohammad Ali Jinah of Pakistan, Carlos Romulo of the Philippines, Zhou En-lai of the People's Republic of China, and of course Sukarno, the President of the host country Indonesia. As stated in the December 29, 1954 communiqué of the preparation committee, the Bandung Conference was intended "to promote goodwill and cooperation among the nations of Asia and Africa; to explore and advance their mutual as well as common interests; and to establish and further friendliness and neighborly relations" (White House Office 1955a).

In the context of the Cold War tension involving the United States on one side and the Soviet Union on the other, the conference was also intended as a global expression of Asian and African nations' aspiration in charting their own future, free from any pressure to ally with either side of the tension, and even to actively participate in easing the tension by promoting the principle of peaceful coexistence.

The Bandung Conference and the United States

Looking from a different perspective, however, the United States—the self-proclaimed leader of the "Free World"—saw the Bandung Conference with suspicion and regarded it as a source of deep concerns. Washington feared that the Bandung Conference would be exploited by the USSR and China to spread their communist influence among Afro-Asian nations. In Washington's view China and the Soviet Union possessed better training and organizational skills that it would be easy for them to influence Asian-African countries that had just recently gained independence. So great were Washington's concerns that it contemplated unilateral moves to disrupt the conference.

In anticipation to the conference, Washington policymakers set up a special Coordinating Board aimed at implementing plans to frustrate the conference and influence its outcome. Members of the board planned to work through "proper channels," namely delegations from countries thought to be friendly to the U.S., such as the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, and Turkey (White House Office 1955b). Through these countries the administration hoped to monitor the dynamics of the conference and "influence actions at the conference in line with U.S. policies and objectives" (White House Office 1955c) On January 15, 1955 the board stated that it planned "to foster in advance of and during the Bandung Conference and maintain thereafter Free World awareness of the facts of Soviet-Chinese aggression and imperialism in the Far East." Moreover, it intended to put the communist representatives to the conference "psychologically on the defensive" (White House Office 1955c)

Working through the friendly nations, the Coordinating Board's main goals include:

> to create a moral and psychological tone unfavourable to the Communists by: (1) exposing the moral depravity of the Chinese Communist regime; (2) exposing the Soviet colonial-imperial pattern which uses Communist China as its executive agent in Asia; (3) discrediting the motives of [the People's Republic of China's Foreign Minister] Chou En-lai's five principles of: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and, peaceful co-existence (Craig 1955).

By using these tactics Washington hoped to create an environment within the conference that would provoke the participating delegates to question the motives behind the seemingly appealing anti-colonial rhetoric of the communist participants. The US wanted to "take advantage of the groundwork laid by Communist propaganda and turn it against them" (White House Office 1955a). In general, the US government intended to make any efforts possible to prevent the conference from being manipulated by Moscow and Beijing to support policies of the communist bloc or to condemn the international practices of the United States and its Cold War allies (White House Office 1955d).

A more specific initiative dealing with the perceived threat of the Bandung Conference was offered by officials of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Instead of just planning to interfere in the conference peacefully, these officials were proposing a bolder move: an assassination plan to sabotage the conference itself. For a long time, however, the plan had been kept secret until it was revealed in 1975 before the Church Committee, a US Senate committee chaired by Senator Frank Church to investigate the CIA's covert activities. In a hearing of that year the committee required testimony regarding the activities of CIA officers stationed in East Asian countries, including their activities during the 1950s. According to that testimony CIA officials had proposed to assassinate an "East Asian leader" in order to disrupt the Bandung Conference, which they considered a "Communist Conference" (quoted in Blum 1995: 99).[2]

It was during this hearing that the Church Committee learned that CIA officials had targeted the President of Indonesia, Sukarno. The committee

also learned that the officials had moved to the point of identifying an agent who would carry out the assassination plan. The report stated,

> In addition to the [other] plots discussed in the body of this report, the Committee received some evidence of CIA involvement in plans to assassinate President Sukarno of Indonesia ... Former [CIA] Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell testified that the assassination of Sukarno had been "contemplated" by the CIA, but that planning had proceeded no farther than identifying an "asset" [who] it was believed might be recruited to kill Sukarno. Arms were supplied to dissident groups in Indonesia but, according to Bissell, those arms were not intended for the assassination (Blum 1995: 100).[32]

Fortunately for the participants of the Bandung Conference, the assassination plan was never carried out. The reason was in part because after some further deliberations "cooler heads prevailed at CIA headquarters" (Blum 1995: 99). The conference continued without any major disruption.

Despite the withdrawal of the assassination plan, the overall initiatives contemplated and taken by Washington specifically intended to disrupt the Afro-Asian conference only demonstrate US willingness to take any unilateral action it considered necessary to remove any obstacle to its hegemonic ambition. As widely known, during the Cold War US government was keen in conducting similar unilateral initiatives in international affairs aimed at advancing its own global interests—usually at the expense of other nations.

The outcome of the conference

Despite US government malicious attempts to interfere and to disrupt, the Bandung conference went as planned. Delegates from the five sponsoring nations (Burma, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India and Pakistan) along with representatives of the twenty four guest-nations convened and discussed issues that were important with regard to relations and cooperation among Asian and African nations. Held on April 18-24, 1955 the conference succeeded in formulating a common platform for the formerly colonized nations. They discussed ways and means to gain closer cooperation on economic, cultural and political matters. The conference also discussed issues pertaining human rights, self-determination, and peoples who still lived

under the yoke of colonialism. Moreover the conference officially declared the desire of Asian and African nations, in cooperation with the United Nations, to be more active in promoting world peace, justice, solidarity and cooperation.

As part of the desire to promote better international relations delegates to the conference proposed the well-known Ten Principles—known in Indonesia as the "Dasasila Bandung"—that they suggested should be the basis for cooperation among nations. The principles proposed were:

> 1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
> 2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
> 3. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small.
> 4. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country.
> 5. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
> 6. (a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective deference to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers; (b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries.
> 7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.
> 8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
> 9. Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation.
> 10. Respect for justice and international obligation (U.S. Government Printing Office 1957: 2344-2352).

Participants of the conference were convinced that building cooperation among nations based on these principles would greatly enhance international peace and security. They were equally convinced that using the conference's declaration on economic, cultural and political cooperation would increase the common prosperity and well-being of the participating countries.

But more important than the written statements, the conference clearly echoed what later would be known as "the Spirit of Bandung" or "the Bandung Spirit". By the Bandung Sprit the conference meant the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among nations and peoples regardless of their political, economic, cultural or religious background. In light of this spirit, for instance, Bandung emphasized the importance of respect for human rights and urged the use of the Universal Declaration of Human rights as a common standard in international relations. On the issue of economic cooperation, Bandung encouraged closer cooperation on the basis of mutual interest and national sovereignty, including exchange of experts and the founding of financial and economic institutions that would benefit all parties involved. Based on the realization of Africa and Asia as being the cradles of civilization, Bandung also encouraged cultural contacts among peoples of the two continents, including exchange of knowledge and information pertaining cultural matters. In place of global division and rivalry, Bandung promoted the spirit of peaceful-coexistence among nations of the world. It was in this spirit that Bandung countries opposed imperialism, colonialism and any form of neo-colonialism.

The Bandung Spirit was very important, especially since the newly-independent nations of Asia and Africa were now facing the continuing tension of the Cold War between the capitalist bloc under the leadership of the United States and the socialist/communist bloc led by the Soviet Union. The tension tended to pressure these new nations to ally with either side of the two blocs, and the Bandung Spirit helped them in resisting to such pressure. That was the reason why in defiance of the pressure to ally with either side of the Cold War, participants of the Bandung Conference vowed to remain neutral and promoted the idea of non-alignment in the East-West tension.

The conference and the Cold War period

In practice, however, the Bandung Spirit was not an easy ideal to implement. The spirit of cooperation and solidarity, for instance, was much easier to say than to put into action. One of the reasons for the difficulty was the

fact that in the wake of the Bandung Conference each of the participating countries underwent rapid domestic changes. As an example, in Indonesia the ministerial cabinet under Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo resigned shortly after the conference was over, despite its success in hosting the international gathering (Feith 1968: 402). The general elections that took place several months after the conference put the Indonesian Communist Party (the PKI) as one of the four chief winners of the elections and created widespread concerns among anti-communist elements of the Indonesian population. The popularity of the communist party in the second half of the 1950s and the first-half of the 1960s was followed by an abrupt and bloody ending, continued with the Indonesian government's shift from being left-leaning to pro-Western. In 1961 the independent nations of Asia and Africa formed the Non-Aligned Movement, aimed at promoting the interests and priorities of developing countries in world politics, but the movement was not always effective in achieving its goals, including the promotion of solidarity and cooperation among the Bandung countries themselves, especially on political and military matters. Failure of Asian-African nations in preventing the Vietnam War was an example. The Philippines's willingness to accommodate American military bases was another.

Another reason for the difficulties in implementing the Bandung Spirit was the fact that the Cold War created waves of international pressures that often were too strong for Asian-African states to resist, let alone to counter. While Soviet leader Joseph Stalin detested the idea of neutralism, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles publicly stated that "neutralism is immoral", and both shaped their policies based on this kind of conviction. Stalin's ideological spokesperson Andrey Zdanov divided the world into two camps, the socialist and the imperialist camps. He declared that if a country was not a socialist country it was *ipso facto* on the side of the "imperialist" camp. With untiring efforts the superpowers of the Cold War tried to pull as many Asian and African countries as possible to each of their sides. While the Soviet Union tried to entice countries like Indonesia to enter its sphere of influence, the United States launched similar campaigns toward Indonesia and other neutral countries. In other words, despite its failure to disrupt

the Bandung Conference, the US continued to try to undermine Asian and African nations' efforts to building solidarity and cooperation.

In the 1960s, through members of South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)—which had been formed in 1954 and initiated by Washington—the United States asserted its military presence in Southeast Asia and that of US allies especially Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand. Military presence of such major powers, in turn, divided Southeast Asian nations into members and non-members of the military pact. While the Philippines, Pakistan and Thailand were willing to join, the rest of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, decide to distance themselves from the group. When the non-aligned nations in 1964 initiated economic cooperation among developing nations by forming UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), the United States saw it as a possible obstacle to Washington's economic interests and soon began put pressures on it. UNCTAD, which initially was intended to promote integration of developing countries into world economy and reduced the flow of their natural resources to capitalist nations of the North, had to abandon many of its initiatives due to pressures from the US and its allies (Kadeer 2005: 2).

Through international trade and financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank, the United States also tried to influence the economy and politics of many developing countries. By using the so-called Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) initiated by the World Bank and the IMF, for instance, Washington was able to spread the idea of deregulation and liberalization of both state and private enterprises, which eventually would guarantee easy entrance of foreign investment to Asian-African countries. Throughout the Cold War US moves on these matters were often done through collaboration with corrupt governments and dictators of the target countries (Kadeer 2005: 2-3). By implementing such methods not only did Washington gain support from these countries, but it also obtained access to their natural resources and other economic potentials. But as a consequence many governments of the developing countries were compelled to cut back social services for their own people, including services on education,

health and eradication of poverty. With the weakening of the Asian-African solidarity these people had nowhere to turn but themselves.

The Bandung spirit and the Post-Cold War period

By the time when in the early 1990s the Cold War came to an end—marked by the collapse of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union—the Bandung Spirit seemed to have been weakening (Fernando 2002: 15). Greatly influenced by the dynamics of the Cold War, many Bandung countries not only failed to promote solidarity and cooperation as expected in 1955, but in some cases were even in deep antagonism toward each other. Iraq and Iran—both present at the Bandung Conference—were at war with each other in the 1980s and were still influenced by the impact of the war years after the war ended. For many years Syria, a Bandung country, interfered and dominated the politics of Lebanon, another Bandung country. India and Pakistan—both were among the hosts of the Conference—have been in bitter conflict over Kashmir. The idea of peaceful coexistence seemed to have disappeared.

Domestically many of the Bandung countries were governed by authoritarian governments. In some cases these governments were in close cooperation with trans-national corporations, at the expense of their own people and natural resources. Instead of presenting themselves as people-oriented governments, many of them were directing their economy and politics according to the fluctuation of international economic trends. Many of their development projects were not primarily based on the need of the people, but on the wish of international lending agencies. They replaced planned-economy with market-economy, resulting in the widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Some governments turned blind eye on their country's ethnic and religious conflicts. Others even secretly encouraged such conflicts in order to serve certain interests. In some of the developing countries respect for human rights often has to give way to personal or communal interests.

Ironically, while Asian-African solidarity was in decline following the end of the Cold War, American unilateralism has been on the rise. The

collapse of the socialist-communist bloc that marked the end of the Cold War has been interpreted as victory of the capitalist bloc under the leadership of the United States. The world changed from being bi-polar to uni-polar, with the US came out as the only surviving superpower. Enjoying this new status, the United States became even bolder in pursuing its unilateral policies. As it did in trying to disrupt the Bandung Conference, in many instances the United States continues to launch similar unilateral moves in pursuit of its hegemonic ambition.

Under the umbrella of economic globalization and using neo-liberal ideology of liberalization and deregulation the US has been very active in its unilateral actions to dominate world economy and politics (Xiao 2005: 2-3). The formation of WTO in 1992, for instance, is used by the US as a means of expanding the interests of its own trans-national corporations and the corporations of its former Cold War allies. Although initially formed as a trade organization, the WTO has been pushing its jurisdiction into non-trade issues such as intellectual property rights, plants and animal protection, traditional knowledge and biodiversity. The US—along with other members of the group of eight rich nations known as The G8—consistently promoted the notion that economic globalization means economic growth, the increase of wealth, common prosperity, peace and freedom, although in the realities of the developing countries it often means the increasing number of people who live in poverty, the mounting security threats arising from the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the diminishing freedom of people who live under the pressure of market-oriented governments and politics, and the massive irreversible damage to the environment.

When an economic approach meets serious obstacles, the US would not hesitate to resort to military actions. The Gulf War of 1990, the invasion and occupation of Iraq since 2003, and the so-called war on terror are just a few examples of how Washington is willing to sacrifice countless human lives—both non-US and US citizens—and inflict massive damage on properties in search of global domination. Under the pretexts of retaliating Iraq's involvement in the bombing of New York's World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 (which has never been proven) and destroying Iraq's weapons of

mass destruction (which had never been found), the United States invaded the sovereign country of Iraq and militarily occupied it. Throughout the military operation, the US concealed the fact that the invasion of Iraq had been contemplated prior to the New York bombing, and that the major reason for the invasion was actually the desire of US oil corporations to control Iraq's oil and the flow of oil in the Middle East. Military operation as massive as the invasion of Iraq is also important for US military-industrial complex to get rid of old weapons and to pressure US government to dramatically increase its yearly spending on military research and production—all to the benefit of American big corporations.

The invasion of Iraq also demonstrates that US government had only little respect for the United Nations. The plan for the invasion was not adequately consulted with members of the world body, and it was carried out basically in defiance of the wish of many UN members. The term "coalition of the willing" in relation to the invasion was used merely as a rhetorical smoke screen to cover American tradition of unilateralism. There is an impression that for the US government the UN is only good when it serves its initiatives and interests. Otherwise this world body is considered as an ignorable institution and as an obstacle to US global ambition. In spite of the attitudes, however, the US strongly defends its special privileges—and the privileges of its allies—as a UN member, such as the veto right. Despite the fact that such right is in violation of democratic principles, the United States continues to maintain and promote it, because it is necessary to serve and advance its own interests and the interests of its allies.

Challenges ahead

In the face of an international condition that is marked by the weakening of the Bandung Spirit and the rise of American unilateralism, developing nations need to join hands in the struggle for the democratization of today's international affairs. For this, it is important to rekindle the Bandung Spirit of solidarity and cooperation—not just among Asian and African nations but also among other nations and circles that aspire to have a more just and prosperous world (Khudori 2005:61). Only in a world that is increasingly

democratic unilateral practices could be restrained and the spirit of solidarity and cooperation could flourish. In today's context, an international struggle for democracy in global relations should focus on the democratization of at least three areas, namely world politics, world economy and the United Nations.

As we have seen, American victory over the socialist bloc of the Cold War means that the US government now possesses greater freedom in pursuing its hegemonic domination. In the efforts to pursue its interests the United States often disregards the interests and the sovereignty of other nations. As a result, despite its claim as being a champion of democracy, in world affairs the United States tends to create undemocratic international relations. In Washington's view nations are divided into those that are rich and powerful (currently there are eight of them) and those that are poor and less powerful (there are more than one hundred of them today). Under the leadership of the United States the rich and powerful countries tend to regard other countries merely as objects of their self-serving policies. The international loan and aid mechanism that these countries promote and enforce tends to make poor countries increasingly dependent on rich nations economically and politically (Perkins 2004: xi).

Needless to say, this kind of international situation is unfair. In response to the situation the developing countries along with other countries should unite and work together to create international relation that is truly democratic. Respect for human rights should not be regarded merely as respect for the life and status of an individual person but should also include the life and status of each of the nations of the world. The Bandung Spirit is very important in this kind of endeavor, an endeavor to promote international cooperation and solidarity in political matters (Mshana 2005:28). Bandung countries and members of the non-aligned movement along with other countries that share the same spirit should be more active in fighting against unilateralism and in promoting democracy, peace and justice in international affairs. An example of effort on this was expressed at the World Social Forum held in Mumbai on May 16-21, 2004, which deliberated on "The Spirit of Bandung conference 1955 in the Globalized Context—Building

Community of Peace for All." At the same time governments of Asian and African countries are urged to build systems of government that are more democratic and more people-oriented, since some of these governments are often willing to sacrifice their own people and natural resources for the sake of short-term gains by serving the interests of foreign trans-national corporations.

As We have seen, international financial and trade organizations are often exploited by the United States to serve its global interests. As a result, many countries, mainly those that are already poor, become victims of international economic and trade systems that subjugate many Asian-African nations and exploit their natural wealth. In the face of such unjust system and practices, developing countries should unite and work together in creating an international system of trade and economy that are more democratic and more sensitive to the needs and interest of as many nations as possible. Neoliberal ideologies that are persistently promoted by these capital-oriented institutions are mainly designed to benefit the rich countries of the North, resulting in the massive poverty among the developing countries of the South. Nations of Asia and Africa should re-unite and change this unfair condition.

In order to change the current discriminatory international condition there should be democratization of the international trade and financial institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. More and more countries should have access to such trans-national economic and financial institutions which policies greatly affect their politics and economy. Only then these institutions will be able not only to serve the interests of the few rich and powerful nations, but also the common interests of the international community. Moreover, since today many trans-national corporations often profoundly influence the economy and the politics of Asian-African countries, these countries need to urge not only political leaders but also leaders of trans-national corporations to democratize their institutions so that smaller nations will also have access in the decision-making process that would affect them. The trans-national economic institutions that are sponsored by political and business leaders of the developed countries should also be called to help eradicate poverty that now plagues many Asian and

African countries. Debt cancellation and debt reduction are examples of ways in combating poverty. Meanwhile, movements critical to the capitalist globalization that were held in Seattle, Porto Alegre, Florence, Paris-Saint Denis, Mumbai and Scotland could be seen as a sign of the growing desire for more democratic international economic system.

US tendencies to conduct unilateral moves and its attitudes to disregard the United Nations has cost the organization its credibility as an authoritative body in supervising international relations and mediating international disputes. As a result many nations have become less confident in the UN when they have problems in international relations. Moreover, as if following US example of defying UN orders, some countries would not hesitate to simply disregard UN recommendation for certain actions. The defiance of the Indonesian government to UN calls regarding issues involving atrocities done by the Indonesian military in East Timor in 1999 is an example.

Clearly the UN needs some radical reforms in its system. As a modern international organization it needs to be democratized. The retaining of special privileges such as veto rights by a few powerful countries, for instance, is against the principles of democracy and needs to be revised or modified. If this kind of practice continues, powerful nations will always achieve what they wish, while smaller and poor nations, which mainly Asian and African, will find it difficult to pursue their interests. Veto rights should be abolished or at least modified to better reflect democratic principles. The principles of democracy require that all members of the UN have equal voting rights in the General Assembly. The reform program launched by Secretary General Kofi Annan on March 21, 2005—called *In Larger Freedom*—is very important and could be used as a starting point in the democratization of the United Nations.

Conclusion

Looking back at the 1955 Bandung Conference we can see that it was indeed a very important moment in the history of the ex-colonial states of Asia and Africa. The Bandung Spirit that came out of it was a crucial foundation for building solidarity and cooperation not just among Asian-African nations

but also among nations of the world in general. Unfortunately, further development during the Cold War and after indicates that the spirit was not as strong as expected. Meanwhile, the United States, which had intended to unilaterally disrupt the Bandung Conference, continued to take unilateral actions in pursuit of its global, hegemonic interests. In many cases this pursuit was done at the expense of Asian-African nations along with other developing countries. This kind of unilateral actions becomes worse when they are supported by other powerful nations as well as by trans-national financial institutions, trade organizations and corporations that are based in the developed countries. Meanwhile, the United Nations as a world body has often been bypassed by the United States in executing its unilateral initiatives.

To deal with this current unfair situation, it is important for nations of Asia and Africa to rekindle the Bandung Spirit and join hands in common struggle for the democratization of international relations. In today's context the struggle for democratization should be focused on three areas, namely the democratization of world politics, world economy, and the United Nations. As a basic principle, any political or economic decision that would have international impact should be discussed with the widest possible international participation.

Although this section discusses American unilateralism at length, it does not suggest that the US is the *only* country that practices unilateralism in international affairs. Nor does it suggest that the developing countries should resist *only* unilateralism that is conducted by the United States. In today's world, unilateralism can be done by any country, and people should reject any form of unilateralism in international affairs be it done by American, European, Asian or other countries.

When in 1955 President Sukarno delivered his opening speech at the Bandung Conference, he might not realize that his concerns would remain true and relevant even fifty years later. Today, the well-being of humankind has not always become the primary consideration in global affairs. The common welfare of the human race still continues to be subjugated by the desire of "controlling the world" among leaders who are in places of high military and economic power. Only common international struggle for the

democratization of international relations will help build a world where the well-being of humankind will become the primary consideration in international affairs.

Endnotes

1 Originally published in *Inter Asia Cuture Studies*, No. 4 Volume 6, 2005, London: Taylor and Francis Group. Some editorial modifications have been made.

2 Blum, one of the founders and editors of the *Washington Free Press*, is a former State Department employee.

3 The report was originally published in *Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders,* The Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (U.S. Senate) November 20, 1975. It was quoted in Blum 1995: 100. See also Kahin and Kahin 1995: 114. The parenthetical reference is to the still-classified record of Bissell's testimony before the Committee.

Part 2

Interfaith Relations

Introduction

Indonesia is not only a multi-ethnic, but also a multi-religious nation. In Indonesia, as we know it, there are many traditional systems of belief, and six major religions are officially acknowledged by the government: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. As a religion that came through missionaries from Europe, in Indonesia Catholicism is often associated with Western colonial legacy. Catholics were often viewed as "strangers" who like to relate themselves with former colonial rulers. The fact that even decades after colonialism officially ended there were many Dutch (and other European) missionaries working in Indonesia perpetuates such a view. This is certainly contrary to the fact that during most of the colonial period, Roman Catholicism was suppressed by the Dutch colonial government. It was only beginning in the first decades of the twentieth century that the colonial government allowed Catholicism to be promoted in the Dutch East Indies, especially in Java. Thanks to good Catholic educational institutions and system, by the 1940s many Indonesians became Catholics. During the war of independence many Catholics participated in defending the country against Dutch efforts to re-establish their colonial rule. The participation continued during the post-colonial period and remains up to the present.

The sections in this part discuss how Indonesian Catholics move along and become part of their nation's history. While the first section is an invitation for the Catholics to enhance their participation as citizens in the social, political, cultural and economic dynamics of Indonesia, the second section traces back on how Catholics have been part of the country's struggle for democracy. With regard to the struggle for democracy, the last section shows an example of how Catholics through a higher educational institution helps promote inter-religious dialog and collaboration among religious adherents in Indonesia.

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1. Indonesian Catholics, the Eucharist and Social Participation[1]

Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. The Lord gets involved and He involves His own, as He kneels to wash their feet.
—**Pope Francis**

PRIOR TO THE arrival of Western colonial powers, the area now known as Indonesia was a vast archipelago comprised of politically independent feudalistic sovereignties. Each of these sovereignties had its own system of belief. The systems of belief usually differed from one ethic group to the other. By the third or fourth century many Indonesians became Hindu or Buddhist, and a few centuries later the religion of Islam began to spread among the Indonesian population.

Remain Alarming

The coming of the Portuguese in the 16th century in search of spices brought along Christianity, especially to the people who lived in the eastern part of the archipelago, such as Flores Island and the islands of the Moluccas.

Beginning in the 1600s the Dutch were setting foot in Indonesia, first as traders and later (since 1800) as political and economic power. Under the Dutch Indonesia was known as the "Dutch East Indies". When Holland was occupied by France as a result of the Napoleonic wars in Europe, in 1811 Indonesia fell to the British and was administered by Lieutenant Governor Thomas Stanford Raffles. But in 1816 Indonesia was returned to the Dutch. It was in part thanks to the Dutch and British colonial systems that the archipelago gradually became a modern political unit. Early 1900s witnessed

the rise of Indonesian nationalism in the form of national independence movements.

Within a few months after the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded the Dutch East Indies. When in March 1942 they came to Indonesia, the Dutch were taken by surprise and militarily unprepared. The Japanese forces easily defeated the Dutch and took over their colonial possession. The Dutch then formed a government-in-exile in Australia.

Following the bombing of Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 9, 1945) and the Japanese surrender to the Allied forces of World War II, Indonesia proclaimed independence on August 17, 1945. Instead of returning to the feudal, pre-colonial system of politics, the Indonesian freedom fighters declared that the new nation would be a democratic republic. Sukarno became its first President, Mohammad Hatta Vice President.

Learning that the Japanese had surrendered to the victors of the Second World War, the Dutch attempted to re-colonize their former colonial territory. The attempt, however, was met with strong resistance by the young Republic, both militarily and diplomatically. For the next four years the Indonesians fought against the Dutch, until the latter eventually acknowledged the Indonesian independence in 1949.

As President of the new Republic, Sukarno was overwhelmingly loved and revered by majority Indonesians. He was close to the people and he made his government people-oriented and civilian in nature. Moreover, he was very much critical to foreign intervention, including economic one. In the midst of the Cold War tension between the Western bloc led by the United States and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union Sukarno was persistent in making Indonesia as neutral as possible. He even pioneered the formation of a coalition of the newly-independent nations, called the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Sukarno's closeness to the people and to the Indonesian Communist Party, along with his efforts in promoting neutrality in the Cold War antagonism, were regarded as a serious threat by anti-Communist forces in Indonesians and by the United States and its allies. The United States feared

that a left-leaning Indonesia would become an easy target for the communist bloc in spreading their influence in Southeast Asia.

In 1965, between the months of September and December about half-a million Indonesians who were accused of being communist were massacred. Soon after the bloodbath, known as the 1965 Tragedy, Sukarno's political authority diminished and later he was forced out of power. He was succeeded by President Soeharto, a military general.

Different from Sukarno, Soeharto's government was elitist, authoritarian, militaristic, and in favor of foreign investment. It maintained close relations with developed capitalist nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. President Soeharto was using all means available, including religions, to keep him in power. His political skills combined with his willingness to use force and violence against those whom he considered as a threat, kept him to stay in power for more than three decades. In 1998, however, amid Asian economic crisis and rioting students, Soeharto was forced to step down as Indonesia's top leader.

In the wake of Soeharto's fall from power Indonesia underwent a period of political transition, a transition from authoritarian and undemocratic government to a more people-oriented and democratic political system. This transitional period is widely known as the period of *"Reformasi"* (Reformation), in which Indonesians hoped to reform the country from a country ruled by an authoritarian government into a functioning democracy based on maximum participation of the citizens; social and economic justice; and corruption-proof government.

Today the transition continues. There have been much success in this period of transition, but new problems arise. Among them are the widespread corruption, daunting economic difficulties, domination of foreign capitals, lack of effective political leadership, and an ever growing threat to its pluralistic tradition.

Democracy is widely practiced in the national and local levels, but forces of anti-democracy remain alarming. Sources of anti-democratic threats include certain religious groups, certain military circles, and some

well-organized economic powers. The political role of religious adherents continues to be unclear, but with one obvious exception, namely the Indonesian Moslems.

Relative Freedom

As mentioned above, as a vast archipelago that comprised of thousands of islands and hundreds of ethnic groups, Indonesians originally had diverse systems of belief. With the coming of organized religions from abroad, however, many Indonesians abandoned their traditional faith and embraced new religions, especially Buddhism, Hinduism and later Islam. These religions dominated much of the archipelago during the pre-colonial period. In the 16th century the Portuguese introduced Catholicism to the people of the Indonesian archipelago, especially those who lived in the eastern part of the territory. Between 1546 and 1547 St. Francis Xavier came to the area on a Portuguese ship and taught Catholic faith to the people of the Moluccas.

The arrival of the Dutch in the early 17th century, however, made the propagation of the Catholic faith difficult. For some obvious reasons the Dutch were more favorable toward Protestants than to the Catholics. Preaching the Catholic faith was made almost impossible except in places like the islands of Flores and Timor. In Amboina Catholics were forced to change their faith into Protestant. There were numerous incidents that demonstrated Dutch animosity and repression toward Catholic missionaries. In 1924, for instance, Fr. Egidius d'Abreu SJ was executed because he taught Catholic faith and celebrated the Eucharist in prison. Fr. A. de Rhodes, a French Jesuit who Romanized Vietnamese characters, was expelled from the Dutch East Indies after being forced to watch his cross and Mass kit being burned. Yoanes Kaspas Kratx, a lay Catholic from Austria, was also expelled from the colony because he was helping several Catholic priests who were passing through Batavia, the colony's capital. Kratx went to Macau and later he became a Jesuit.

Despite the repression by the Dutch, Catholic faith began to grow in Indonesia in the early 1900s. This was in part thanks to the tireless efforts of

Dutch missionaries such as Father F. van Lith, a Jesuit, who baptized the first Javanese Catholics in 1904 and provided excellent education to many young Indonesians. Some of these educated young students would become future leaders of Indonesian Catholics, including Archbishop Albert Soegijapranata of Semarang and national politician Frans Seda.

While occupying Indonesia the Japanese did not seem care much about religions, let alone the Catholics, whose number was still very limited when they took over the Dutch East Indies in 1942. The only religion they cared for was Islam, because of its large following, in the time when the Japanese needed as much as possible support from Indonesians in their war efforts against the Allies. Under the Japanese many Catholics suffered enormously. Dutch missionaries were interned along with other Dutch nationals under very disheartening conditions, while many facilities belonged to the Catholic community were taken over by the Japanese and were used to serve their own purposes.

During the rule of President Sukarno Catholics enjoyed relative freedom. This was in part because as a person whose parents adhered to two different religions, President Sukarno was very much open to any religion. When exiled in Flores he was helped by Catholics of the island. Sukarno was a Moslem, but he was also very close to and well-loved by people of other religions, including the Catholics. A number of Catholic leaders were able to maintain close relations with the President.

The relative freedom that had been enjoyed by the Catholics continued during the early years of General Soeharto's presidency, while the number of Catholics was on the rise. But by the end of the General's rule Catholic communities often became targets of attacks and other anti-Christian acts.

Very Limited

During Indonesia's struggle for independence Catholics actively participated in fighting against Dutch attempt to re-colonize Indonesia. Young Catholic soldiers such as Agustinus Adisucipto, Ignatius Slamet Riyadi and Josaphat Sudarso fought courageously and sacrificed their lives for the sake of the

country's independence. They were officially declared national heroes and their names are all over the country even today, as many public places such as airport and streets are named after them. When Archbishop Soegijapranata had to choose between having his headquarters located in the Dutch-held territory or in the territory which was fully in control of the Indonesian forces, he moved and chose the latter. The Archbishop's act symbolized the adherence of the Catholics to the Indonesian government and their refusal to support Dutch control of Indonesia.

Under the rule of President Sukarno many Catholics were active in politics. Catholic figures such as I.J. Kasimo and Frans Seda were nationally known and well-respected. Meanwhile the Catholic Party was prominent among other political parties of the period.

When in 1965 people who were accused of being communists were massacred, apparently many Catholics did not explicitly object to it. In the wake of the massacre, however, many Catholic individuals and institutions helped families of the victims and accompanied those who were imprisoned because of their association in one way or the other with the Indonesian Communist Party—or with any leftist ideas. This period also witnessed conversion to Catholicism of many survivors of the 1965 Tragedy.

Under the rule of President Soeharto, called the "New Order" government, Catholics participated in many aspects of the country's life, but their political prominence gradually diminished. This was in part due to the rise of the Moslem's political role and influence, and also due to the reluctance of a growing number of Catholics to engage in political participation. Many were more interested in social and charity works or simply laying low amid the political dynamics of the country. As a result, slowly but certainly the Catholics were politically marginalized by the Indonesian society at large.

In a quite surprising number, however, young Indonesian Catholics were involved in the *Reformasi* movement to challenge President Soeharto's authoritarian rule in order to make Indonesia more open and democratic. Unfortunately when Soeharto did indeed step down in 1998 and the country was ready for a democratic change, the political role of the Indonesian youth

in general began to subside, and along with it the role of the Indonesian young Catholics.

Today, with only a few exceptions, the political role of Indonesian Catholics is generally very limited and their political contribution to the nation in general remains less than clear.

"Get up, let us go."

Looking at the Indonesian history and observing the current social and political condition, one could ask: in that kind of socio-political context, what has been and what should be the role of the Eucharist in Indonesia? This is certainly an important question to ask, but perhaps it wouldn't be proper to ask the question to the Eucharist itself, since the Eucharist is of course not a human being that we can ask.

Instead, we should ask leaders, participants and the liturgists of the Eucharist celebration: in that kind of socio-political dynamics of Indonesia, especially in this threshold of socio-political transition, what do you think should be the role of the Eucharist? Remember, Catholics in Indonesia are just a religious minority in Indonesia.

For one, it seems that for many Indonesians (despite the minority status) the Eucharist had been a source of inspiration, energy and blessings in their participation in the nation's life and socio-political dynamics. This was clear from the participation of Catholics from the struggle for independence period up to the end of the Sukarno government.

But in the last several years, unfortunately, the public participation of Indonesian Catholics in the country's socio-political life has not been as clear as it used to be. We then are compelled to ask certain questions, such as: does it mean that in Indonesia the Eucharist has ceased to be a source of inspiration, energy and blessings for many Catholic Indonesians in their socio-political participation?

While that kind of question is still waiting to be answered, in the last several years it seems that certain groups of Catholics in Indonesia are more interested in making the Eucharist as "beautiful" as possible as a religious

ritual than in remembering the discipleship aspects of any Catholic religious ceremony, in which it should inspire the participants to be active "proclaimers" of the Good News wherever they are. If this is true, then perhaps it's time for Indonesian Catholics to re-evaluate and discuss whether participation in the Sacred Liturgy of the Eucharist is encouraging or discouraging their active participation in building a better Indonesian society.

After all, when on that Thursday night Jesus held the Last Supper with His disciples in that Upper Room, He did not mean that the disciples would only deepen their personal faith, but also that they would be ready to proclaim the Good News wherever they were—not only among themselves, but also among other people, other nations, and eventually the whole world. Perhaps it was not merely a coincidence that in that same night one of the sentences Jesus uttered to His disciples shortly after the Last Supper was: "Get up, let us go" (Mark 14:42).

Some Reflections

As a final reflection it is important to hope that instead of making the Eucharist merely a religious ritual that absorbs the people's time and energy for the sake of the ritual itself, Indonesian Catholics should make the Eucharist a true celebration of faith that encourages and energizes them in their involvement and participation in the life and the dynamics of their nation. The involvement and participation should not be necessarily limited to political involvement, but also involvement and participation in other aspects of Indonesian life as a nation.

Personal faith for deepening personal spiritual life is important, but so is personal faith that becomes the basis for collective participation as part of a larger national community and humanity.

Note:

1 Originally a paper presented at the "Asian Theology Forum on Eucharist: Preparation meeting for FABC General Assembly" conference in Seoul, South Korea, 17-21 May 2009, hosted by Pax Romana, ICMICA, and Woori Theological Institute.

2. Indonesian Catholics and the Struggle for Democracy[1]

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To make democracy work, we must be a nation of participants, not simply observers. One who does not vote has no right to complain.
—Louis L'Amour

AS A COUNTRY that was colonized for a long period of time and gained independence only after World War II, Indonesia is relatively new to the idea of democracy. Democracy began to be implemented in Indonesia only after the country declared independence in 1945.

In the first two decades of Indonesian independence, however, democracy was still difficult to be fully put into practice, as the country was undergoing a transitional period from being a colonial territory to being an independent nation. During this period, under the threats of domestic rebellions and being affected by the dynamics of the Cold War, the country tried to implement the ideals of democracy, but never fully succeeded in the attempt. Beginning in the mid-1960s Indonesia was ruled by an authoritarian government that used democracy merely as a lip-service to justify its own political and economic interests. It was only after the fall of the authoritarian government in 1998 that Indonesia began to have greater freedom to make democracy a reality. The efforts, however, face many difficulties.

Along with adherents of other religions, Indonesians who belong to the Catholic religion have been participating in the Indonesia's struggle for democracy. As a religious minority, however, their participation in promoting democracy has faced many challenges. The public perception in Indonesia of Catholicism as part of the colonial legacy and the unfamiliarity with

democratic practices within Catholicism itself are among the challenges in Catholics' efforts to participate in the country's pursuit for democracy.

This article is an attempt to explore Indonesian Catholics' participation in their fellow citizens' efforts to build Indonesia as a democratic nation. It also wants to show how the Catholics deal with the challenges they face, both externally and internally. In line with the common notion of democracy as an egalitarian system of government in which citizens are involved in determining their nation's policies and are treated equally according to the law, in the Indonesian context this paper intends to observe how Indonesian Catholics participate in their nation's works for democracy. These works for democracy include the promotion of equality among citizens, freedom of association, religious freedom, freedom of expression, protection of and respect for human rights, and fair and accountable elections.

Historical Background

Indonesia's Past and Present

Like other Southeast Asian countries prior to the arrival of Western colonial powers, the area currently known as Indonesia was a vast archipelago comprised of politically independent or loosely-connected feudalistic sovereignties. Each of these sovereignties kept its own traditions regarding politics, culture, language, and belief system.

In the 16th century the Portuguese came to the Indonesian archipelago as the first European colonists. They came to the archipelago after capturing Malacca in 1511 and wanted to continue their quest for spices in a cluster of islands in the eastern part of the archipelago. Altogether the islands in the cluster were called the Spice Islands or the Moluccas. The Indonesians call them Maluku.[2]

Following the Portuguese, in 1595 Dutch explorers began to arrive in the Indonesian ports and in 1602 Dutch merchants established the Dutch East Indies Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*-VOC). In 1605 the company defeated the Portuguese in the Moluccas and took over the control of the spice trade in the area. In a relatively short period of time the

VOC was able to implement its economic control throughout most of the present-day Indonesia's commercial centers. When in 1799 the VOC went bankrupt control of the Indonesian islands was taken over by the Dutch colonial government.

When in March 1942 the Japanese imperial military forces came to take over the Dutch East Indies, following the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the Dutch were taken by surprise. The Japanese forces easily defeated the Dutch and took over all of their colonial possessions. The Dutch colonial government fled Indonesia and formed a government-in-exile in Australia.

Following the Japanese surrender to the Allied forces of World War II on August 15, Indonesia proclaimed independence on August 17, 1945. Instead of returning to the pre-colonial feudal system of government, the Indonesian founding fathers declared that the new nation would be a democratic republic, comprising of the entire former Dutch East Indies. Sukarno became its first President. The Indonesian founding fathers then declared that the new republic would be based on five principles called *Pancasila*, which includes belief in God.

Learning that the Japanese had surrendered, the Dutch government-in-exile intended to reclaim and re-colonize Indonesia. However, their intention was met with fierce resistance by Indonesian freedom fighters, both militarily and diplomatically. For the next four years the Indonesians bitterly fought against the returning Dutch colonial military. On December 27, 1949 the Dutch officially acknowledged Indonesian independence.

As president of the new Republic, Sukarno was overwhelmingly popular and widely revered by most Indonesians. With regard to religions, under Sukarno Indonesia officially acknowledged six religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

In foreign policy the president was very critical to the developed capitalist nations of the West. In the midst of the Cold War tension he urged the newly-independent nations of Asia and Africa take neutral position. Soon, Sukarno's anti-capitalist rhetoric and his efforts to promote neutrality in the Cold War antagonism were viewed as a serious threat by anti-Communist circles in Indonesia and among Western nations. The United States, for

instance, feared that a left-leaning Indonesia under Sukarno would become an easy target for the communist bloc in gaining influence and control over Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia.

In 1965 Indonesia's anti-communist military and civilian groups, with covert support of Western nations, launched a brutal and massive anti-communist purge. As a result, more than half-a-million Indonesians who were accused of being communist were massacred. Many more were imprisoned and exiled. Soon after the bloodbath and imprisonment, known as the 1965 Tragedy, Sukarno's political power diminished. He was pushed from power and was replaced by President Suharto (also spelled "Soeharto"), a military general, in 1966.

Suharto ruled Indonesia in an authoritarian and militaristic style of government. He called his government the "New Order" government, an indication of his intention to reverse Sukarno's policies and style of government. During his rule President Suharto was using almost all means and opportunities available to him, including religions, in order to keep himself in power. In 1998, however, amid an Asian economic crisis, rioting students, and communal violence Suharto was forced to step down.

The period of political upheavals preceding the fall of President Suharto was known as the *"Reformasi"* (Reformation) period. During this period many Indonesians—mostly university students—wanted to reform the country into a functioning democracy based on maximum participation of the citizens; social and economic justice; and corruption-free government.[3] Not surprisingly Suharto's departure from power in 1998 was followed by high expectations that Indonesia would eventually become a truly democratic nation. Today democracy is widely practiced, but forces of anti-democracy remain powerful and alarming.

Major Religions and Traditional Beliefs

As a vast archipelago that comprises of more than seventeen thousand islands and hundreds of ethnic and sub-ethnic communities, Indonesia was a home for extremely diverse traditional beliefs. For centuries each of these ethnic and sub-ethnic communities maintained their own tradition of belief

almost completely independent of each other. With the coming of organized religions from abroad, however, many Indonesians abandoned (or were pressed to abandon) their traditional beliefs and embraced new religions.

The first major religion that came to Indonesia was Hinduism. It was introduced to the archipelago by traders from India around the fourth and fifth centuries AD. Along with Hinduism, Indian traders and immigrants that came to Indonesia also brought with them Buddhism, making it the second oldest organized religion in Indonesia.[4] Traders and immigrants from China that came to the Indonesian archipelago beginning in 300 AD brought with them Confucianism.

Another major religion that came to the Indonesian archipelago during the pre-colonial period was Islam. The religion was brought in mainly by traders from India, China and the Middle East. Although there are artifacts which suggest the Islamic presence from several centuries earlier, the religion began to spread rapidly only beginning in the 13th-14th centuries.[5] Today Islam is the most widely-practiced religion among organized religions in Indonesia. Currently more than 87% of the Indonesian population declared themselves as Moslems, making Indonesia the largest Moslem-majority country in the world.

During the colonial period Roman Catholicism and Protestantism were introduced to Indonesia. It is interesting that despite centuries of domination by foreign religions many Indonesian traditional beliefs managed to survive, although in many cases they have to adjust themselves to the changing circumstances.

Roman Catholicism in Indonesia

The arrival of the Portuguese colonial power was followed by Catholic missionaries who came to the Moluccas to introduce Catholic faith to the local population. One of these missionaries was St. Francis Xavier, a Spaniard and one of the first members of the Jesuit Order, who arrived in 1546.[6] When he left the islands in 1547 his efforts were continued by Dominican missionaries who worked on the nearby islands such as the island of Flores. With the expulsion of the Portuguese from Ternate in 1574 by Moslem rulers,

many Catholics in the northern parts of the Moluccas were either killed or under pressure to convert to Islam.[7]

The remaining Catholics in the Moluccas suffered further from the takeover of the islands by the VOC from the Portuguese in 1605. Under the VOC the surviving Catholics were forced to convert to Protestantism.[8] Catholic priests were either expelled or executed. It was only after the collapse of the VOC in 1799 and the legalization of Catholicism in the Netherlands starting around 1800, were Dutch Catholic missionaries able to resume their works in the colony.[9] In the island of Java Catholic missionary activities did not resume until 1898. That year a missionary center was established in the small town of Muntilan, located about 30 kilometers north of Yogyakarta, in the central part of the island.[10]

The Muntilan mission center was led by a Dutch Jesuit priest, Father Frans van Lith. The mission did not initially go very well. But in 1904 four Javanese village leaders came to Van Lith and asked him to be given Catholic religious instructions. Van Lith agreed, and on December 14 of that year the four leaders were baptized, along with more than 170 of their fellow villagers. The baptism became an important step for a renewed zeal in the Catholic missionary works in Java and other islands. A growing number of native Indonesians were interested in embracing the Catholic faith, and by 1940 they had their first native bishop, namely Bishop Albertus Soegijapranata SJ (1896-1963).

In the wake of the Japanese defeat in the Pacific theater of World War II and Indonesia's declaration of independence in August 1945 the Catholics were gradually free to resume their activities. But early years of the Indonesian independence were not easy for them. This was in part because Indonesia was fighting against the Dutch who wanted to return and re-colonize its former colony, while in the minds of many Indonesians Catholicism was (somehow) closely associated with the Dutch—primarily because it was brought to Indonesia by white missionaries.

Following Dutch official recognition of Indonesian independence on December 27, 1949 and throughout most of the rule of President Sukarno, Catholics enjoyed relative freedom. This was partly because as a person

whose parents adhered to two different religions (Islam and Hinduism), President Sukarno kept an open mind to all religions and encouraged the Indonesian people to do so. The good relations between Sukarno and the Catholics continued throughout most of his presidency.

The period under President Sukarno saw a rapid growth in the number of Catholics outside the traditional Catholic areas of eastern Indonesia. In the wake of the 1965 Tragedy many Indonesians avoided being labeled communist (and therefore atheist) by joining major religions. A good number of them became Catholic, making the number of Catholics during this period rose significantly.

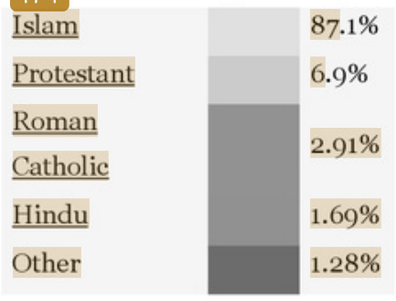
The situation of the Catholics in Indonesia changed when General Suharto came to power as president, following the end of the 1965 anti-communist purge. While under President Sukarno Catholics enjoyed relative freedom in practicing their faith and in spreading it, under President Suharto their freedom became more limited. The Suharto period and the period after that saw interesting dynamics in both the increasing and decreasing percentage of Catholic population. According to the census on religions in Indonesia (see chart) the percentage of Catholics in Indonesia between 1980 and 1990 increased from 2.98% to 3.58% of the total Indonesian population. Since 1990, however, that percentage went down. According to the 2010 census, while the total number of Catholics was increasing, their percentage within Indonesia's general population dropped to merely 2.91%. The census shows that while since 1985 the percentage of the Catholics was always above 3%, for the first time in 2010 it came to below 3% of the population. This is interesting because, according to the census, during the same period (between 1990 and 2010) the percentage of other Christian groups rose from 6.04% to 6.96 % of the country's total population.

Table 1: Religion Data in Indonesia Census[11]

	1971[54][55]		1980[56][57]		1985[58]		1990[58][59][60]		2000[61][62][58]		2005[58]		2010[7]	
Islam	103.58	87.51 %	128.46	87.94%	142.59	86.92%	156.32	87.21 %	177.53	88.2 2%	189.01	88.58%	207.18	87.18%
Protestant			8.51	5.82 %	10.59	6.46 %	10.82	6.04 %	11.82	5.87 %	12.36	5.79 %	16.53	6.96%
Catholic	8.74	7.39 %	**4.36**	**2.98 %**	**5.14**	**3.13 %**	**6.41**	**3.58 %**	**6.13**	**3.05 %**	**6.56**	**3.07 %**	**6.91**	**2.91%**
Hindu	2.30	1.94 %			3.18	1.94 %	3.29	1.83 %	3.65	1.81 %	3.70	1.73 %	4.01	1.69%
Buddhist	1.09	0.92 %			1.60	0.98 %	1.84	1.03 %	1.69	0.84 %	1.30	0.61 %	1.70	0.72%
Confucian[63]	0.97	0.82 %									0.21	0.10 %	0.12	0.05%
Other													0.30	0.13%
Unstated													0.14	0.06 %
Not asked	1.69	1.42 %	4.76	3.26 %	0.95	0.58 %	0.57	0.32 %	0.41	0.20 %	0.24	0.11 %	0.76	0.32%
Total[64]	**118.37**		**146.08**		**164.05**		**179.25**		**201.24**		**213.38**		**237.64**	

Source: Wikipedia, "Religion in Indonesia". Retrieved March 10, 2012.

Table 2: Percentage of Major Religions in Indonesia



Source: Wikipedia, "Religion in Indonesia". Retrieved March 10, 2012.

During the 1998 political upheavals prior to the resignation of President Suharto many of the targets of the communal violence were Chinese-Indonesians. In the wake of the riots many of them fled the country and lived elsewhere. Since many of the Chinese-Indonesians were Catholic, their departure from the country helped reduce the number and manpower of Catholics in Indonesia.

Participation in the Struggle for Democracy

In the period prior to the proclamation of independence, the role of the Catholics was very limited. This is understandable because, as we have seen, during this period the number of native Indonesian Catholics was still very small, and most of them lived in the easternmost parts of the country, far from the center of the colonial administration in Java. Moreover, under the colonial system democratic ideas and democratic movements were obviously not given a chance to live.

After the Indonesian proclamation of independence in 1945, however, the participation of Catholics in the country's struggle for democracy increased dramatically. The participation was done especially during the war of independence against the returning Dutch colonial government, which lasted from 1945 to 1949. During this period Catholics actively participated in the fight against the Dutch. Young Catholic soldiers such as Agustinus Adisucipto and Ignatius Slamet Riyadi fought courageously. They eventually sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country's freedom and independence.

This period also saw a strong Catholic leadership in the person of the first native Indonesian bishop, namely Bishop Soegijapranata SJ. When in 1946 the town of Semarang (where his office was located) became part of the Dutch-controlled territory, he decided to voluntarily move his office to Yogyakarta, the temporary capital of Indonesia. By leaving Semarang and moving to Yogyakarta Soegijapranata demonstrated his stand against the Dutch and his loyalty to Indonesia. When the war of independence was over, Soegijapranata continued to maintain close personal relations with President Sukarno. In recognition to Soegijapranata's important role in the struggle for independence, on July 26, 1963 Sukarno was officially declared him national hero.[12] Outside the realms of politics during this period many Catholics also actively participated in the shaping Indonesia's cultural and academic life.

When the 1965 anti-communist purge took place many Catholics did not explicitly oppose it. Some even allegedly participated in the purge, especially in the heavily Catholic populated areas of the country. In the wake of the purge, however, Catholic individuals and institutions helped those who were detained as political prisoners and the families they left behind.[13]

Many of these prisoners were either already Catholic prior to 1965 or became Catholic during their imprisonment.

Just as during the government of President Sukarno, throughout the early parts of President Suharto's New Order government Catholics actively participated in many aspects of the country's efforts for democracy, including in politics, education and the media. Toward the second half of Suharto's rule, however, Catholics' political and cultural prominence began to wane. A combination of reasons account for this, such as Suharto's growing authoritarianism; growing pressures by leaders of the Moslem community on Indonesia's religious minorities, especially the Catholics; and the widespread tendency of "disinterestedness" among Catholics to engage in the political process of the country. Gradually Catholics were politically marginalized within the Indonesian society.

In the final days before the President was forced to resign in 1998, there was a short period of resurgence of Catholics' involvement in the country's affairs, especially among Catholic youth. But continuing the general trend since the second half of the Suharto's rule, however, when Suharto did indeed step down and the country was becoming more democratic, many Indonesian Catholics returned back to the less prominent position. Many of them are reluctant to actively participating in the broader causes of the nation at the time when members of other religious communities (especially the Moslems) are increasingly more outspoken in voicing their stand on the country's various issues.

Despite the general silence and preference among Catholic individuals and institutions to lay low, a good number of Indonesian Catholics are actively participating in Indonesia's struggle for democracy, although they often do it quietly and outside the official Catholic institutional structures. Many of them work as writers, intellectuals, artists, business persons, educators, journalists, publishers, and other professions.

Current Context

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As we have seen, the fall of President Suharto and his authoritarian New Order government in 1998 marked a new beginning in the Indonesian

history, in which Indonesian citizens had greater opportunities to build the country as a democratic nation. Thanks to the general progress in the works for democracy, today Indonesia is considered one of the world's largest democratic nations.

While there are many encouraging signs that in the post-Suharto period Indonesia is becoming more democratic, there are other signs which indicate that in Indonesia the forces of anti-democracy remain strong. Responding to the democratic trends, these forces try to hinder any efforts to build Indonesia as a democratic republic. Many of these forces originate from certain religious communities and they often direct their violent conduct toward religious minority groups. As a result, while the stories on Indonesia's progress toward democracy are very edifying, other stories have been on the rise with regard to the country's religious matters.

On February 6, 2011, for instance, a group of about 1,500 people (mostly young men) attacked a small village of Cikeusik, Banten, West Java, Indonesia in the name of a certain religion. Cikeusik is a home of Moslems who belong to the Ahmadiyya community. Government officials were generally absent during the event.[14] Two days later, on February 8, 2011, in the town of Temanggung, Central Java, Indonesia, three churches (one Catholic, two Protestant) were attacked by a group of about one thousand people, claiming to be a Moslem group. Meanwhile, in the city Bogor, West Java, a Protestant congregation of the Taman Yasmin Church has been denied to worship in their own church by the city's mayor, for several years.[15] A report produced by the Setara Institute—a non-government organization promoting social justice and religious tolerance—stated that since 2009 religious-based communal violence has been on the rise. In 2010 alone there were at least 216 cases of human rights violence against religious minorities.[16]

In such political and religious contexts some Indonesian Catholics respond by joining fellow Indonesians in fighting religious intolerance while promoting religious tolerance and democracy. Others prefer to avoid any direct participation in publicly advancing the causes of democracy. They are *not* necessarily against the idea of democracy; rather, they are simply not eager in taking part in efforts to promote democracy.

As one of the officially acknowledged religions in Indonesia, Roman Catholicism—just like other major religions—is not (and has never been) a democratic entity. It is an institution which believes that leadership comes from above, and authority is given to certain people who are assigned to lead others. Decisions are not fully taken by deliberation among equals but by spiritual authority held by the leaders. Based on this belief, the structure of Catholicism in Indonesia is traditionally hierarchical—reflecting the structure of Catholicism in the world. Leaders and administrators are not openly elected but traditionally appointed. With such a background many Indonesian Catholics are lacking the benefit of having democracy as part of their personal and communal religious experience. At the same time some Catholic leaders in Indonesia appear to be not particularly enthusiastic about democratic initiatives.

Up to a certain extent the refusal to join efforts in promoting democracy is understandable, since for Indonesian Catholics the external pressures on them are simply too daunting to face. The dominance of Islam in almost every aspect of the Indonesian society (politics, culture, education, civil society), for instance, leaves only limited rooms for them as a small religious-minority to play important role in the nation's life. In response, some Indonesian Catholics prefer to channel most of their time and energy inwardly, such as in internal administrative works and involution of religious rituals. This inward preference, in turn, often generates internal conflicts within the Catholic community itself. Moreover, because of this inward tendency, the "visibility" of Catholics in the eyes of the Indonesian public becomes limited. It is quite difficult today for Indonesian Catholics to have influential voice in the society, including in efforts to build and promote democracy.

Some Recommendations

Realizing the fact that currently adherents of Catholicism are but only *less* than 3% of the total Indonesian population and that a growing number of Catholics are reluctant to engage in the country's affairs, perhaps it is not too realistic to expect that Indonesian Catholics will be able to play significant

role in Indonesia's works for democracy. However, based on the above observations on Catholics' role in the country's struggle for democracy in the first few decades of Indonesia's independence there are few possibilities that Indonesian Catholics can explore.

During the post-colonial period, when many Catholics actively engaged themselves in building Indonesia as an independent and democratic state, Catholicism was well-accepted and was rapidly growing in membership. As we have seen, the decreasing visibility of Catholic participation in public affairs since the second half of the Suharto rule runs parallel with the decreasing percentage of Catholic population vis-à-vis Indonesia's total population.

This phenomenon shows that the more active were the Catholics in the country's struggle for democracy, the greater were the prominence and growth of Catholicism. Conversely, the less is the participation of Catholics in the affairs of the nation, the less are the prominence and growth of the religion.

It is an undisputed fact that Catholic community in Indonesia is just a small religious minority. However Indonesian Catholics should not view this fact as a "threat" element in the "SWOT" analysis.[17] On the contrary, as one informant of this research suggests, they should see it as an "opportunity"—an opportunity to organize themselves in order to maximize their participation in the struggle for democracy in Indonesia. It can be said that precisely because of their small number, Indonesian Catholics should be able to easily coordinate and organize themselves in order to maximize their efforts and participation in promoting democracy in their motherland.

From past experiences and the current contexts of Indonesian Catholicism discussed above, we see that the circumstances surrounding the Catholic community in Indonesian keeps changing, as human reality is itself a changing reality. To meet such changing and challenging circumstances, perhaps it is not a bad idea for the Catholic community to have an institutional center that works for research and development regarding the Catholic community as part of a larger dynamics of the Indonesian society with its pluralistic ethnic and religious traditions. If desired, after some time the

research center could be expanded into a larger institution which dedicates its works as part of the nation's efforts in building and maintaining democracy.

Just like any other organizations, Catholic organizations often suffer from internal conflicts and rivalries. These conflicts and rivalries are often motivated by a desire to gain short-term advantages, but with less regard to the greater cause. In the case of Indonesia's youth Catholic organizations these conflicts and rivalries often prevent potential young Catholics from contributing to the country's works for democracy. This cycle of self-destruction needs to stop. Young Indonesian Catholics should work together and stand above personal or group interests, and join forces for the common good of the nation. At the same time more efforts should be put to enhance collaboration between members of different Catholic religious orders and congregations that work in Indonesia.

As much as possible Indonesia's Catholics should be encouraged to get more involved in the works for the good of the country. As shown by Catholic national heroes from the early days of the Republic, Catholics could deeply involve themselves in the fight for the interests of the entire nation. To their fellow Indonesians they showed that Catholics had strong tradition of involvement and engagement in the nation's business. Thanks to their efforts Catholics in Indonesia were highly regarded. A failure to continue such efforts could result in a growing popular perception in which Catholics are regarded "outsiders" while Catholicism is perceived merely as a remnant of the colonial past. The presence of many Caucasian Catholic missionaries in Indonesia often perpetuates such perception.

Being an island-nation Indonesia is traditionally a heterogeneous nation, including in terms of ethnicity and religion. As a result the Indonesian society has a long tradition of religious pluralism. Within this context of religious plurality Catholics need to collaborate with Indonesians who belong to other religious traditions. This kind of collaboration is important not only for the survival of Indonesian Catholics themselves, but also for that of Indonesia as a pluralistic nation.

Traditionally Catholics in Indonesia like to work very closely with fellow Catholics from Europe. However, considering the continuing decline of the

number of Western missionaries that come to Indonesia and the increase of Indonesians' abilities to conduct international affairs, perhaps time has come for Indonesian Catholics to broaden their horizons with regard to international collaboration. Instead of only collaborating with Catholics in Western countries, Indonesian Catholics should expand their cooperation with Catholic communities from other parts of the world, including the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Pacific. This kind of collaboration will not only benefit Indonesian Catholics but also Catholics in these places.

Closing Notes

By observing the history of Catholicism in Indonesia since the colonial period and by looking at the current context of Catholicism in Indonesia, we can see that with regard to the Catholics' involvement in Indonesia's struggle for democracy there is a difference between the period between 1945 and the early 1980's on the one hand, and the period between early 1980's and the present on the other. From 1945 to early 1980's Catholics were very active in Indonesia's struggle for democracy. For Catholics of that period—despite their minority status—Catholic faith was a great source of inspiration and energy for their engagement in the nation's social, political, and cultural endeavors. Since the second half of President Suharto's New Order government in the early 1980's, however, public engagement of Indonesian Catholics in the country's struggle for democracy became less publicly visible. Amid external and internal pressures, during this period Catholics were more interested in focusing their work on internal matters within the Catholic community itself, including ritual matters. Less emphasis was put on the discipleship aspects of Catholic faith, in which Catholics live up their faith as a source of inspiration and energy to be active "proclaimers" of the Good News of the Gospel.

The picture of Indonesian Catholics within the context of their nation's struggle for democracy is certainly not always rosy and uplifting. However, believing that Catholicism in Indonesia is not merely a human institution but God's "living sacrament", one needs to be sure that Indonesian Catholics will never give up. Inspired by Christ's teachings and by invaluable lessons from

their nation's history, Indonesian Catholics will always be ready to become "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world".[18] They will view their religious-minority status not as a liability, but as an asset; not as a "threat" but as an "opportunity". They will realize that after all Christ did not start His works with the majority. Instead, He started with a tiny minority—a minority with deep faith in Him and with strong commitment to the great cause for which He gave up His life.

As any Christian knows, it is only by having deep faith in Christ and strong commitment to the great cause that He gave up His life for that one will succeed in the endeavor as bearer of the Gospel's Good News, be it in Indonesia or anywhere in the world.

Endnotes

1 Originated from a research as part of an international research project participated by researchers from Loyola University-Chicago, USA; Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, Peru; Vilniaus Universitetas, Vilnius, Lithuania; and Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia; was subsequently published in Michael J. Schuck and John Crowley-Buck (2015). Democracy, Culture and Catholicism: Voices from Four Continents. New York: Fordham University Press.

2 The term "Nusantara" is commonly used to refer to the Indonesian archipelago prior to the Proclamation of Independence in 1945.

3 See Kees van Dijk, A Country in Despair: Indonesia between 1997-2000 (Jakarta: KITLV Press, 2001), pp. 161-183.

4 Robert Cribb, Hisitorical Dictionary of Indonesia (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1992), pp. 66, 187-188.

5 For further discussion on the coming of Islam, see M.C. Ricklefs, A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 3-14.

6 Karel Steenbrink, Catholics in Indonesia: A Documentary History, 1808-1900 (Leiden: KITLV, 2003), pp. 6-7; Ricklefs, p. 25.

7 Wikipedia, "Roman Catholicism in Indonesia", retrieved March 10, 2012.

8 Steenbrink, p. 7.

9 Ibid, pp. 72-73.

10 Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink (eds.), A History of Christianity in Indonesia (Leiden: Brill 2008), pp. 695-703. Frans Seda, "Simfoni yang Tidak Pernah 'Rampung'" in A. Budi Susanto SJ, Harta dan Surga (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius, 1990), pp. 62-77.

11 The table is a compilation of census results by Indonesia's Badan Pusat Statistik. See http://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321&wid=0 Retrevied: August 20, 2012

12 See *Surat Keputusan Presiden Republik Indonesia No. 152 Tahun 1963.*

13 Paul de Blot SJ, "Surat Terbuka untuk Para Sahabat, Kenangan Manis di Jaman Pahit" in Mu'inatul Khoiriyah, Surat Rindu untuk Ayah di Pulau Buru (Kebumen: Indipt Press, 2007), pp. 149-168.

14 Newsweek, February 13, 2011.

15 Ismail Hasani and Bonar Tigor Naipospos (eds.), Negara Menyangkal: Kondisi Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan di Indonesia, 2010 (Jakarta: Pustaka Masyarakat Setara, 2011), p. x.

16 Ismail Hasani and Bonar Tigor Naipospos (eds.), pp. vi-x.

17 SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) is a method of strategic planning first developed by Albert Humphrey (1926-2005) of Stanford Research Institute (SRI International), USA.

18 The Gospel of Matthew 5: 13-16.

3. Inter-Religious Cooperation in Higher Education Programs[1]

My humanity is bound in yours, for we can only be human together.
—Bishop Desmond Tutu

DURING THE DUTCH colonial period Christianity was seen by Indonesians as the religion of the colonialists, while other religions, especially Islam (and to a certain extent Hinduism and Buddhism), were viewed as belonging to the natives. In many cases the policies of the Dutch gave the impression of hostility toward the natives and their religion. Other than being marginalized religiously, the native Moslems were also marginalized economically, since in terms of economic policies the colonial government was more favorable toward members of the Chinese minority, who were mostly non-Moslems. Despite the fact that the Dutch colonial government was more favorable to the Protestants than to the Catholics, the natives did not bother to make the distinction between the two.

Following the Proclamation of Independence in 1945 religious relations in Indonesia (including Moslem-Christian relations) was improving. This was in part because the Christians, especially the Catholics, under the leadership of Bishop A. Sugijapranata, clearly sided with the general population of Indonesia, especially Java, during the struggle for independence against the returning Dutch colonial forces between1945 and 1949. "100% Catholic and 100% Indonesian" was the Bishop's motto, reflecting the position of Indonesian Catholics *vis-a-vis* the Dutch occupying armies.

Rerely Occurred

This period also witnessed the acceptance of Christianity by the new government and the population in general, as one of the officially acknowledged relitions in Indonesia, a course that was guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution. From then on Moslems, Christians and and adherence of other religions were intensely involved in the formation of the new nation-state and defending it against its potential enemies. There were no serious social conflicts arising from religious tension between the religious communities, although compared to the Moslems, for instance, the Christians were a very small number. The general acceptance of *Pancasila* (the Five Principles) as the foundation of the newly-independent Indonesia and the state motto *"Bhineka Tunggal Ika"* (unity in diversity) helped unite people despite the pluralistic nature of Indonesia's population, including in terms of relgion.

There were attempts among Indonesia's founding fathers to make a certain religion have special dominant position, especially when there was a series of debate over whether Pancasila or *Piagam Jakarta* (the Jakarta Charter) should be the foundation of the Indonesian state. The so-called Piagam Jakarta was the five principles of the Pancasila added with a phrase obliging Moslems to follow Islamic laws. While Sukarno, supported by nationalist and Christian leaders, argued for Pancasila as Indonesia's foundation, a number of Muslim leaders opted for the latter. Concerned with the nation's unity, however, those who took part in the debate accepted Pancasila as the nation's foundation. The spirit of unity as one nation prevailed. It should be added that despite the often-heated debates over issues regarding race and religion during this period there were no serious social conflicts among members of religious communities. Religious conflicts rarely occurred.

Society-Initiated Forums

In the mid-1960s, however, serious religiously-related social tension began to take place. Ironically, it was not tension between Muslims and Christians, but between those who claimed to be religious adherents and those who were

members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) or its symphatizers. The outcome of the general elections of 1955 and of the local elections of 1957, which showed that PKI was gaining growing support from the general population, worried many in Indonesia (and outside the country as well). Strategies were then formed, aimed at destroying the party. When between the final months of 1965 and the early months of 1996 Communist purge occurred, many religious adherents involved in the massacre. Hundreds of thousands of people who were accused of being communists (and thus considered 'atheists') were killed. The Indonesian Army under the command of General Suharto was considered the main instigators of the killing.

Since then, religious notion of "theists" and "atheists" became a hot political issue. Meanwhile, in the wake of the massacre a significant number of Indonesians converted to the officially-acknowleged religions, inculing Christianity. In part this was because these people were afraid of being considered "atheists" and therefore would be excluded from the society. At the same time many of them genuinely joined the Christian faith because many church people helped the victims during the time of hardship and tragedy. During the early days of President Soeharto's New Order government, which began in 1966, tension between Muslims and Christians was present in certain circumstances, but there were no public, large-scale conflicts between the two communities.

At the end of the 1980s, however, the situation began to change. During this period many officers in the military were displeased with Soeharto's lack of policies to advance the military's interests. This was partly because the President was too busy with his own business interests and with the excessive business interests of his children. When the Chief of the Armed Forces Benny Moerdani, a Catholic, criticized Soeharto on his children's extensive business, the president responded by distancing himself from the military, and seeking a new alliance elsewhere. He then began to approach the Muslim community, such as by supporting the establishment of ICMI (*Ikatan Cendikiawan Muslim Indonesia*/ The Association of Indonesian Muslim Scholars), which in turn became a religiously based political movement. It was then that religion (especially Islam) began to play important role in the politics of Soeharto's

New Order. Since then many politicians considered religions as a "political commodity" and used them to create social tensions and conflicts, while eventually would serve their own political and economic interests.

It was during this period that tension between Muslim and Christian communities, and similar tension between the Moslem-majority *pribumi* (natives) and the economically affluent Chinese community, began to arise. Any political, economic or religious rumors could easily start social unrest and conflicts. In the process it contributed to the worsening Muslim-Christian relations. The deterioration in the elations between the two religious groups during this period was mainly in terms of physical confrontation. Between 1995 and 1997 alone, it was reported that about 89 churches in Indonesia were damaged or destroyed, with a number of people killed.

In 1967, as part of its politics of religion, the New Order government established what was called "Musyawarah Antar Agama" (Forum for Religious Dialog). Although it sounded noble, in reality it only produced "a labyrinth of unproductive communication" among the religious elite, without any clear benefit for the general population.

Responding to such a situation, in the 1990s some people offered initiatives on a new way of doing religious dialog. They began to set up society-initiated forums that were oriented toward the promotion of greater justice and democracy. Among them were Fordem (*Forum Demokrasi*/Forum for Democracy), Interfidei, MADIA, Y.B. Mangunwijaya's DED (*Dinamika Edukasi Dasar*/The Dynamics of Basic Education) and FPUB (*Forum Bersama Umat Beriman*/Interfaith Forum). Members of these trans-religious movements intended to emphasize not just communication among different religious believers, but also to promote social justice and democracy.

New Ways

It was hoped that with the fall of the New Order in 1998 the damaged relations between Christians and Moslems would return to the pre-New Order, more harmonious and respectful status. Unfortunately, even several years after the regime's fall, relations between the two religious communities remain uncertain, to say the least. Instead being harmonious and respectful it has

been marked by large-scale ethnic-religious conflicts such as in the Moluccas (Maluku) and Poso (Central Sulawesi). The voices of hope brought about by the inter-religious movement in the early 1990s were gradually replaced by the noises of religious radicalism and religiously-masked political and economic greed.

Looking back at the dynamics of (and the conflictual in) Muslim-Christian relations in Indonesia past and present, one can easily recognize that there are many factors which contributed to the situation. Some of the factors might be religious or theological, but others are simply historical, economic, social, and political. In many casese religious tenstion and conflicts were caused by religious and other factors. Needless to say, if one wants to rebuild the damaged "bridge" of relations between the two religious communities, those factors deserve to be explored as part of finding lasting solutions.

By seriously studying factors that contribute to the Moslem-Christian relations we can explore new possibilities in dealing with the issue. This could be in the form of: encouraging more society-initiated inter-religious forums; promoting the idea of putting religious dialog in the larger context of Indonesia's history, politics, economy, and cultures, especially with regard to the struggle for justice and democracy; to make religious dialog not merely verbal communication between adherents of different religions but learning to live and work together as a culturally- and religiously-plural society; using educational institutions to promote the new ways of doing religious dialog (instead of misusing it to advance one group's interests).

Academic Forums

Concerned with the above dynamics and situation of religious relations in Indonesia, Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia—along with other universities in the country—promotes cooperation among students from different religious backgrounds. In more specific ways, the university's Master's Program called IRB (*Ilmu Religi dan Budaya*/Religious and Cultural Studies) actively promotes cooperation among members of various educational and religious personalities and institutions.

The main aim of the IRB is "to find and develop the field of humanities as a liberating social force by focusing on the study of cultures, and in a more specific way on the study of religious issues." By doing this, the program is intended "to strengthen the responsibility of the academic world in the production of cultures in the contemporary Indonesian society, especially in finding a place for the role of religions (or any system of belief, for that matter) in that production of cultures."

There are three sub-fields studied with regard to culture and the process of culture production: (a) the social bases which support a particular culture; (b) the value of cultural expression in relation to the formation of group identity; (c) interaction between socio-cultural groups in retaining and developing their culture and identity.

Meanwhile, the three main issues intended to be addressed with regard to religions are: (a) How far can a religion become a principal factor in "dynamizing" an existing cultural group, or to motivate the birth of new social groups; (b) how far can a religion motivate different social groups to produce cultural expression; (c) how far can a religion inspire a particular cultural group in defending itself against the intrusion of a dominant culture. In other words, the program is intended to explore how far a religion can become "a point of vitality" instead of "a point of fatality" in the growth of a culture.

Although the university is a Catholic institution, with regard to student admission the program attempts to be as inclusive as possible, in terms of the students' religious backgrounds as well as ethnic and cultural ones. Thus the students in the programs are adherents of Islam (with Nahdlatul Ulama/NU and Muhammadiyah association), Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) or other religious communities. With regard to ethnicity, there are students whose ethnic background is Javanese, but there are also ones with Papuan, Acehnese or Minahasan backgrounds.

Similar diversity applies to the program's faculty members. In recruiting members of the teaching staff, we try to hire lectures with various backgrounds in terms of religion and academic disciplines relevant to the program. We invite lectures from Protestant and Moslem institutions to teach in the program, and at the same time we also have our permanent faculty

members who teach at those institutions. However, due to the difficulties in finding full time, qualified lectures, some in the teaching staff are only able to teach every other semester.

The courses offered by IRB include Cultural Theories; The Growth of Cultural Studies; Religion, Politics and Ideology; Information Technology and Cultural Growth; Religion and the Asian Society in the 21st Century; Nationalism, Religion and the National Integration; Psychology of Religion; Religion in the Post-traditional Societies; and the New Social Movement. Clearly, instead of directly addressing "religious dialog" *per se*, the program invites the students to study various social and academic issues relevant to the contemporary Indonesian society.

Besides offering formal courses, IRB also holds out-of-classroom discussions, symposiums, seminars and other forms of academic forums on various topics, such as Indonesian Historiography, Pop Culture, Indonesian Politics, Research Methodology, and others. The forums involved collaboration with domestic as well as foreign partners including from Australia, Europe, the United States, and neohgboring countries. Usually participants came from different parts of the country as well as of the world.

IRB maintains good relation and cooperation with institutions considered relevant to efforts in promoting religious dialog and pluralism, such as Interfidei, LKiS *(Lembaga Kajian Islam Sosial)*, UIN *(Universitas Islam Negeri/* State Islamic University), etc. The program also encourages publications by students and faculty members. Regularly the program publishes *Nadheer* bulletin, and a journal called *Retorik*. The topics of books published by the faculty members are ranging from Semiotics to Psychology of Music, from Archbishop Soegijapranata SJ to Young Karl Marx.

It is hoped that with what it offers and does the IRB will be able to help not only advance the academic capabilities of its students and faculty, but also help rebuild the damaged, old bridge, and create a new, wider and smoother one in re-connecting the Moslem-Christian communities.

Note:

1 Formerly pointers for the International Colloquium on "Managing Muslim-Christian Relations: Educational Policy Options" at the University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, 11-13 February 2004

Part 3
Foreign Relations

Introduction

In talking about international diplomacy people often put more emphasis on the institutional dimension of the governments, the diplomats or the negotiators, and less on the personal factors of the persons involved in the diplomacy. In so doing they forget that those who are involved in every act of diplomacy or negotiation are actually individuals—i.e. real human beings—with his/her own personal background. Meanwhile more often than not personal background of the diplomats or negotiators play important role in the way the diplomacy is being conducted. A diplomat with a certain traditional background from a certain nation would say things or would act in a certain way that are not always familiar to his/her counterparts who come from another country. This could generate difficulties in the negotiation. On the contrary, understanding of each other's personal and traditional or national background among the diplomats or negotiators would make the negotiation beneficial to both parties.

The sections in this part show how in conducting his foreign policies Indonesia's President Sukarno was very much influenced by his personal cultural background. The first two sections discuss how Javanese traditional understanding of political power, unity, world order and leadership very much affected the way Sukarno understood and implemented his leadership, both as he lead Indonesia and as he negotiated with foreign leaders. Being a leader of a newly-independent nation in the midst of the Cold War, as the third session will show, was certainly not easy. Yet, thanks to his firm hold on the traditional Javanese tradition, he was able to do the best he could, even though the eventuality of his political career was not like what he would have expected.

1. Diplomacy and Cultural Understanding[1]

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Humor, humility and, of course, honesty, all are qualities that work in public and cultural diplomacy. —**Cynthia P. Schneider**

5

DURING THE FIRST two decades of the Cold War, especially during the administration of the United States Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961) and Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969), relations between the US and Indonesia were marked with suspicion, ambiguity, and antagonism. This was in part due to the failure of many US policy makers in understanding—let alone respecting—Indonesia's culture and politics, especially as they were embodied in the political views and personality of Indonesia's first president, Sukarno. Failing to see Sukarno as a Javanese-Indonesian leader who viewed domestic and international politics based on his Javanese background, many Cold War US policy makers considered him a communist demagogue who threatened US interests and world peace.

The failure brought far-reaching consequences. Despite attempts by President John F. Kennedy and his administration (1961-1963) to be friendly toward Sukarno, greater pressures against the Indonesian president in the US policy-making formulation remained dominant. One of the results of such pressures was US support during President Johnson's administration for Indonesia's massive anti-communist purge in 1965, which was followed by the removal of President Sukarno from power. The US Cold War policy makers succeeded in their anti-Sukarno course of action, but the "success" was achieved at the expense of untold number of Indonesians who lost their lives in the process.

There are important lessons one can draw from this tragic diplomatic policy implementation, especially with regard to today's post-Cold War international politics, in which foreign policy makers are often challenged to deal with difficult worldwide realities that require diplomatic and military involvement.

Cold War, the U.S. and Sukarno

By most of the US media and policy makers, particularly since the second half of the 1950s, Sukarno was perceived and depicted as pro-communist, pro-Soviet Union demagogue who "deserved" to be pressured in order to comply with US interests. These policy makers acknowledged Sukarno's popularity among his people, but they also believed that the Indonesian president was pushing his country to side with the Eastern bloc, which was of course US Cold War's main foe. They recognized Sukarno's prominence among the newly-independent nations, but they were also convinced that the Indonesian leader, if left alone, could ignite worldwide anti-American sentiment among those nations.

Thanks to this kind of perception and depiction, many US policy makers began to seek ways to pressure or even unseat the Indonesian president. Following debates and argumentation among themselves, these policy makers decided to help anti-Sukarno forces in Indonesia in removing him from power. It can be said that in addition to the usual economic and political factors, US foreign policy makers' anti-Sukarno attitudes and desire to help remove Sukarno from power were also caused by the failure to understand and respect Sukarno's views on political power and international relations, which were deeply rooted in the Javanese culture and tradition.

Javanese Culture and the Idea of Political Power

In the introduction of his book, *The Religion of Java*, Clifford Geertz reminds the reader that it is not easy to characterize Javanese culture in a single label or dominant theme. Javanese culture (one of the most influential cultures in Indonesia) is very complex, he stated.[2] This was in part because as the most

populated island of Indonesia, Java—home of the country's largest ethnic group—has been influenced by many other cultures over the centuries, including cultures that came from India, China, the Middle East, Portugal, the Netherlands and neighboring nations.

The influence that came from foreign cultures made Javanese culture a rich culture, being able to absorb, incorporate, learn and develop elements from other cultures. At the same time this also contributed to the Javanese tendency to combine elements of their own culture and tradition with those of other cultures. Not surprisingly, Javanese culture is often described as having strong tradition of syncretism, although this is certainly not unique to the Javanese culture.

The richness of the Javanese culture helps make the Javanese feel very confident of the strength of their culture. Indeed, many Javanese believe that Javanese culture is not only "better" than other cultures in the Indonesian archipelago, but also *the* culture against which other cultures of the world should be measured. Based on such confidence the Javanese believe that Javanese kings should not only use their power to govern fellow Javanese people, but also to influence the world at large.

Traditionally the Javanese have their own way of understanding power, especially political power. To them power is something that exists in itself, independent of humans, but at the same time is realized in the person who has the rights to hold it, namely the legitimate ruler.[3] The ruler, therefore, gains power not merely from the people but from his or her right and legitimacy to hold the power. Instead of coming from the people, the right and legitimacy come from the ruler's ancestral line of power. He or she can hold it as long as he or she has the ability and legitimacy to have it in his or her hand. For the Javanese ruler there are no administrative time limits for the king's or queen's rule.[4]

Moreover, for the Javanese ruler—and the Javanese people in general—the idea of unity is very important. That is why the power of the ruler as a unifying force is absolute. Opposition is not allowed or is only given little space, because it is considered a threat to unity. Dispersion or sharing of power is something that is also not highly-regarded in the Javanese concept

of power.[5] Along with this idea, the concept of oneness (often translated into *eka* or *tunggal*) is also central in the Javanese concept of power. Any political move or tendency—whether it comes from within or without—that could threaten the unity of the kingdom is not tolerated and should be crushed.[6] Domestic opposition and foreign intervention are considered dangerous and therefore should not be accepted.

The Javanese also believe that there is certain logic in the pattern of foreign relations. This pattern is reflected in the concept of *mandala*, which the Javanese derived from an Indian political theory.[7] The belief in *mandala*—a circle that symbolizes the dynamics of influence, interests or ambition—reflects the Javanese idea of the struggle for expansion in the pursuit of world-domination and universal peace under a sole and supreme ruler.[8]

Sukarno and the Javanese Culture

Sukarno was deeply influenced by Javanese culture, especially by the Javanese concept of political power. Although his father was a Moslem Javanese and his mother a Hindu Balinese, he grew up in Java and was mostly raised as a Javanese. This is an important factor in explaining why he thought and acted as he did throughout his political career. Javanese culture influenced him not only in his personality or in how he made sense of the world around him, but also in how he viewed political power in general; in how he practiced domestic politics; and in how he conducted international relations.

Reflecting the Javanese culture, Sukarno was an Indonesian national leader with a complex personality. His ideas and actions were clearly inspired by traditional Javanese ideas, but at the same time he borrowed from other cultures and traditions. He often used Javanese concepts, but to them he added ideas from different religious traditions, European philosophy, communism, and from modern concepts of power. He came from a humble origin, but he liked to build grandiose buildings and edifices. He thought and acted as modern leader of a democratic republic, but following the custom of traditional Javanese kings he officially had several wives.

In many of his writings and speeches Sukarno liked to blend elements from different theories and religious traditions such as elements from Marxism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.[9] He also sought to reconcile different revolutionary theories with the realities of colonial Indonesia. The result was typically Javanese: the synthesis of different beliefs and thoughts. It was along these lines that in 1926 Sukarno began to promote the idea of NASAKOM. NASAKOM is an acronym for the Indonesian words *NASionalisme* (nationalism), *Agama* (religion), and *KOMunisme* (communism). In his writings he argued that Nationalism, Islam and Marxismtogether provided the basis for Indonesia's struggle for independence.

As he grew up in the town of Blitar, East Java, he became familiar with Javanese culture and Javanese views of power. As a young boy he very often watched *wayang* (puppet show performance), a narration of the Indian Ramayana and Mahabharata epics with their relevance to the Javanese values. From the epics he learned many ideas about Javanese concepts, including concepts of power, politics, and government.

As a leader with a Javanese cultural background Sukarno later claimed to have the right and legitimacy to lead Indonesia due to his ancestral links. This perhaps helps explain why on the one hand he embraced a style of a modern national leader such as being a president of a democratic republic, but on the other hand he often acted like a Javanese traditional ruler, such as not allowing any rival to his presidency and agreeing to be named president-for-life.

It needs to be added, however, that Sukarno did not follow Javanese concepts and tradition blindly. He was indeed aware of what he was doing. As Anderson puts it, Sukarno knew that "the mode of social transformation must be adapted to traditional ideas," in this case to the Javanese ideas. He was also aware that "such a strategy presupposes a leadership sophisticated enough to be deeply familiar with these ideas, yet not bound by them, and disciplined enough to use them without succumbing to them."[10] He familiarized himself with Javanese ideas, but at the same time he was using them as long as they fit to his ideas of how to best govern Indonesia according to modern system of government.

During his years as a teenager Sukarno learned from anti-colonial activists ideas that later played important role in his life: self-respect as a free Indonesian, the spirit of nationalism and anti-imperialism, and socialist ideas. When he continued his study in the city of Bandung, West Java, he met like-minded young intellectuals and formed a study club and, against the will of the Dutch colonial government, even established a political party, called PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*/Indonesian National Party).

It was during this time that he came to the syncretic idea of combining Marxism and Indonesia's colonial reality. While in Marxist concept the worker in the capitalist society is poor because he doesn't have control over the means of production, he observed, in the colonial Indonesia the farmer owns some kind of means of production but remains poor.[11]

As the Javanese have a high regard to the idea of unity and balance, Sukarno also regarded unity and balance as a very important issue in Indonesian politics. He harshly suppressed any attempt for regional rebellion or act of secession.

When in 1956-1958 a number of regional military commanders rebelled against his government, he took firm actions in suppressing them, knowing that the rebels were supported by the United States. In the early 1960s, when the British and Malayan governments declared their intention to form the Federation of Malaysia—and thus, according to Sukarno, threaten the unity and security of Indonesia—the Indonesian president fiercely fought against the idea. It was due to the influence of the Javanese idea of the importance of unity that Sukarno constantly appealed for national unity. He wanted unity maintained at all cost.

Influenced by the Javanese concept of international relations, Sukarno also believed that foreign relations were very important—both for Indonesia's survival and for his own political survival. At the same time he also believed that his power, just like the power of any Javanese king, was not limited to Indonesia. He wanted something broader. Although legally he was leader of Indonesia only, he wished to extend his influence outside the Indonesian borders. He was convinced that international relations were not merely a matter of having good diplomatic relations with other countries, but also a

collaboration between equal parties working together to make the world a better place to live together as a global community.

The notion of relations between equals was very important to Sukarno, so that he wanted to make sure that Indonesia (and himself) be considered an equal party by the great powers of the world. He believed that in order to be considered equal by other nations Indonesia should have a good bargaining position and should be able to draw respect from the international community. Moreover, he wanted to demonstrate that Indonesia was not only able to govern itself, but was also able to lead other newly-independent nations toward common international progress. Sukarno was eager to show that although Indonesia gained freedom from colonialism almost 170 years after the US declared its independence, it had the right to be considered equal by any other country in the world. Hence as a leader of Indonesia he felt he had the right to be treated as equal by other national leaders, including by American presidents.

As the leader of Indonesia operating in a world that was involved in the Cold War hostility between the Western capitalist bloc under the leadership of the United States and the Eastern communist bloc led by the Soviet Union, Sukarno felt the need to play a role in the international affairs. The role, however, was not merely siding with either one of the two blocs, but rather finding alternative to the hostility and antagonism. Sukarno supported the idea of building a coalition of neutral countries which refused to side with either of the blocs. Hence he hosted the 1955 Bandung Conference of the newly-independent countries and supported the idea of forming the Non-aligned Movement.

Sukarno declined to get directly involved in the rivalry between the two blocs of the Cold War because in his view both sides were just pursuing their own interests at the expense of other countries. He wanted to concentrate instead on how to develop ways to minimize the two blocs' antagonism. He made friends with the US, but he also built close relationship with the Soviet Union and its allies, including the People's Republic of China. In line with the Javanese political views, Sukarno despised the fact that the world was divided into two opposing sides and aspired to have the world as a unity, a unity under a set of shared principles.

Sukarno and Relations with the United States

Failing to understand the Javanese background and the complexity of Sukarno's worldviews, many American policy makers viewed him merely as a left-leaning, anti-US demagogue who wanted to turn his nation into a communist state.

When Sukarno intended to build close relations with the US, for instance, President Eisenhower and his foreign policy makers refused respond positively. The president himself appeared to be ambiguous toward Sukarno. On the one hand he publicly welcomed Sukarno to the US on a state visit in 1956, but on the other hand he gave the Indonesian president the cold shoulder.[12]

In his autobiography Sukarno remembered how his conversation with Eisenhower during the visit was "going nowhere" and how the American president refused to talk to him about important matters. Eisenhower, instead, only wanted to talk about films. Recalling the visit Sukarno noted: "At the White House he could manage only to discuss our mutual love for motion pictures."[13] And when Sukarno tried to explain that Asia was in the stage of euphoria from the recently-gained independence and the US should not interfere with Asian affairs, Eisenhower hardly reacted.[14]

When in 1960 Sukarno was visiting the White House again Eisenhower kept Sukarno waiting at the anteroom for a period of time without any formal explanation, let alone apology, making the Indonesian President felt humiliated.[15] For Sukarno it was a strong sign that Eisenhower was unwilling to take him seriously and declined to consider him as an equal.

Indeed, Eisenhower refused to understand or even show interest on Sukarno's views regarding international relations. On the contrary, in 1956 the Eisenhower administration began to fully support a major CIA clandestine operation for supporting a rebellion against Sukarno and his government. The administration considered Sukarno pro-communist, and therefore an obstacle to US interests in Indonesia. Many in Washington believed that he should be closely watched or even pushed from power.

Unlike President Eisenhower, President Kennedy appeared to understand Sukarno. Kennedy had met Sukarno when he came to Indonesia

as a visiting congressman from Massachusetts in 1957.[16] The visit had helped Kennedy understand Indonesia in general as well as Sukarno's views on domestic politics and foreign relations. Based on such understanding Kennedy tried to build a relationship with Sukarno which was different from that of his predecessor.[17] In response, Sukarno felt that Kennedy respected him and his political views.[18] Once he even said to Kennedy: "After all what is international relations but human relations on a larger scale?"[19]

In the context of the Cold War, President Kennedy's cordial relations with Sukarno were certainly intended to promote American interests and to keep Sukarno from being controlled by the Soviet bloc. But it was not Kennedy's policy to unseat Sukarno from power or to support a rebellion against him. On the contrary, Kennedy wanted to check the spread of communism in Indonesia by winning Sukarno's heart and the hearts of the Indonesian people. In other words he wanted to minimize the influence of communism in Indonesia by understanding Sukarno's political views and standing.

With the demise of President Kennedy and his administration in 1963, however, US attitudes toward Indonesia changed. Washington returned to the unfriendly approach of the Eisenhower administration—if not worse. President Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy's successor, paid less and less attention to Indonesia and to Sukarno, while his foreign policy makers became increasingly hostile toward the Indonesian president.

The beginning of President Johnson's administration coincided with the increasingly close relations between Sukarno and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). For Sukarno, building closer relations with the PKI (while controlling it) was important to maintain Indonesia's unity. In the minds of the Johnson administration's foreign policy makers, however, such an idea was merely a disguised move by Sukarno to push Indonesia into becoming a communist country. And if Indonesia became a communist country, they feared, it would become a serious threat for US interests in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia in general, as indicated by developments in Vietnam.

Soon these policy makers began to seek ways to pressure Sukarno, or even to get rid of him from Indonesia's political arena. One of the steps

they took was to replace US Ambassador to Indonesia Howard Jones—who appreciated Sukarno's views and personally got along well with the Indonesian president—with Marshall Green, a staunch anti-communist diplomat. As soon as Green began his task as the new US Ambassador to Indonesia he reversed Ambassador Jones' "getting along" policy with Sukarno to a policy of "collision course" between Indonesia and the US.[20]

Removing Sukarno from Power

The golden opportunity to bring that "collision course" into full swing came when in the early hours of October 1, 1965 six high-ranking Indonesian military generals were kidnapped and killed in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. Before the real culprits behind the kidnapping and killings were found, General Suharto—head of the Indonesian Army's Strategic Reserve Command and an anti-communist—declared the Indonesian Communist Party leaders to be the mastermind of the killings. He and his supporters also implied that President Sukarno had quietly supported the murders.

Three weeks after the killing of the generals, violence erupted in Central Java, East Java, Bali, and to a lesser degree in several other parts of Indonesia. Many people who were accused of being communists were massacred.[21] In many cases these people were just rounded up, summarily shot and buried in shallow graves or thrown into the river. In total, between half a million and a million Indonesians were killed during the three-month-long purge. Thousands of people were taken into different prisons located throughout the country, and many of them were later sent to the notorious island-prison of Buru, located in a remote part of the country. They were killed and imprisoned without any legal procedure whatsoever. Many more victims were to be stigmatized and marginalized by the society even long after the 1965 events.

While the killings were taking place, the US Embassy in Jakarta reportedly provided a list of 5,000 names of individuals who should be killed.[22] The purpose of the mass killing, as later studies suggested, was not only to eliminate the communists in Indonesia. It was also intended to

deprive Sukarno of his nationwide grass-root support and his legitimacy as Indonesia's president. Many US foreign policy makers expected that by depriving him of his support and legitimacy he could be easily pushed from power.[23] In the wake of the 1965 mass killings and imprisonment Sukarno indeed lost his position as Indonesia's highest leader. He was replaced by General Suharto, who was friendlier toward the US and its interests.

Learning the Lessons

US policy makers succeeded in helping anti-Sukarno groups in Indonesia in removing the Indonesian president. The removal, however, was achieved through a very violent way, in which innumerable human lives were lost. From the Cold War perspective, the violent removal was partly the result of fear among American foreign policy makers—especially during the Eisenhower and Johnson administrations—that left alone Sukarno would turn Indonesia into a communist state and endangering American interests. To some extent, the fear was the product of the foreign policy makers' failure to understand and respect the Indonesian president's personal and cultural background, especially his stance as a Javanese-Indonesian person and political leader.

The tragic events surrounding Sukarno's removal as the Indonesian president were certainly more complex than just US policy makers' failure in understanding Sukarno's cultural background. There were more pressing factors such as Indonesia's domestic power struggle and the ever-increasing East-West tension of the Cold War. However, US foreign policy makers' failure (read: refusal) to understand and respect Sukarno's personality and cultural background contributed to the closing of doors for dealing with Indonesia and its president in more flexible and non-violent ways.[24]

By understanding Sukarno's concepts regarding politics, national unity and international relations within the context of Javanese culture and tradition, US policy makers could have had more comprehensive views on Indonesia and Sukarno. This, in turn, could have led to more peaceful ways in preventing Sukarno and his nation from being too antagonistic toward

US interests without sacrificing the lives of so many Indonesians. The failure to gain such understanding, now we learn, unnecessarily helped create a political situation that led to Indonesia's 1965 bloodbath.

Without intending to simplify the matter, US policy makers' views and policies toward Indonesia under Sukarno provide important lessons for anyone who is interested in the foreign policy formulation. One of the lessons is the fact that the use of one-sided and Cold War-biased views as the basis for formulating policies toward a foreign country and its leader could bring tragic consequences—not only to the leader, but also to millions of other people.

This kind of lesson is important, because even after the Cold War is long gone, many foreign policy makers—in the United States as well as in other countries—still tend to view foreign leaders in simplistic terms and refuse to understand these leaders within the context of their personalities and cultural background. As a result many foreign policy makers often see removal of a national leader or military engagement as the only solution. Consequently, again and again incalculable lives—military and civilian—were lost while the outcomes of such removal or engagement are not always certain. Needless to say, in international diplomacy, sensitivity to local traditions and culture remain very important.

Endnotes

1 Previously published in *International Journal* (Canada), Volume LXVII, No 4, Autumn 2012. Some editorial modifications have been made.

2 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959, 7.

3 Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*. Ithaca and London: Cornel University Press, 1990, 38.

4 The Javanese concept of power is basically male-centered, but there were Javanese kingdoms that were ruled by a queen, such as the Kalingga kingdom's Queen Shima (d. 732 AD) and Majapahit's Queen Tribhuwana Wijayatunggadewi (1328-1351).

5 Anderson, 36.

6 Anderson, 36. As Anderson noted, "The urge to oneness, so central to Javanese political attitudes, helps to explain the deep psychological power of the idea of nationalism

in Java. Far more than a political credo, it expresses a fundamental drive to solidarity and unity in the face of the disintegration of traditional society under colonial capitalism, and other powerful external forces… Nationalism of this type is something far stronger than patriotism; it is an attempt to reconquer a primordial oneness." Anderson, 37.

7 Anderson, 43.

8 Soemarsaid Moer[illegible]o as quoted in Anderson, 43-44.

9 Bernhard Dahm, *Sukarno and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969, translated from the German by Mary F. Somers Heidhues), 39.

10 Anderson, 73.

11 Sukarno claimed to have met a farmer by the name of Marhaen, who represented this condition. He later called his ideas for liberating the Indonesian poor from their poverty "Marhaenism".

12 The American public was also enthusiastic about the visit. When Sukarno gave a speech to US Congress, con[illegible]smen reacted to the speech with standing ovation.

13 Sukarno. *An Autobiography as Told to Cindy Adams*. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merril [illegible]ompany, Inc., 1965), 277.

14 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 277-278.

15 Sukarno said, "I waited and waited. Finally, when it was close to an hour, I spoke sharply to the Chief of Protocol, 'Have I to wait any longer? Because if so, I am leaving right now.' The man went pale. 'Please, I beg of you… wait just a minute, Sir,' he stammered and raced inside. Out came Eisenhower. He had no excuse. He didn't even [illegible]ther to offer one when I ultimately was ushered in." Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 295.

16 John F. Kennedy, Personal Papers, Boston Office 1940-1956. Political Miscellany, 1945-56, Box 11, Folder: Asia Trip 1951. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts. See also Baskara T. Wardaya. *Cold War Shadow: United States Foreign Policy Toward Indonesia, 19[illegible]1963*. (Yogyakarta: PUSdEP and Galangpress, 2007), 294-295.

17 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Countries Reference [illegible]pies, Box 113. Folder: Indonesia 1/61-3/61.

18 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 7. His other remarks on Kennedy: "Here was a man with a progressive mind. When I discussed my aid problems with him, he understood. He agreed. Perhaps if Mr. Kennedy were still here our countries might not have drifted so far apart." Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 296.

19 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 7.

20 [illegible]een, 13-14.

21 See Baskara T. Wardaya. *Bung Karno Menggugat: Dari Marhaen, CIA, Pembantaian [illegible]ssal hingga G30S*. (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2009, seventh edition).

22 Edw[illegible]d C. Keefer (ed.), *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Vol. XXVI, pp. 386-387.

23 See for instance, Peter Dale Scott, *"The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-1967," Pacific Affairs*, LVIII, 2 (Summer 1985), 239-64.

24 This was certainly different from what President Kennedy had tried to do during his presidency in his dealing with Sukarno.

2. Sukarno, Javanese Tradition and International Politics[1]

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Foreign policy is like human relations, only people know less about each other. **—Joe Biden**

AS AN ISLAND with many inhabitants and plenty of potentials—and not too distant from the mainland Asia—for centuries Java has been attracting many people from the various places. Traders, immigrants, wise men and religious preachers alike came and went to the island, more often than not leaving their influence and marks on the island's population. These people came from India, China, the Middle East, Western Europe as well as from the neighboring areas. Their presence made the Javanese used to learn and incorporate cultures and tradition that came from the outside and combining them with their own. As a result, and as discussed in the previous section, the Javanese people are generally very open to external influences, have great ability to absorb and integrate many elements that came to them, and making the Javanese culture tends to be syncretic, multi-element and quite complex.[2]

As we have discussed, due to the multi-element and complex nature of the Javanese culture, many Javanese feel confident about their culture, especially about their cultural position vis-à-vis other cultures and traditions of the Indonesian archipelago. In many instances Javanese often think of their culture as being superior to others. More than that, they often think of the Javanese culture as the "standard" against which other cultures should be measured.

The Javanese custom of labeling little children (sometimes also foreigners) who are not yet able to speak or act properly as *"durung nJowo"*

(not yet Javanese) is an example how the Javanese regard their culture as the standard against which the "culturality" of a person is judged. The use of royal names of Javanese kings such as *Amangkurat* (the holder of the earth), *Paku Buwono* (the axis of the earth), *Hamengku Buwono* (the bearer of the world), indicates the Javanese confidence in the idea that Java is not only superior to other cultures, but also that it is actually the "center" of the whole world.

Based on such confidence the Javanese believed that Javanese kings should not only use their power to govern fellow Javanese people, but should also be used to govern or at least influence the world, to make it able to live according to the Javanese values and norms.

The Just King

Traditionally the Javanese believe that power, especially political power, is something that exists in itself, outside the human realm. It did not depend on the will of humans. As something that exists in itself, power can deliberately come down to a specific person of its preference and making the person possess legitimate authority to govern others. Those who are under the jurisdiction of the power holder has no other choice than to obey him or her. Translated into the real world, a Javanese ruler has the power not because he or she was desired (let alone elected) by the people to rule, but because power had chosen him or her to be the leader of the Javanese people. The ruler can rule as much as he or she wants with no need an administrative term-limit.

Moreover, the Javanese also believe that as the ruler of Java, which culture is superior to other cultures, a Javanese king has the obligation to have authority over non-Javanese people, so that they too would become "Javanese", in the sense of having a higher sense of culture. Within this view, any Javanese king's attempt to broaden its influence and authority to non-Javanese peoples and areas—such as what the rulers of Majapahit kingdom did—was not only expected but also fully justified. It was the Javanese ruler's obligation to spread the Javanese influence as much as they could, as long as the power still remains in the ruler.

In connection to this belief, the Javanese also emphasized the importance of *kesatuan* or unity. Since the ruler has the power to govern from

the power that came to him or her, he or she has the absolute right and obligation to unify the people under his authority. Any form opposition is not tolerated and needs to be eliminated.[3] The people should obey the ruler as an absolute leader.

The Javanese further believe that the world—at least the world as they knew it—should live together in peace and unity.[4] Borrowing the Indian political concept called *Mandala* (a circle symbolizing the dynamics of influence, interests or ambition) the Javanese believe in the international dynamics of political struggle in order to make the world to be united and peaceful under one supreme leader.[5] The supreme leader could be in the form of a *Ratu Adil* or Just King.

Complex personality

As we have seen in the previous section, reflecting the complex nature of the Javanese culture, Sukarno—the first president of Indonesia—was a person with complex personality. He was trained in the colonial Dutch (western) educational system, but he was open to many non-western ideas, including eastern philosophy and Marxist thoughts. From his father's line he was Javanese, but from his mother's side he was Balinese. While his father was a Moslem, his mother was a Hindu and he respected both faiths and let the ideas from the two influence his way of seeing the world and expressing his ideas. Upon Indonesia's independence from the Dutch colonialism he declared Indonesia as a modern republic, yet he did not object when he was appointed as president for life. He was not a king, but imitating Javanese kings he had many wives.

In his autobiography Sukarno himself admitted the complexity of his personality. He said:

> My birthday is double six. June six. It is my supreme good fortune to have been born under Gemini, the sign of twins. And that is me exactly. Two extremes. I can be gentle or exacting; hard as steel, or poetic. My personality is a mixture of reason and emotion. I am forgiving and I am unyielding. I put enemies of the State behind bars, yet I cannot keep a bird in a cage.[6]

The influence of the Javanese culture on Sukarno was also manifested

in his syncretic tendency. In many of his writings and speeches he liked to blend elements from different theories and religious traditions such as elements from Marxism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.[7] He also sought to reconcile different revolutionary theories with the realities of colonial Indonesia. The result, as he also admitted, was typically Javanese: the synthesis of different beliefs and thoughts. He combined the dialectics of Marxist revolutionary theory, Hindu self-denial, Islam's *jihad* (holy war) and Christ's Sermon on the Mount.[8]

When for a number of times the Dutch imprisoned him, he used his time in prison to read even more. He let himself to be enriched by ideas from other cultures and system of thoughts, but at the same time he remained firm in his hold on Javanese world-view, including the idea of how politics should be conducted. Based on the understanding of Marxism, for instance, Sukarno personified the condition of the poor Indonesians in the person of a farmer by the name of "Marhaen" (who owned simple "means of production" but remained poor) and began to seek ways to liberate him and the people of Indonesia in general from the domination of the oppressive colonialist system implemented by the Dutch. Sukarno called the concept of liberating the oppressed Indonesians "Marhaenism", which he said was a form of socialism in the Indonesian context.

One of his most prominent attempts in combining ideas was certainly his attempt to combine nationalism, religious adherence and communism as the basis for Indonesian unity and common struggle in the post-colonial period. For this he created the acronym NASAKOM, which is an abbreviation of *Nasionalime* (nantionalism), *Agama* (religion) and *Komunisme* (communism). He believed (and encouraged) the nationalists, adherents of all religions and the communists to work together to rebuild Indonesia into a democratic republic nation after the long period of subjugation under colonialism. More than just about Indonesia, Sukarno believed, the Nasakom principle was also important for the whole Asia, and perhaps even all the newly-independent countries of the world. In his view, nationalism, Islam and Marxism were "the concepts which have become the spirit of the movements in Asia as well as of the movements here in Indonesia."[9]

The idea of Nasakom was first made public by Sukarno in mid-1920s. Decades later he remained consistent with the idea. In 1961, for instance, he repeated his confidence in the Nasakom idea when he said:

There are indeed already in existence the large groups of 'revolutionary powers' in Indonesia,

> the Moslems, the nationalists, and the Communists. Whether you like it or not, this cannot be denied. Even the gods in heaven cannot deny this fact!... We must bring about a unity between the Moslem group, the Nationalist group and the Communist group. And that is why we must not be afflicted by the diseases of Moslem-phobia, nationalist-phobia or communist-phobia. ... And precisely because I want my nation to be victorious both in the past and at present I work my fingers to the bone to unify all forces which are revolutionary—whether they be Moslem, Nationalists or Communist.[10]

Needless to say, Sukarno as a Javanese person was consistent with the idea of synthesizing nationalism, religious beliefs and communism up to his last years in power.

Guided Democracy

To a certain extent apparently Sukarno also subscribe to the Javanese idea that power exists in itself and descends upon the person of its liking.[11] He, for instance, believed that he was predestined to lead his people. The fact that he was born at dawn and in the first year of a new century (1901), he held, was a sign that he was a special person with a special mission to his people and his country, and perhaps even to the world in general.[12]

Reflecting the Javanese idea of power, he claimed to have the right and legitimacy to lead Indonesia due to his familial link with pre-colonial kings of Java. He claimed himself as being the descendant of Indonesia's great kings, such as the king of Singaraja, Bali (from his mother's side), and the legendary prophetic king of the Kediri Kingdom, Jayabaya (from his father's side).[13]

This was probably one of the reasons why as a president he operated as if he was a monarch with absolute power. As mentioned above, he did not

object when he was named president for life. When in 1956 Vice President Hatta resigned, he did not care to look for a new Vice President to replace Hatta. Sukarno also had limited patience to the liberal party system and implemented his version of democracy called "*Demokrasi Terpimpin*" or Guided Democracy. He was aware that many people regarded him as "fulfillment of a Javanese messianic myth about the coming of a *Ratu Adil* or Just Prince" who would free the people of Java (and Indonesia) from foreign domination.[14] He might not fully believed in the myth, yet he used it to justify his power over the people.

National Unity

Upholding the Javanese belief on the importance of unity, Sukarno regarded unity a very important element in the life of Indonesian as a nation-state. To him it was un-negotiable that independent Indonesia consisted of the whole former Dutch colony. When in 1949 the Dutch declared that West Papua (Irian Barat) would not be part of Indonesia because it has characters that were different from the rest of its former colony, Sukarno refused to accept it. He demanded that Irian Barat should be "returned" to Indonesia or he would have to use military force to gain the territory and integrate it with the rest of Indonesia. He never ceased to use all possible efforts to integrate the territory into Indonesia until the efforts became successful in 1963.

In 1956 he began to denounce the multi-party system because he considered it a threat to the unity of the nation. He then began to talk about "burying political parties" and replaced it with a system that would be "more suitable" to the Indonesian way of thinking and would guarantee the nation's unity. He then introduced a system he called "*Demokrasi Terpimpin*" or Guided Democracy. When in that year a rebellion took place in the islands of Sulawesi and Sumatra, and later was sponsored by the US Central Intelligence Agency Sukarno took firm action and succeeded in suppressing the rebellion.

Meanwhile, in early 1960s, when the British colonial government declared its support for the formation of the Malaysian Federation, Sukarno did not have any objection. However, once he thought that the federation

would become an excuse for the colonial government to retain its influence in the region, and therefore would threaten the unity and security of Indonesia, Sukarno began to publicly oppose the plan.

Sukarno wanted to have unity at all cost, a unity that reflected the ideals of Nasakom. As mentioned above, with Nasakom Sukarno wanted to have the nationalists, people of religious beliefs and the communists work together in building a better Indonesia based on the principles of Pancasila.[15] In other words, Sukarno wanted to include the communists in the cabinet. Not having the communists in the cabinet, according to Sukarno, was like having a horse with only three legs. It would be difficult for the horse to move around, let alone to run. Indonesia needed the communists to join the government in order to have Indonesia move forward, just as the horse needed the fourth leg in order to be able to run.

When in 1927 he established the PNI Sukarno emphasized the importance of unity in the struggle of Indonesians to build a new and independent nation, free from any colonial power. Indeed, one of Sukarno's great achievements in promoting Indonesian independence was his ability to weld the disparate population of the archipelagic former Dutch colony—which extended for more than 3,000 miles across and which included over 250 different linguistic groups—into one single nation. After interviewing Sukarno in late 1945, Richard Straub, a BBC correspondent, enthusiastically declared, "Lincoln is alive in Indonesia." The journalist was impressed by Sukarno's ability to lead the greatly diverse people in a tumultuous time and by his vision of a democratic republic modeled on the United States.[16] Both inside and outside Indonesia he was widely acknowledged as unifying leader and symbol of Indonesia's fight for independence and international justice.

It was due to the influence of the Javanese idea of the importance of unity that Sukarno constantly appealed for national unity. Understandably, along with his fellow Javanese, Sukarno was uneasy with the idea of federalism, constitutional separation of power, and the multi-party system.[17] He wanted unity maintained at all cost—with himself as the dominant power over it.

Well-Reflected

Sukarno was aware that Indonesia was just one of the Asian and African nations that gained independence only after the end of World War II. However, he felt that Indonesia had the right to be considered equal by nations which had gained the independence many years or even centuries earlier. It was therefore as a leader of Indonesia he felt he had the right to talk to and to be treated as equal by any other national leaders of the world, including American presidents and any top leader of the Soviet Union.

Perhaps it was in this context that Sukarno liked to wear semi-military uniform with all its decoration in his public appearances, although he never served in the military. First he wanted to give a sense of pride to his people (and perhaps to himself), but he also wanted to show the world that although his country had just gained independence and its social, political and economic conditions are still far from stable, he was able to present himself as a modern leader with a modern appearance, ready not only to lead his country but also to deal with other countries on international matters as equals. Asked by his future co-author of his autobiography Cindy Adams on why he liked to wear military uniform with all its decoration Sukarno said: "It is because I am the Supreme Commander. My people spat upon by the Dutch. They were colonized for centuries. They were slaves. Now that we are free I must give them a symbol of authority to look up to."[18]

As we have seen above, the Javanese believed that a Javanese ruler had the the duty to extend his or her authority and influence outside Java. Reflecting such a belief as the president of Indonesia Sukarno felt that he was given a similar duty, namely to extend his role in the world outside Indonesia. Based on such belief, for instance, he began to seek role in the international dynamics of the period. It was along this line that he perceived and promoted the idea of international relations as personal relations. To him any international relations should not be based on the military or economic might of a country, but on the equality of two persons dealing with national and international matters as "friends".

As he was Indonesia's leader when the world was involved in the Cold War hostility between the capitalist bloc under the leadership of the United

States and the communist bloc led by the Soviet Union, Sukarno felt the need to play role in the international tension. The role, however, was not merely siding with one of the two camps of the Cold War, but to find an alternative to the tension and antagonism.

While each of the camps was busy extending its sphere of influence and recruiting allies, and while some newly-independent countries were also busy choosing side in one of the two blocs, Sukarno supported the idea of building a coalition of neutral countries which refused to side with either of the blocs. At the same time he also sought some kind of leadership in the coalition. It was in part based on this idea that in 1955 he hosted the Bandung Conference, a conference of 29 Asian and African countries that mostly had just gained independence from colonialism. Later he would support the formation of the movement of non-aligned nations.

Sukarno didn't want to care much about the issues involving the rivalry between the two blocs of the Cold War. For him, both sides were just the same, pursuing their own goals at the cost of other countries. He wanted to concentrate instead on how to find an alternative and if possible to take advantage from the Cold War tension. He visited as many countries as he could, including the United States, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, disregarding the tension and rivalry that existed among them. In addition to this, and reflecting the ideals of Javanese view, Sukarno despised the fact that the world was divided into two opposing sides and aspired to have the world as a unity, a unity under a set of shared principles. And if possible those principles would be the principles of *Pancasila*, Indonesia's official state principles.

Sukarno's ideas and views regarding international relations during the Cold War was well-reflected in how he always wanted to meet and to deal with key leaders of the Cold War, such as President Eisenhower and President Kennedy of the United States and Premier Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union.

Felt Left Out

In dealing with President Eisenhower, Sukarno had some kind of ambiguity. On the one hand he fell in love with the United States and its ideals. Sukarno liked The U.S. as a symbol of a country that upheld freedom and democracy. He also had a great hope on Eisenhower as a leader of a superpower nation that he would help Asian nations in realizing their freedom and independence as new nations. On the other hand, he also felt that he was being disrespected by Eisenhower. He felt that Eisenhower didn't want to take him seriously and was very hesitant in considering him as an equal. Sukarno was irritated when Eisenhower said that the American pilot that was shot down while helping regional rebellion in Sulawesi was a "soldier of fortune"—because in fact the pilot was a CIA agent—but he refused to condemn Eisenhower and the U.S. in public.

When visiting the U.S. for the first time in 1956 Sukarno was very moved by the warm reception he received from the U.S. Congress and the American people in general. Along the streets where his motorcade passed, people cheered for him with tipper-tape reception. The U.S. Congress also welcomed his speech with standing ovation. But when he met President Eisenhower, he was not very happy. He complained: "Later I conferred with President Eisenhower and we had an immediate non-meeting of the minds." He said that he could only talk to President Eisenhower about trivial issues such as motion pictures. He elaborated the meeting in his autobiography:

After many lapses and lulls, his [Eisenhower's] conversation went like this:

> Eisenhower: I hear you like movies, President Sukarno. Tell me, how often do you see them?
> Sukarno: Three times a week in the palace.
> E: Can you guess how many times I see them?
> S: No. How many times do you see them, President Eisenhower?
> E: Every single night. What kind of film is your favorite, President Sukarno?
> S: Adventure stories, history, and biographies.
> E: Is that so? Well, I like only Westerns. And I bet you'll never guess who

my favorite star is.
S: No. Who?
F: Randolph Scott.[19]

When Sukarno tried to explain that Asia was in the stage of euphoria from the recently-gained independence and the US should not interfere with Asian affairs, President Eisenhower did not react much and Sukarno was disappointed.[20] Sukarno was equally disappointed when he talked to Eisenhower's most important man in the Cold War policymaking, Secretary State John Foster Dulles:

> I tried to explain our nation's political color to [Secretary of State] John Foster Dulles. 'We have no desire to echo the Soviet Union or to strictly follow the path America has laid out for us. We will never become a satellite of either bloc.' But nonalignment can be easily misunderstood by America. America likes you only if you're on the side she selects. If you don't go along with her totally, you're automatically considered to have entered the Soviet bloc. ... Mr. Dulles's retort was, 'America's policy is global. You must be [on] one side or the other. Neutralism is immoral.'[21]

There was another occasion when Sukarno also felt underestimated by President Eisenhower. During his visit to the White House in 1960, President Sukarno and his entourage were kept in the White House's ante room for sometime. When eventually they were let in to the meeting room, the Indonesian President was disappointed as there was no single word of apology or explanation from the side of President Eisenhower.[22] The fact that when Eisenhower went for a tour to Southeast Asia, including a stop in Manila, the Philippines, but refused to visit Indonesia, also made Sukarno felt left out and disrespected.[23] As a leader of Indonesia Sukarno felt that Eisenhower refused to take him seriously and declined to consider him as an equal.

Economic Team

With President Kennedy everything was different. Sukarno maintained a very close and good relationship with him. The two had met each other even before Kennedy became president, when in 1957 in his capacity as a

congressman from the State of Massachusetts, Kennedy visited Indonesia. Shortly after Kennedy delivered his famous inaugural address, Sukarno told US Ambassador to Indonesia Howard Jones: "Please tell President Kennedy for me that the Indonesian people are expecting great things of him."[24] Sukarno said he respected Kennedy very much and claimed that the American president admired him greatly because Sukarno had a "searching, inquiring mind." The two found much in common. Sukarno felt that Kennedy respected him when the latter "discussed the ideologies I promoted and quoted passages from my speeches."[25]

When visiting Kennedy in Washington, Sukarno felt that he was treated very personally and regarded as an equal. Kennedy took him around the White House, even to Kennedy's private room, and took him for a short helicopter flight which Sukarno enjoyed very much.[26] Sukarno once sent mangoes to Kennedy and promised to send more, even though that time the mango season was rather short.[27] Sukarno believed that personal relation with Kennedy was important not only just for the sake of him and Kennedy, but also for the relations of their respective countries, as well as for international relations in general. Sukarno once remarked to Kennedy: "After all what is international relations but human relations on a larger scale? ..."[28] Sukarno was very happy when in late 1963 Kennedy planned to visit him in Indonesia sometime in the spring of 1964. The Indonesian president even set up a plan to build a special guest house for Kennedy. "I was so excited that I put a team of architects and engineers onto readying a special guest house for him on the grounds of the palace," he said.[29] He said to Ambassador Jones: "Tell President Kennedy not to hesitate. Tell him to come. Tell him he will get a warm reception the like of which has never been seen in Indonesia."[30] On another occasion, while pointing at the site where the Kennedy guest house was going to be constructed, Sukarno told Jones: "I want President Kennedy to be my first guest there." Laughing, the President then added: "Tell President Kennedy if he comes to Manila and doesn't come to Jakarta, I'll blow up the White House."[31] In return to Sukarno's cordial relation with Kennedy, in July 1961 the American President sent a letter to President Sukarno, inviting Sukarno's son Guntur to study in the U.S.[32]

It was thanks to this close friendship that in the height of the Cold War tension the Kennedy government was willing to help Indonesia on its dispute with the Netherlands over West Papua, and eventually Kennedy personally intervened and helped Indonesia won control of the territory.[33] Later, Kennedy also sent an economic team to help map out and establish a long-term economic plan for Indonesia.[34]

Special Relations

To show the world that he was above the Cold War antagonism, Sukarno also maintained close relationship with the leader of the Soviet Union, Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Just right after his visit to the US in 1956, Sukarno went straight to China and to the Soviet Union on a state visit, although he knew that the visit would disappoint the U.S. To demonstrate how close the Soviet leader was to him, Sukarno claimed: "Khrushchev sent me jams and jellies every two weeks and handpicked apples, corn and other vegetables from the best of his crop." In 1960 he invited Khrushchev to visit Indonesia. The Soviet Premier did come and spent about eleven days in Indonesia.[35] Sukarno was very happy with the media coverage he received during the Khrushchev visit. "When Khrushchev was here," he said proudly, "100 foreign newsmen swarmed all over, constantly underfoot".[36] Sukarno was very happy that when he came to Moscow more than a hundred musicians played *Indonesia Raya,* the Indonesian national anthem, to welcome him. "It brought tears of pride to my eyes that our land had come to this," Sukarno remarked.[37] He equally trembled when he received the same warm reception on his visit to Beijing. He said: "Peking [Beijing] welcomes me with tremendous parades and gun salutes. The people with me are proud of me, proud that our downtrodden country has taken its place among the great nations."[38]

Sukarno was proud of himself that Khrushchev was not only good to him personally but also to his country. He recalled: "I asked Khrushchev for the one hundred million. It was bitter cold, yet he [Khrushchev] came out of the Kremlin into the street to embrace me, welcome me with warm words and walk me inside personally. There were no long, cold negotiations. His

finance men deliberated just long enough to determine our rate of repayment and grace period. Two minutes later everybody said, '*Da*', and that was it."[39]

As a person who liked to emphasize the importance of personal aspect of international relations Sukarno was apparently more impressed with his visits to the Communist bloc than to the Unites States. Comparing Sukarno's visit to the US with the visits to the Soviet Union and China, former Indonesian Foreign Minister Ide Agung Anak Agung noted: "If the political impact of the visit of President Sukarno to the US were to be compared to that of his visits to the USSR, China and the other Communist countries in the same year of 1956, it must be admitted that his visits to the USSR and China had a more lasting effect on the further developments in Indonesia. In particular, his visit to China was to have far-reaching influence on the political developments in Indonesia after 1957."[40] Perhaps it was one of the factors why beginning in the late 1950's Sukarno began to build special relations with the two communist countries.

Other Nations

Reacting to the way Sukarno related to them, each of the Cold War key figures reacted differently. Eisenhower was somewhat cordial, but he did not regard Sukarno very seriously. He refused to visit Indonesia and paid special attention to Sukarno. He even fully supported a major CIA clandestine operation of supporting a rebellion against Sukarno and his government. As we have seen, when Sukarno twice visited him at the White House, Eisenhower only offered limited personal hospitality. Kennedy tried to have different kind of relation with Sukarno. He tried to be more cordial and warm, thanks in part to Ambassador Howard Jones and his other foreign policy advisers. He invited Sukarno to Washington, sent his brother Robert Kennedy to meet Sukarno in Jakarta, helped solved the West Papua dispute, maintained personal correspondence, and even planned to visit Indonesia in the spring of 1964. Knowing that the US and its allies tried to pull Sukarno to their side, the Soviet leader Premier Nikita Khrushchev was also trying to maintain good relationship with Sukarno. His long visit to Indonesia in 1960

and the significant amount of aid that he offered to Indonesia indicated how serious Khrushchev wanted to have relations with Sukarno and Indonesia.

Regardless of the differences and similarities between the approaches of these Cold War leaders to Sukarno, however, they worked for the same agenda: pulling Sukarno closer to each of their camp, and keeping him away from the other camp of the Cold War. With each of their own styles Eisenhower and Kennedy tried to pull Sukarno closer to the US, while Khrushchev was trying to keep Sukarno away from Washington and pulling him closer to Moscow.

Sukarno was fully aware of the situation, and tried the best he can to play the game and benefit from it. Besides, as a Javanese ruler he wanted to show that he had power not only to his fellow Javanese or the Indonesian people, but also to people of other nations including nations that were key parties in the international antagonism of the Cold War.

"Javanese irrationalism"

As we have seen earlier, Sukarno reacted differently to each of the Cold War leaders. He was disappointed by Eisenhower's attitudes toward him, but he liked Kennedy's personal approach. It was thanks to Kennedy that Sukarno began to regain trust in the US and wanted to build closer relationship with Washington in the wake of Washington's support for the Indonesian rebellion during the Eisenhower years. Following the assassination of President Kennedy, however, Sukarno's relation with the United States began to deteriorate. While President Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy's successor, paid less and less attention to Indonesia and to Sukarno—in part due to the deepening US involvement in Vietnam—the Indonesian President was increasingly antagonistic toward the US. Even as the US was still trying to provide aid to Indonesia, Sukarno was unhappy with the way Johnson more or less ignored him. The climax of it was when Sukarno uttered his well-known words to the US: "go to hell with your aid".

With Khrushchev, Sukarno tried to maintain good relationship, but it was lasted only until the Soviet Premier was deposed from power in 1964.

In its place, Sukarno was building closer relation with People's Republic of China, another significant power in the Cold War tension.

Beginning in 1965, in the wake of the communist purge in Indonesia, Sukarno's political power began to diminish. In 1967 he was officially removed from power and replaced by right-wing and pro-West General Soeharto as President. The US and other countries of the Western bloc of the Cold War was happy to see Sukarno and his "Javanese irrationalism" out of the picture.[41]

Difficult

Clearly Sukarno's Javanese cultural upbringing and worldview played important roles in his views of the world, politics, international relations, even his own place in the midst of it. The way he viewed his political power and his relations with other Cold War actors was greatly influenced by his Javanese culture. Based on this cultural background he conducted his domestic and international political leadership.

Alas, it was this style of leadership that gradually generate opposition to his position as the top leader of Indonesia, both domestic and foreign. In the increasing tension between the Indonesia's Right and Left and between the two blocs of the Cold War, it was steadily difficult for him to maintain political ideals based on his Javanese world view, as unity, world leadership, or his claim of political power deriving from his ancient monarchical links. At the end it was economic and political interests of domestic and international powerful forces that prevailed.

Endnotes

1 In a differ[14]ormat, this section was originally presented as a paper at the conference "The Cold War in Asia: The Cultural Dimension", organized by the Asia Research Institute, Nation[2] University of Singapore, 24-25 March 2008.

2 See for instance Clifford Geertz, The Religion of Java, London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959, 7.[2]

3 Anderson, 36. As Anderson noted, "The urge to oneness, so central to Javanese political attitudes, helps to explain the deep psychological power of the idea of nationalism in Java. Far more than a political credo, expresses a fundamental drive to solidarity and unity in the face of the disintegration of traditional society under colonial capitalism,

and other powerful external forces… Nationalism of this type is something far stronger than patriotism; it is an attempt to reconquer a primordial oneness." Anderson, 37.

4 Anderson, 43.

5 marsaid Moertono as quoted in Anderson, 43-44.

6 Sukarno, *An Autobiography as Told to Cindy Adam*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merril Company, Inc., 19 17.

7 Bernhard Dahm, *Sukarno and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969, translated from the German by Mary F. Somers Heidhues), 39.

8 Sukarno, *obiography*, 114.

9 Sukarno, *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism* (Ithaca, NY: Modern Indonesia Project, 1970), 37. This was a republication and English translation of Sukarno, "Nasionalisme, Islam and Marxisme," *Su donesia Muda*, 1926.

10 Sukarno, 1961 speech, as quoted in Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Twenty Years of Indonesian Foreign Relations, 1945-1965*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Duta Wacana University Press, 1990, 283.

11 Sukarno, however, did not follow the Javanese culture and t ition blindly. As Anderson said, Sukarno was aware that his political strategies "presupposes a leadership sophisticated enough to be deeply familiar with these [Javanese] ideas, yet not bound by them, and disciplined enough to use th without succumbing to them." He was using Javanese beliefs and traditions only as long as they fit to h as of how to best govern the people according to modern system of government. See Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia*. Ithaca and London: Cornel University Press, 1990, 73.

12 Repeating his mother's words, Sukarno said: "Then she [his mother] said softly, 'Son, you are looking at the sunrise. And you, my son, will be a man of glory, a great leader of his people, because your mother gave birth to you at dawn. We Javanese believe that one born at the moment of sunrise is predestined. Never, never forget you are a child of the dawn." Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 17.

13 Anderson, 39-40; Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 19.

14 Anderson, 73.

15 Pancasila is the name given to Indonesia's five basic principles of A belief in God, Humanity, Unity, Democracy and Social Justice.

16 Dahm, 324.

17 Anderson, 36.

18 Cindy Adams, *My Friend the Dictator*, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merril Company, Inc., 1967, 10.

19 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 277.

20 id., 277-278.

21 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 277.

22 Sukarno said, "I waited and waited. Finally, when it was close to an hour, I spoke sharply to the Chief of Protocol, 'Have I to wait any longer? Because if so, I am leaving right now.' The man went pale. 'Please, I beg of you… wait just a minute, Sir,' he stammered and raced inside. Out came Eisenhower. He had no excuse. Didn't even bother to offer one when I ultimately was ushered in." Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 295.

23 Said Sukarno: "When he was in Manila, practically on my doorstep, he refused to visit Indonesia. Let America never comment that Sukarno only plays host to Communist leaders. Not once has any American Chief of State set foot on our soil though I have repeatedly e ded the invitation." Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 296.

24 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Countries Reference Copies, Box 113. Folder: Indonesia 1/61-3/61.

25 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*,7. His other remarks on Kennedy: "Here was a man with a progressive mind. When I discussed my aid problems with him, he understood. He agreed. Perhaps if Mr. Kennedy were still here our countries might not have drifted so far apart." Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 296.

26 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 296.

27 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Countries Reference Copies, Box 113. Folder: Indonesia vol. I, August-September 1961.

28 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 7.

29 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 296.

30 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, Countries, Box 114. Folder name: Indonesia, General, 5/63.

31 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, Countries, Box 114. Folder name: Indonesia, General, 1/63-2/62.

32 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Archives, Countries, Box 119. Folder name: Indonesia, Security, 1961-1963.

33 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Countries Reference Copies, Box [illegible] Folder: Indonesia, General, 1961-1963.

34 JFK Library, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Countries Reference Copies, Box 113. Folder: Indonesia, Report of Economic Survey Team 1/12/62 (A) Folder.

35 On Khrushchev's personal account regarding his visit to Indonesia, see Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*. New York: Bantam Books, 1976, 353-377.

36 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 14.

37 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 295.

38 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 295.

39 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 298.

40 Sukarno, *An Autobiography*, 191.

41 Anderson, 11.

3. Sukarno and the Cold War: A Brief Note*

*During the Cold War we were interested because we were scared that Russia and the United States were going to go to war. We were scared that Russia was going to take over the world. Every country became a battleground. —**Fareed Zakaria***

THE END OF World War II was followed by international tension between two ideological camps, namely the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union and the capitalist camp under leadership of the United States. Each of the camps tried to extend its sphere of influence by pulling other nations to its respective side.

"Cold" war vs "hot" war

While there was no direct military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union (hence, "cold" war), outside these nations' territories, there were "hot" military conflicts with millions of people (both military and civilian) fell victim. The Korean War (1950-1953) and the Vietnam War (1960s-1975) were just two examples of how the so-called "cold" war turned into "hot" wars in Asia. The wars in Asia occurred in part because one side of the conflicting parties aligned itself with one camp of the Cold War while the other decided to align with the opposite camp.

As a newly-independent Asian nation that was rich in natural resources and was strategically located between two great oceans, Indonesia was greatly influenced by the dynamics of the Cold War. Each side of the Cold War wanted to pull Indonesia into its sphere of political and economic influence.

Instead of aligning with one side of the Cold War against the other like other nations, however, Indonesia decided to chart its own course by staying neutral while taking advantage of the international conflict and actively promoting neutral position among other newly-independent nations.

In turn with regard to dealing with the Cold War Indonesia offers a possibility of viewing the Cold War conflict from the perspective of smaller nations, and of explaining the international dynamics of the period from other than the conventional mainstream narratives.

Taking Advantage

While other Asian nations were spending much time considering which side of the Cold War they wanted to take, Indonesia was setting its own agendas. Since 1948, for instance, Indonesia formulated its international relations under the principle of "politik bebas aktif" or independent and active policy. With this policy Indonesia wanted to stay neutral in the Cold War antagonism while actively promoting peace and collaboration among nations of the world. The implementation of the policy was carried out under the leadership of President Sukarno by taking several important steps.

First, Sukarno refused to succumb to the either side of the Cold War. As a former freedom fighter for the independence of his country against the "colonialist-capitalist-imperialist" Dutch colonial government Sukarno did not want his nation to be "re-colonized" by Western nations, particularly the United States, which in his view were also colonialist-capitalist-imperialist nations. Under Sukarno, for instance, Indonesia refused to join SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization), which was formed under the auspices of the United States.

At the same time Sukarno was also aware that the Soviet Union had similar intention of expanding its influence and of using other nations to serve its own interests, and because of that he refused to fully align his country with Moscow. For Sukarno, siding with either sides of the Cold War would be akin to throwing back Indonesia to the hands of another nation.

In 1956 right after his successful state visit to the United States, Sukarno went to the Soviet Union and China. With such action he intended to show the world and the people of Indonesia that he was "beyond" the Cold War antagonism.

Second, Sukarno took advantage of the Cold War to enhance his own role and popularity among the newly-independent nations. Instead of aligning with either side of the Cold War, Sukarno used the international tension to promote collaboration among nations that were also only recently declared themselves independent from colonialism.

In order to prevent these nations from joining either bloc of the Cold War, Sukarno helped initiate the idea of forming an international association of neutral nations called the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). He then hosted the first-ever conference of Asian and African nations, held in the city of Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955. The conference participants called for closer collaboration among Asian and African nations while encouraging the two camps of the Cold War to maintain peaceful coexistence.

Third, Sukarno was playing one side of the Cold War against the other to meet his own goals. Aware of the fact that both the US and the USSR were trying to pull Indonesia to their respective side, Sukarno was using the United States and the Soviet Union to serve the interests of his country. Sukarno, for instance, secretly asked support from Premier Nikita Khrushchev in Indonesia's fight against the Dutch to gain control over West Papua territory. But then he leaked the "secret" of Soviet's support to the US. As a result Washington pressured the Netherlands to leave West Papua. The Netherlands did leave West Papua and soon the territory came under the control of Indonesia.

While many historians see smaller nations and their leaders merely as victims or "proxies" of the two antagonizing superpowers of the Cold War, the case of Indonesia's President Sukarno offers a different insight into the conflict. Instead of being victim, Sukarno positioned himself as an important player in the Cold War rivalry, especially among the newly-independent nations of Asia and Africa. He consciously played one side against the other in the Cold War contest in order to serve his personal as well as his nation's benefit.

Perished

Later, however, Sukarno had to "pay the price" for what he did—a very high "price" indeed. Concerned with his increasing anti-Western rhetoric, his influence among non-aligned nations, and his closer relationship with the Indonesian communist party many Western leaders and policymakers conspired to topple him from power. They succeeded in toppling him down and replaced him with a pro-Western leader, namely General Suharto. The process of toppling him from power included the one of the bloodiest act of violence in the 20th century, in which at least 500,000 Indonesian citizens perished during the 1965 anti-communist purge.

Note:

* This section was originally pointers presented as pointers at the IAHAA Conference, in Surakarta, June 2012.

Part 4:
The 1965 Tragedy

Introduction

The period of 1965-66 was one of the darkest periods—if not the darkest one—in the post-colonial Indonesian history. During these years and the years immediately afterward an orgy of violence took place in Indonesia, in which about half a million Indonesians perished. Most of them were killed on the basis of their association with the Indonesian Communist Party, but many were killed for different various reasons. Many more were incarcerated, tortured, raped, exiled or discriminated against for the same various reasons. The mass killing and other acts of violence were mostly done by Indonesians—both the military and civilians—but they were done not without foreign involvement. While by the foreign agents and the local perpetrators the events were considered necessary step to win the communist-capitalist contention in the Cold War, for the victims the violence and death caused by the events of 1965-66 were real and personal.

The sections in this part attempt to discuss the horrible events of "anti-communist" purge that took place in Indonesia in 1965-66. The brief first section—originally published in the online version of Australian magazine called The Conversation as a backgrounder—is offered to those who are not too familiar with the 1965 events or with Indonesia itself. It shows that despite efforts to suppress narratives on 1965 by pro-Suharto groups, many young Indonesians remain eager to learn about what actually happened in Indonesia surrounding the events of 1965 as well as the impact of the events on Indonesia afterwards. The second section puts the events of 1965 in a broader context, both domestic and international. Meanwhile the last section of this part will take us to see how the same events—the anti-communist mass murder—is seen from two different perspectives, namely the perspective of the American foreign policy makers on Indonesia and from the perspective of the victims of the unspeakable violence.

1. What We Know About Indonesia's 1965 "Anti-Communist" Purge[1]

We know that often holding those who have carried out mass attrocities accountable is at times our best tool to prevent future attrocities. —***Samanta Power***

INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES WERE introduced to Indonesia's 1965-66 massacre of "communists" by the multi award-winning 2012 documentary *The Act of Killing*. While the details of what happened remain buried in the depths of time, here's what we do know.

On October 1, 1965, a group of left-wing soldiers calling themselves the September 30th Movement abducted six army generals and a first officer from their homes. A couple of hours later, the movement made a radio announcement that they had taken action to protect the country's inaugural president, Sukarno, from right-wing generals who they claimed were planning a coup.

Reacting to the vacuum in the army high command, Major General Suharto took the army leadership. He cajoled and intimidated the movement's troops in central Jakarta to surrender without much of a fight, and then stormed the movement's headquarters at the Halim Airforce base.

In less than 48 hours, Suharto had roundly defeated the 30th September Movement. At about the same time, the abductees' bodies were found in an old well in an area known as Lubang Buaya (literally means "Crocodile Hole") in east Jakarta.

The army accused the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) of being behind the movement, and of aiming to overthrow the government. This triggered the largest anti-communist purge and mass killings in modern-day Indonesia. Thousands of Indonesians suffered from years of incarceration and torture under the New Order, the regime built by Suharto when he became president in 1967.

An orgy of violence

After taking control of the situation, as well as media outlets, Suharto launched an operation to destroy the PKI and its followers. He dispatched the army's Special Forces unit to arrest, imprison and kill Indonesians suspected of being members of the communist party. On the third week of October 1965, an orgy of violence — including arrests, torture and murder — began in Central Java, followed by East Java in November, and continued in December to the island of Bali.

Similar efforts took place in other parts of Indonesia, but mostly on a smaller scale. Between 200,000 to 800,000 Indonesians are thought to have been killed during the anti-communist purge. Many more were imprisoned, exiled, discriminated against and stigmatised.

Under the New Order regime that Suharto subsequently created, former political prisoners had their ID cards marked. And their children were not allowed to enter civil service or the military.

The PKI was indeed destroyed. And the country's inaugural president, Sukarno was gradually removed from power as the army became the dominant political power in Indonesia. Suharto became de facto president by March 1966 and was appointed acting president by the parliament a year later. From 1966 to 1998, the pro-Western Suharto dictatorship ruled supreme and suppressed memory of the massacre.

Power struggle

The bloody events of 1965 did not happen suddenly; both domestic and international factors were involved.

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Locally, there had been increasing tension among Indonesia's political elites since the country's first general election in 1955 (after its declaration of independence in 1945). Out of the approximately 30 political parties that participated, the PKI was one of the major winners, coming fourth in election results.

This PKI gain dismayed and worried many members of the political establishment, especially anti-communist politicians, and the right-wing army leadership.

By the mid-1960s, this situation had created something of a "political triangle" in which three different parties wanted to take control of the country's leadership: the elected President Sukarno, the PKI and the army.

What happened in 1965 can been seen as the climax of the tension that been building up since the first general election of the Indonesian republic.

The global stage

Internationally, Indonesia was something of a front for the Cold War. Both the United States and the Soviet Union were interested in having the largest country in Southeast Asia in theirsphere of influence, especially as Indonesia is quite rich in natural resources.

In this sense, the 1965 destruction of the PKI and Western nations' support for General Suharto's New Order government can be seen as part of efforts to prevent Indonesia from joining the Soviets.

After Suharto came to power in 1967, only the government's side of the story was allowed in describing the events of 1965. Even though only a handful of PKI leadership were involved in the kidnapping, the New Order regime painted the murders of the army generals in 1965 as an attempted communist take over.

The government was silent on the massacre of suspected communists and their sympathisers that followed. And any other version of events was disallowed; former political prisoners were not permitted to

tell their stories, and anyone who tried to give a different version of events was pressured or threatened by the government.

Only after President Suharto resigned in 1998 following student protests triggered by the 1997 Asian financial crisis were Indonesians free to talk about what actually happened. Unfortunately, that freedom did not last very long.

Forces connected to Suharto have re-emerged and dominated public discourse on the events of 1965 and 1966. These included several radical anti-communist groups and military or police groups that had benefited from the Suharto government. They often attack forums that discuss topics related to the 1965 events and display anti-communist banners in public places.

Moves to suppress stories deviating from the New Order's narratives are taking place to this day. To counter them, a growing number of young Indonesians are holding forums on 1965 events despite the risk of being attacked. They also publish writings on 1965-related issues in the media and through the internet.

These young people are standing up in the belief that in order for the country to heal the wounds opened by this traumatic event and move forward as a true democracy, it must acknowledge its dark history, however painful.

Note:

1 This article was originally published in the Australian online magazine *The Conversation* (Australia), September 30, 2016, titled "Backgrounder: What we know about Indonesia's 1965 "anti-communist" purge" and has been slightly edited. See https://theconversation.com/backgrounder-what-we-know-about-indonesias-1965-anti-communist-purge-66338

2. The 1965 Tragedy and Its Context*

No matter what cause one defends, it will suffer permanent disgrace if one resorts to blind attacks on crowds of innocent people.

–Albert Camus

AS DISCUSSED EARLIER, on October 1, 1965, as we have seen, six generals and one high-ranking Army officer were kidnapped and killed in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. A military group called "Gerakan 30 September" (September 30th Movement) declared itself responsible for the kidnapping and killing.

On October 2, 1965 the movement was banned by the government and its top leaders (chiefly Lieutenant Colonel Untung Samsuri, Colonel Abdul Latief and Brigadier General Soepardjo) were in hiding or on the run. Two days later, on October 4, the bodies of the slain military officers were discovered in an old well in the village of Lubang Buaya, located in the outskirts of Jakarta. On October 5th the bodies were buried in a public military ceremony.

During the chaotic days of early October 1965, the Army's official newspapers *Angkatan Bersendjata* and *Berita Yudha* published stories accusing leaders and members of the PKI to be responsible for the killing the generals; other newspapers were banned. The Army's newspaper published a story which said that "immoral acts" were performed by members of the Gerwani (a women's organization associated with the PKI) mocking the

bodies of the dead generals. According to the newspaper, Gerwani members mutilated the bodies of the generals while dancing erotically.[2]

Due to this kind of reporting, within days stories of "communist cruelty" spread throughout the country, particularly in Java and Bali. Meanwhile, in the midst of the chaotic situation Major General Suharto (head of the Army Strategic Reserve/ KOSTRAD and the future president of Indonesia) came to the front as the nation's "savior" from communism and quickly suppressed the "evil" conspiracy.

About three weeks after the events in Jakarta, mass killings began to take place in Central Java. In the third week of October 1965, for instance, many people in Central Java were summoned and summarily killed by mobs of people with the support of military personnel. They were killed on the accusation that they were communists and therefore responsible for the kidnapping and killing of the generals in Jakarta—hundreds of kilometers from their homes.

In November 1965 worse mass killings took place in the province of East Java, followed by killings of thousands of people in the island of Bali in December of that year.[3] Similar killings also took place in different parts of the country, but usually with much less intensity than the killings in Bali and Java. In total, it was estimated that between 500,000 and 1,000,000 lives perished in the mass murders in 1965—one of the biggest peacetime massacres of the 20th century.[4]

Those that were accused of being communist, but survived the killings, were taken to detention centers throughout the country. More than ten thousand men were sent to the infamous Buru Island in the Moluccas, while women prisoners were sent to the prison in the village of Plantungan, Central Java.[5]

In the wake of the killings and detention, family members of those who were killed or imprisoned were discriminated against. They were accused of being "tainted" by communism and not allowed to work as civil servants or to serve in the military. The accusation and the stigmatization that followed continued long after the events of 1965.

The Context

Due to the complexity, the controversies, and the heavy political elements surrounding the 1965 events, as well as the domestic and international attempts to cover up the human rights abuse and its circumstances, it has been quite difficult to fully comprehend what actually happened in 1965 and the situation that led to the horrendous events. In order to better understand the 1965 tragedy, one needs to put it in a wider context.

In 1955 Indonesia held a general election, the first since its proclamation of independence in August 1945. Approximately 30 political parties joined the election, and it was reported that about 90 percent of eligible voters turned out. To the surprise (and disappointment) of many, the PKI was the party with the fourth largest share of votes. In regional elections held in 1957 the communist party continued to gain increasing number of voters.[6]

The PKI's big gains in those two elections concerned many political circles in Indonesia, especially the Indonesian Army, the nationalists, and members of religion-based political parties. The second half of the 1950s was marked by growing sentiment of anti-Communism, especially among Indonesian political elites. With the Army being in the forefront of the anti-communist move, President Sukarno began to worry that the move would gradually increase the Army's political role in the country's politics and therefore become a threat to his own power. To prevent that from happening, Sukarno sought protection by moving closer to the PKI, which had a huge following at the grassroots.

At the same time, the fear of being crushed by its chief rival, the Army, pushed the PKI to align itself closer with President Sukarno by supporting many of the latter's ideas and programs. Ironically, the situation also compelled the Army to move closer to Sukarno, out of fear of being crushed by the PKI. In a similar fashion, fear of being pushed aside by the PKI moved Sukarno to maintain closer ties with the Army, respectively its key figures.

As a result of this political constellation and dynamics, a peculiar "political triangle" gradually developed in Indonesia.[7] In this triangle, each of the contending parties tried to enhance its own position (and if possible

to grab the nation's top political leadership) by keeping distance to one side and aligning with the other.

Needless to say, the period between the second half of the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s was marked by an intensifying political power struggle by these three main actors at the top level of the Indonesian politics. From this perspective, what happened in October–December 1965 appeared to be a culmination and logical consequence of such political dynamics.

While a domestic power struggle was taking place in Indonesia, in the international community a continuous overarching power clash in form of the Cold War was occurring. It involved communist countries led by the Soviet Union, and Western capitalist nations headed by the U.S.. Both camps of the Cold War attempted to widen as much as possible their international "spheres of influence". Indonesia was one of the targets in the two camps' contest.[8] While for the Soviet Union the PKI's increasing political gains provided hopes for its greater influence in Indonesia, for the U.S. it became a threat to its interests in the country and in the region.

Due to its appeal among the Indonesian grassroots population, by the early 1960s the PKI became the third largest communist party in the world, smaller only than the Chinese and Soviet parties. This pleased Soviet leaders, and made them eager to build closest possible ties with Indonesia. In 1961, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev spent twelve days visiting Indonesia just to show how interested Moscow was in including the country in the Soviet camp of the Cold War.[9] Whether the visit really bore fruit, the possibility of the Soviet Union having closer ties with Indonesia worried many American policymakers.

The U.S. worried that this huge country, with its strategic location and abundant natural resources, would fall to the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Some were aware that, in addition to being rich in oil, Indonesia's islands were filled with untapped mining potential, including the enormous gold deposits located in West Papua.

Those policymakers were also increasingly concerned about the communists in Vietnam; these concerns in turn affected U.S. policy toward Indonesia. Washington feared that left alone, Indonesia could become

another serious communist threat in Southeast Asia. In addition to the Soviet Union and the United States, the People's Republic of China also had growing interests in Indonesia. This was in part because since the early 1950s, following the suppression of the communists in the wake of the Madiun Affair of 1948, the new leadership of the PKI sought closer ties with Beijing. When in August of 1965 PKI Chairman Aidit visited China, he was cordially welcomed by Chairman Mao Zedong.

While Washington increasingly worried about Indonesia's situation, in the late 1950s President Sukarno announced NASAKOM, his new political concept. He suggested that nationalism, religion, and communism were not mutually incompatible, and encouraged the three groups to work together for the people of Indonesia. The notion of officially including the communists in Indonesian politics, along with Sukarno's inclination to promote leftist ideas, naturally added to the concerns of the U.S. Washington feared that if Sukarno was allowed to implement the idea of NASAKOM, the communists would come to dominate Indonesia, and American interests in the country would be endangered.

One of the central political issues in post-independence Indonesia was its disputes with the Netherlands (Indonesia's former colonial power) over West Papua territory. When the Dutch colonized Indonesia, the territory was part of the Netherlands' colonial possession. However, when The Hague officially recognized Indonesian independence in 1949, the Dutch government declared that West Papua would remain under its control, while Indonesia claimed the territory as an integral part of the newly independent nation.

The West Papua (then called Irian Barat) problem became a very crucial issue especially since the second half of the 1950s. This was partly because since the period President Sukarno used the issue to garner domestic and international support against the Dutch, while the PKI used it to serve its own purposes by showing its support and loyalty to the President.

Out of fear that the West Papua question would be used by the PKI to widen its influence in Indonesian politics and to push Sukarno deeper into communist side, the U.S. began to entertain the idea of solving the problem

by supporting the Indonesian position. The U.S. also realized that a prolonged dispute between Indonesia and the Netherlands over West Papua could conceivably draw the U.S. and the Soviet Union into open military conflict. To avoid this, the American government under President Kennedy began to pressure the Dutch to leave the territory.

Thanks to those pressures, in 1962 the Dutch did relinquish their control over the territory and let Indonesia administer it under supervision of the United Nations. The U.S. hoped that by helping Indonesia gain the territory, it would be able to pursue its interests in the country, including minimizing (if not getting rid of) communist influence in Indonesia.

Another central political issue in Indonesia during the 1960s was the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. Britain wanted to unite its former colonies, namely Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei into a British protectorate called the Federation of Malaysia as part of its decolonization process.

When the idea of forming the federation was announced, President Sukarno did not have any objection. However, he later changed his mind, saying that the plan was an attempt by the British and other capitalist nations to "encircle" the newly independent Indonesia. South and Southeast Indonesia was already flanked by two capitalist nations, Australia and New Zealand. The North was bordered by the pro-American Philippines, and under the Federation of Malaysia, North and Northwest Indonesia would be flanked by a puppet state and an extension of the British control of Southeast Asia.

In 1963 Sukarno publicly opposed the idea and declared that Indonesia would launch a policy of *Konfrontasi* (confrontation) against the formation of the Federation of Malaysia.[10] Among Indonesians, the Malaysia issue became very divisive. Many supported the idea of "confronting" the British and Malaysians by military force if necessary, while many others (albeit quietly) were opposed to such an idea. Among those who opposed the idea was the Indonesian Army while the PKI was supportive of it. For the PKI, the Malaysia issue was another opportunity to show its "loyalty" to the nation and to the President while pursuing its own political interests.

Needless to say, the close ties between Sukarno and the PKI over the Malaysia issues worried many Western observers as well as anti-communist groups in Indonesia itself. Fear of communist domination united both Western and Indonesian anti-communist groups and inspired them to find ways to eliminate from Indonesian politics either Sukarno or the PKI—or both.

The Narratives

Despite the many factors that formed the background of what happened in 1965–66, and the various points of view in narrating the events, the Indonesian government under President Suharto preferred to use a single way of framing it. According to its narrative, the killings of the high-ranking military officers on October 1, 1965 were undoubtedly committed by the PKI. Even if the main leaders of the September 30 Movement were in fact Army officers, according to this version they were officers who had been influenced by the communists.[11] The government narrative simply ignored the fact that the leaders of the military movement actually had close personal and professional relations with Suharto since Indonesia's war of independence (1945–1949). It also ignored the possibility that Suharto had potential foreknowledge of what the plotters intended to do.

According to the official narrative of the New Order government, the mass killings that took place after the murders of the military officers in Jakarta were merely "spontaneous" acts, generated by people who were upset with the deaths of the generals. In this narrative, there was no mention of a military presence, let alone military involvement. The fact that the wave of massacres did not happen simultaneously but moved from Central Java in October to East Java in November, and then to Bali in December of 1965, was also ignored.

To justify the killings, the government narrative pictured the communists as traitors of the state ideology Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.[12] Members of the PKI were said to have planned to replace Pancasila with an atheistic ideology, namely communism. They were also portrayed as traitors to the nation of Indonesia.

Using such narrative as a pretext, the New Order government banned the teaching and spreading of Marxism/Leninism in Indonesia while proactively warning the people against the "*bahaya laten*" (persistent danger) of communism. By creating public fear of the reemergence of communism, the New Order government was easily able to implement a military government, where most political leaders from the national down to the village level were active or retired military officers. Furthermore, since the communists and all former political prisoners were considered a danger to the nation, the government believed there should be no form of reconciliation with the victims of the 1965 tragedy.

With the fall of President Suharto and his New Order government in 1998, however, different narratives about what happened in 1965–1966 and after began to emerge. From the victims and eyewitnesses of the events, for instance, there were many testimonies, which claimed that not all those murdered and imprisoned in 1965–66 were communists, let alone having connection with the killing of the generals in Jakarta on October 1, 1965. Many individuals were falsely accused. Before being killed or put in prisons, there were no legal procedures to determine whether they were really guilty of any crime or not.

Many of the survivors considered themselves to be victims of injustices committed by Suharto and others who had great ambition for political power.[13] The fall of Suharto in 1998 provided historians with the opportunity and freedom to look into the events of 1965–66. Rejecting the linear and singular approach in viewing them, these historians believed that there were broader contexts for what happened in 1965–66.[14] As we have seen above, other than domestic factors there were also international factors that led to the events.

Some historians supported the idea that the killings of the generals were actually the result of an internal conflict within the Army. They believed that there had been increasing resentment among former members of the Diponegoro Division within the Army, particularly between the younger and more dynamic officers and the older, more well-to-do generals. The fact that almost all of the generals killed were related to the fact-finding

commission that had found Suharto guilty of smuggling and corruption while serving in the Diponegoro Division in Semarang, Central Java, caused historians to wonder if Suharto had something to do with what happened on October 1, 1965.

These historians believed that, regardless of whether Suharto was involved or not in what happened October 1, 1965, the events of 1965–66 were a great tragedy. It was a tragedy not just for Indonesia but for the world. The deaths of 500,000 to 1,000,000 civilians within a relatively short period of time in the hands of their fellow countrymen, while the country was not in the state of war, cannot be dismissed as merely a domestic political matter.

Meanwhile, there are many unanswered questions related to the 1965–66 events. One of them was why Suharto was spared by the September 30 Movement, despite the fact that as commander of KOSTRAD he was next in line in case General Ahmad Yani, the commander of Indonesia's armed forces, was killed or incapacitated.[15] Also, if the mass killings of 1965 were "spontaneous", why did the major killing occur in the Central Java, East Java and Bali provinces, and not in West Java Province, which was much closer to Jakarta? Moreover, why did the killings in Central Java began in the third week of October, in East Java in November, and in Bali in December 1965—all of them after the presence of the Army special forces (RPKAD) led by Major General Sarwo Edhie?[16]

Many historians urged the people of Indonesia to look deeper into the events of 1965–66 in order to better understand what actually happened in this period and find ways of reconciliation with the victims of the horrifying tragedy.

The Consequences

Regardless of the growing number of alternative views on narrating the events of 1965-66, the official narrative provided by the New Order government remains influential in the minds of many Indonesians even today, in part thanks to the simplicity and binary (good vs. evil) approach in portraying the story.

As a result, in Indonesia there has been a one-sided view of history, especially related to the Indonesian struggle for independence; the pre-1965 Indonesian government; the role of President Sukarno; the PKI; and the place of civil society in Indonesia's past. In this one-sided view of history, the importance of the Army's role is almost always emphasized while the roles of other agencies (President Sukarno, the PKI, the civil society) tend to be minimized.

Attempts to narrate Indonesian history in ways different from the official version were usually discouraged, discredited or even banned. As a consequence, it is quite difficult for Indonesians to have an adequate and comprehensive understanding of what happened in 1965–66. Any attempt to seek truth regarding the 1965 events was always viewed with suspicion and hindered. Even the 2004 law on the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission signed by the President Megawati was eventually revoked in 2006.

The lack of adequate and comprehensive understanding of the 1965–66 events is regrettable, because what happened during that period was indeed a crucial moment and turning point in Indonesian history. First, while the pre-1965 period of Indonesian politics involved civil society with the nation's political processes, in the period thereafter Indonesian politics was clearly elite-dominated. The national political leadership under President Suharto considered the people merely as a "floating mass" to just follow decisions made by government officials and advisers.

Second, while during the pre-1965 period the Indonesian government was very much controlled by civilians, after 1965 it was dominated by military personnel. From the country's top leadership (the president) to leaders on the local level (village chiefs), most of the holders of political power were, as mentioned above, either active or retired military personnel.

Third, during the period before 1965 the Sukarno government restricted the presence of foreign corporations and investment in Indonesia. To Sukarno's mind, foreign corporations should be allowed to operate in Indonesia only after the country had enough professionals who are able to deal with these corporations. He feared that without the presence of such

professionals, foreign corporations would jeopardize Indonesia's abundant natural resources and use Indonesians merely as "coolies" serving foreign corporations. In the period after 1965, the Suharto government lifted restrictions and allowed foreign corporations to operate freely in Indonesia.[17] As a consequence, for the next several decades Indonesia's natural resources were indeed controlled and exploited by many foreign corporations with only limited benefits for Indonesians themselves.

Regardless of the debates surrounding the events, what happened in 1965–66 in Indonesia was truly an appalling tragedy: six Army generals and one high-ranking military officer were kidnapped and brutally killed in their homes; hundreds of thousands lives were lost in peace-time mass murders; thousands of people were imprisoned without legal basis; and millions were unjustly stigmatized and discriminted against. Needless to say, it was one of the most brutal tragedies of the 20th century. Yet the narratives of the events remain controversial, in part because certain members of Indonesian society do not want the gross human rights abuses of the past to be revealed and its wounds healed.

By putting the 1965 tragedy in a broader context (foreign and domestic), one can gain an understanding of the events. A broader context does not only help students of Indonesian history to become critical of official narratives provided by the government. It also opens up possibilities for other actors (victims, witnesses, historians) to come forward with their narratives. Historical accounts from non-government agencies on the 1965 tragedy, will in turn help Indonesians in general to have better understanding of their own history. It will enable them to deal with a burdened past for the sake of the nation's present and future.

Endnotes

* This section has been published in Bernd Schaefer and Baskara T. Wardaya (Eds.) *1965: Indonesia and the World/Indonesia dan Dunia*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 2013. It has been slightly edited.

2 Komnas Perempuan, *Gender–Based Crimes Against Humanity: Listening to the Voice of [illegible]en Survivors of 1965* (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2007), pp. 51–58.

3 Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 273–303.

4 Robinson, pp. 273–274.

5 See dr. Hj Sumiyarsi Siwirini, *Plantungan: Pembuangan Tapol Perempuan* (Yogyakarta: PUSdEP Universitas Sanata Dharma, 2010).

6 Herbert Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell [illegible]ersity Press, 1962), pp. 434–435.

7 See H. Rosihan Anwar, *Sukarno–Tentara–PKI: Segitiga Kekuasaan Sebelum Prahara Politik 1961–1965* (Jaka[illegible]ayasan Obor Indonesia, 2006).

8 [illegible]r further exploration on Indonesia in the context of the Cold War prior to 1965 see: *Baskara T. Wardaya SJ, Cold War Shadow: U.S. Policy toward Indonesia, 1953–1963* (Yogyakarta: PUSdEP and Galangpress, 2007).

9 Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston, MA: Bantam [illegible]ks, 1976), pp. 353–374.

10 See John Subritzky, *Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian–Indonesian Confrontation, 1961–5* (New York: St. Ma[illegible]s Press, Inc., 2000).

11 See *Gerakan 30 September: Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Jakarta: Sekre[illegible] Negara Republik Indonesia, 1994).

12 Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, *Gerakan 30 September: Pemberontakan Partai Kom[illegible]s Indonesia* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1994), p. 169.

13 See John Roosa/Ayu Ratih/Hilmar Farid (eds.), *Tahun Yang Tak Pernah Berakhir: Memahami Pengalaman Korban 65, Esai–esai Sejarah Lisan* (Jakart[illegible]sam, 2004); Ita F. Nadia, *Suara Perempuan Korban Tragedi '65* (Yogyakarta: 2009); Hersri Setiawan, *Kidung Para Korban: Dari Tutur Sepuluh Narasumber Eks-Tapol* (Yogyakarta: Pakorba and Pustaka Pelajar, 2006).

14 One of the most critical historians toward government narratives is Dr. [illegible] Warman Adam from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI). See for instance, Asvi Warman Adam, *Suharto Sisi Gelap Sejarah Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Ombak 2004); Asvi Warman Adam, *1965: Orang–orang di Balik Tragedi* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2009).

15 According to one of the members of the September [illegible]th Movement, Colonel A. Latief, Suharto was informed about the plotters' plans. A. Latief, *Pledoi Kol. A Latief: Suharto [illegible]libat G30S* (Jakarta: ISAI, 2000), pp. 22–31.

16 Robert Cribb (ed.), *The Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966: Studies from [illegible] and Bali* (Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990). The late Sarwo Edhie Wibowo is the father-in-law of Indonesian former president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoy[illegible]o (2004-2014).

17 See Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.–Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

3. The 1965 Tragedy in the Eyes of U.S. Foreign Policy Makers and the Tragedy's Victims[1]

The problem with the U.S. foreign policy is that we're just so unbelievably powerful. And when you've got that kind of power, it's very hard not to use it. —**Stanley Hauerwas**

JAKARTA, OCTOBER 1, 1965. On that day American diplomats at the U.S. Embassy at the Indonesian capital city received very "surprising" information. According to the information, a "coup d'état" had taken place in Jakarta, in which a number of Indonesian Army Generals were kidnapped and arrested. It was also said that the culprits behind the arrest and kidnapping were the Communists. The Embassy's diplomats soon conveyed the information to the American foreign policy makers in Washington by telegram. "A power move which may have far-reaching implication is under way in Jakarta," said the telegram. It then continued: "A group which calls itself '30 September Movement' claims to have forestalled a 'Generals' coup' in Indonesia. A number of unnamed generals and politicians have been arrested…"[2]

On the one hand, the telegram—and the numerous telegrams that followed—suggested how "surprised" and unprepared were the American diplomats in Jakarta and foreign policy makers in Washington regarding the turmoil in Indonesia. U.S. Defense Secretary, for instance, asked whether the October 1 events were a step for "a definite Communist takeover".[3] Other policy makers asked whether there was a need to evacuate American citizens from Indonesia.[4] Meanwhile, there was a "big question" on whether the Indonesian Army would use the events as an opportunity to seize President Sukarno's political power.[5]

On the other hand, the American diplomats and foreign policy makers were not totally surprised by the fact that a violent conflict was taking place between the Communists and the Indonesian Army. That was because they had been waiting (in fact, encouraging) for such a violent conflict to happen. At least since mid-1964 United States diplomats and foreign policy makers were secretly expecting (and helping to make it happen) that there would be an open conflict between anti-Communist and Communist forces in Indonesia that would be continued with the destruction of Communism in Indonesia. More specifically, they wanted that there would be a direct *clash* between the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party) and the Indonesian Army, in which the PKI would be defeated and wiped out from Indonesia. In addition, the diplomats and foreign policy makers also hoped that such a clash would lead to the removal of President Sukarno[6] from power, and to the changing of Indonesia's economic and political orientation from being anti-Western to be more favorable to Western economic and political interests.

This part of the book is an attempt to explore Indonesia's political upheavals that started on October 1, 1965 (often known as the 1965 Tragedy) from the perspectives of these diplomats and foreign policy makers, particularly with regard to how they perceived Indonesian politics in mid-1960s under the government of President Sukarno; how they became uneasy with Indonesia's continuing tilt to the left; and how they set up plans to reverse such tendency so that Indonesia would become favorable to the interests of the Western countries. At the same time this paper also intends to explore the tragedy from the perspectives of Indonesians who became victims when those plans were being implemented, along with all the sufferings and deaths that resulted from the plans' implementation. By exploring the 1965 Tragedy from the two different perspectives it is hoped that we will have a better and more comprehensive understanding of the terrible political mayhem and that we will be able to draw more lessons from it.

Before October 1, 1965

Other than the American foreign policy makers the British government (supported by the Australian and New Zealand governments) also wanted to

have the PKI destroyed. The reason was because the PKI had been supporting President Sukarno in his "confrontation" policy against the formation of the Federation of Malaysia which the British government supported and facilitated. Quietly the British government wanted to provoke the PKI to launch a coup, but a coup that should be poorly prepared so that it would certainly fail. The failed coup, it was expected, would aggravate the Army to take action against the PKI to destroy it.

Documents containing the exchange of ideas and information among the American foreign policy makers themselves and the American foreign policy makers with those of other countries demonstrate how Western nations—the U.S. and England in particular—wanted to shape Indonesian politics in the 1960s, especially with regard to the idea of eliminating communism in the country. From one of the American diplomatic documents of the period, for instance, we can see what U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Howard Jones said during the Chiefs of Mission conference in Baguio, the Philippines, in early March 1965 regarding the idea. In that conference Jones stated that the best way to change the current Indonesian pro-communist political trend was to provoke the PKI to launch a failed attempt to seize power. Said Jones: "… From our viewpoint, of course, an unsuccessful coup attempt by the PKI might be the most effective development to start a reversal of political trends in Indonesia."[7]

A similar idea had previously been presented by U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia James Ball in order to convince the British government that the U.S. would help reduce Indonesia's opposition to the British initiative in Malaysia. Ball said that the U.S. was going to help destroy the PKI. Reflecting Jones' idea, Ball believed that the best way to destroy the PKI was to provoke the PKI to launch a failed coup which in turn would trigger the Indonesian Army to counter attack and annihilate the party. The U.S. 303 Committee—a committee whose job was to recommend U.S. covert operations in foreign countries—suggested that the U.S. government start to initiate a number of covert operations to obliterate the PKI. The committee suggested that the operations include "covert liaison with and support for existing anti-Communist groups, black letter operations, media operations, including [the]

possibility [of] black radio, and political action within existing Indonesian institutions and organization."[8] The purpose of such operations, it was said, was to exploit the factionalism within the PKI itself which at the end would lead to the Communist party's own destruction.

Meanwhile, the CIA stated that it intended to help the Indonesian Army remain politically united, but at the same time wanted to push the Army so that it would be more forceful in pressuring President Sukarno. Secretly the CIA also launched operations to provoke an open conflict between the PKI and the Army.[9] Ellsworth Bunker, former U.S. Ambassador to India who was well-respected in Indonesia because of his pro-Indonesian stance in the Dutch-Indonesian dispute over West Papua,[10] worried about the worsening US-Indonesian relations. He even supported the CIA's idea on the importance of a military move to initiate a change in Indonesia that would benefit the U.S.[11]

A few months before the idea of provoking the PKI to launch a failed coup circulated among American diplomats and foreign policy makers the same idea had been discussed by British and New Zealand foreign policy makers. This is obvious from a document dated December 19, 1964 written by New Zealand High Commissioner in London, M.J.C. Templeton. In the letter—addressed to the Assistant Secretary of State in the British Foreign Office, Edward Peck—Templeton said that a premature could d'état by the PKI "might be the most helpful solution for the West", with a subsequent note, *"provided the coup failed."*[12] In other words, if the PKI could be provoked to launch a coup—but a failed coup—PKI's arch-rival, namely the Army, would have a justification to destroy the PKI and all left-leaning groups in Indonesia. Peck predictably agreed with the idea. Even a month before receiving Templeton's letter he himself had expressed a very similar idea when he said, "there might be much to be said for encouraging a premature PKI coup during Sukarno's lifetime."[13]

It is not easy to determine how far actually the U.S. was involved in pushing the idea of provoking a failed coup by the PKI. One of the reasons is because there are still many secret U.S. documents that are not open to the public. However, from the available evidence one can see that the U.S. really

wanted to help provoke the PKI to launch a failed coup so that the Army would have a justifiable reason to destroy it. As historian Bradley Simpson said, "… there is no doubt that the coup was a goal of U.S. and British covert operations and was on the minds of many officials."[14] In December 1964 a Dutch official said to the Pakistan's Ambassador to the Netherlands that Indonesia"[is] ready to fall into Western lap like a rotten apple". The official then added that a number of Western secret agents were going to provoke "premature communist coup… which would be foredoomed to fail, providing a legitimate and welcome opportunity to Army to crush the Communists and make Sukarno a prisoner of Army's good will."[15] In the context of the Cold War, the country that had the greatest interests (both politically and economically) in the destruction of communism in Indonesia was certainly the United States.

For the Western policymakers provoking the PKI to launch a premature coup was important because they felt that up to early 1965 the PKI was too slow in its move to seize power, while the Army was quite reluctant to immediately crush the PKI while Sukarno was still in power. There was a need for a certain initiative so that both camps would be provoked to face off each other with the result that the PKI would be crushed, followed by the overthrow of President Sukarno from power.

As shown by Simpson, for a long time during the administration of President Johnson the U.S. was looking for ways to make use of social and political polarizations in the Indonesian society to provoke a direct conflict between the PKI and the Army. He also suggests that "Repeated and similar statements by U.S., British, Australian, and New Zealand officials indicate that high priority was given to psychological warfare and other deceptive activities".[16] The goal for such initiative, according to Simpson, was to create "a climate of fear and confusion in Indonesia about the intentions of the army and the PKI in the hopes that the PKI might launch a premature coup attempt."[17]

Some U.S. policymakers believed that sooner or later Java would be dominated by the Communists. In order to avoid the entire Indonesia being dominated by the Communists, they wanted to break up the Indonesian

territory between Java and Outer Islands, in which Java would become Communist but the Outer Islands would not. To pursue this goal, these policymakers wanted to create a new government independent of President Sukarno's government. As early as May 1964, for instance, Robert Martens, political officer of the U.S. embassy in Jakarta, suggested that if the Indonesian President continue to push his government to the left, the U.S. should consider "establishing a more friendly government or for fostering separatism in the outer islands."[18] Meanwhile in July 1964 U.S. Secretary of Defense suggested a "subversive action on a large scale to disintegrate Indonesia".[19]

Ambassador Jones shared the same concerns, especially as in early 1965 US-Indonesian relation was worsening. He reported that Indonesian radicals now considered the U.S. as the main threat to their interests and began to attack U.S.-related corporations and institutions.[20] Expressing similar concerns, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk was afraid that "before long Indonesia may be for all practical purposes a Communist dictatorship."[21] Responding to the alarming situation Jones suggested that the U.S. should take immediate action. Realizing that Indonesia was the fifth most populous country in the world he viewed the country as a very important for the U.S. That is why he believed that "… for [the] US to watch [Indonesia] fall to early communist domination without making an effort to stop it seems unthinkable."[22]

The concerns on Indonesia being dominated by the Communists were also shared by U.S. President Lyndon Johnson. Not only did he share the same apprehension about Indonesia, he was ready to take any necessary measure to prevent Indonesia from becoming a Communist state. In March 1965 Rusk told former British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Patrick Gordon Walker that "President Johnson has come increasingly to the conclusion that, at the end of the day, should it become necessary, he would be ready for major war against Indonesia."[23] Sharing the same idea of preventing the whole Indonesia becoming a Communist state Great Britain agreed to break Indonesia into two separate states, in which one of them would not be controlled by the Communists. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Relations Offices suggested that the British government

should make "a determined effort to break up Indonesia, because, however chaotic and unstable the consequences, this would be preferable to a strong and menacing communist state of 100 million people."[24]

The concerns of these Western governments and foreign policy makers were not without reasons. Since the Madiun Affair of 1948—in which the Indonesian government armed-forces were in direct conflict with the Communist-supported military groups—the U.S. began to worry that Indonesia would turn into a Communist state, and would "fall" into the Communist side of the Cold War.[25] These concerns increased when beginning in the 1950s the PKI kept growing in membership and becoming popular among the Indonesian people, as it was reflected in the 1955 general elections.[26] Moreover, the Western governments and policy makers viewed that the top leader of Indonesia, namely President Sukarno, as a committed leftist who was increasingly closer to the PKI. When in the early 1960 Sukarno and the PKI began to build closer relations with the People's Republic of China—the second largest Communist state in the world—the policy makers became even more concerned about Indonesia. They feared that Indonesia becoming a Communist state was just a matter of time, which means it would be outside the reach of the Western bloc of the Cold War.

Responding to this possibility, Western governments wanted to have the growth of Communism in Indonesia curbed. If possible they wanted to have the PKI totally destroyed. They hoped that upon the destruction of the PKI Indonesia would change its political and economic direction to the West, as we have seen above. For that reason some Western nations—in particular the U.S., Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand—sought ways to destroy the Communist party and to push Sukarno from power. With regard to the idea of destroying the communist party U.S. foreign policy makers preferred to use covert operations. They believed that by reducing its public appearance in Indonesia and increasing its covert activities, it would be more effective for the U.S. to achieve the goal of preventing Indonesia from moving further to the left.[27]

In order to hasten the process of destroying Communism (and Sukarno's political power) in Indonesia, in July 1965 the U.S. government decided to

replace Ambassador Howard Jones with Marshall Green. Even though Jones was often critical to Sukarno and made a lot of efforts to prevent Indonesia from turning into Communism, in the eyes of the Washington policy makers he was too lenient to the Indonesian President. Green, the man who was appointed to succeed him, was former U.S. Ambassador to South Korea and former Assistant to the Secretary of State. He was known for being strongly anti-Communist. By appointing him Washington hoped that the U.S. would be in a stronger and more determined position in dealing with the Indonesian leader.

Green took his job very seriously. Only two weeks into his new job, he reported to Washington his view of President Sukarno. He said that Sukarno was indeed not a Communist, but was in favor of Communism and was closely collaborating with the PKI. Green believed that Sukarno "[was] deliberately promoting communism's cause in Indonesia."[28] In his view Sukarno increasingly considered the political agendas of the PKI as his own.[29] Meanwhile in its foreign policy Indonesia was gradually leaning toward Communist China. Beginning in 1964 Indonesia started to move away from the Soviet Union while building closer relations with People's Republic of China. This shift of foreign policy was encouraged by the PKI, marked by the cordial relations between the PKI General Secretary D.N. Aidit with China's leader, Mao Zedong. Aidit's visit to China was followed in November 1964 by Sukarno's visit to that country.[30]

Indonesia's close relations with Beijing certainly worried U.S. foreign policy makers. They believed that in its efforts to dominate Indonesia the PKI would be supported by Communist China. If that was the case then in a relatively short period of time, the policy makers feared, Indonesia would be controlled by China. In the mean time they considered China as the main threat for Southeast Asia, especially after China's successful nuclear test in September 1964. [31] Adding to the policy makers' concerns the American media often portrayed Indonesia in 1964 as an alarming nation. The media, for instance, described the alliance between Indonesia and China as a "nightmare" for the U.S., or depicted Indonesia as the second greatest threat

for Southeast Asia after China.[32] This kind of depiction certainly added to the apprehension of not only U.S. policy makers but also Americans in general.

Interestingly enough, the apprehension regarding Indonesia was shared by the Soviet Union. By this time the Sino-Soviet split was already underway. The Soviet government feared that its close relation with Indonesia was going to be replaced by China, which was its Communist main rival in Asia.[33] Responding to this situation the Soviet Embassy in Jakarta began to move away from the PKI and to seek collaboration with other groups in Indonesia, such as the Indonesian Army, the Indonesian Nationalist Party and the Moslem organization Nahdlatul Ulama.[34]

When in 1965 violent conflicts between the PKI and anti-Communist groups in Indonesia—especially Moslem groups—were increasing, U.S. foreign policy makers took them as a sign favorable to U.S. interests. For them the conflicts were an indication that PKI's intention to spread its political agenda in Indonesia met strong resistance from the Indonesian society. As reported by the CIA, such resistance against the PKI took place in North Sumatra, Central Java and East Java. It was also reported that the anti-Communist resistance groups were either approved of or partially supported by the Indonesian Army and Police.[35]

These conflicts intensified when the BTI (Barisan Tani Indonesia)—a peasants' organization affiliated with the PKI—launched the so-called "Aksi Sepihak" or unilateral actions of claiming lands from landlords and absentee farmers and distributed them to the landless peasants. This kind of action generated strong reactions from many sides, especially from Moslem leaders who often controlled large amount of lands. These religious leaders declared that of BTI members were "atheistic" and organized their followers to fight against them. The U.S. foreign policy makers were pleased to learn that the conflicts which originally were merely conflicts over land ownership had now turned into "religious" conflicts between "believers" and "atheists". By turning it into religious conflicts the policy makers hoped that the Communists' position would become increasingly difficult.[36]

In the first months of 1965 Indonesia was marked by rumors of impending coups. The rumors were probably spread by American and

British intelligence stationed in the country, who wanted to create a hostile political environment which would be favorable for a direct clash between the Indonesian Army and the PKI.

The Views of American Policy Makers

The expected clash did become a reality. As we have seen, in the early hours of October 1, 1965 a gruesome event took place in Jakarta. In that first day of October 1965 six generals and a high-ranking military officer of the Indonesian Army were kidnapped by a group that called itself the "September 30th Movement". After being captured and murdered the generals' bodies were dumped into an unused old well in the village of Lubang Buaya, located near the Indonesian Air Force headquarters at Halim Perdanakusuma, in the outskirts of Jakarta. On the same day, through a radio broadcast, it was announced that the September 30th Movement had established the so-called "Revolutionary Council". The Council, it was announced, was aimed at countering the so-called "Council of Generals". The September 30th Movement suspected that the "Council of Generals" was going to launch a coup, and the Revolutionary Council was established to prevent the coup from happening, while guaranteeing the safety of President Sukarno. It was stated in the announcement that the Revolutionary Council had 45 members. Half of them were government officials, while the other half comprised of representatives from various groups, including the three members of PKI's Central Committee.[37]

Before it became clear as what was actually the "September 30th Movement" and who were the main culprits behind the kidnapping and murder of the generals, the commander of the Indonesian KOSTRAD (Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat—Strategic Army Reserve Command) General Suharto (also spelled Soeharto) accused the PKI as the main perpetrator of the brutal military operation. Suharto did not seem to care about the fact that he personally knew all three top leaders of the September 30th Movement, namely Lieutenant Colonel Untung, Colonel Abdul Latief and Brigadier General Soepardjo. Just like Suharto, they were all officers in

the Indonesian Army. Suharto simply stated that the Indonesian Army had been "infiltrated" by the PKI and had been "tainted" with Communist ideas. Because of that he was determined to get rid of these Communist-influenced officers along with all the PKI members. Within a relatively short period of time General Suharto took control of the situation in Jakarta and started to hunt those he suspected of being involved in the September 30th Movement along with all the PKI leaders and the party's rank-and-file.

In order to increase the social and political tension in Indonesia following the murder of the Generals rumors were created and spread, with the intentions of generating popular hatred toward the PKI and provoking the people to "take revenge" against PKI members and supporters. The rumors said that it was the PKI who kidnapped and killed the generals. According the same rumors members of the PKI's women's organization called Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia/Indonesian Women Movement) erotically danced around the dead bodies of the generals while gouging their eyes and slicing their private parts, before dumping the bodies in the unused well. While blocking the publication of other newspapers the Army allowed its own newspaper to publish normally and used it as a means to spread the rumors. Some people believed in the rumors and were ready to attack PKI wherever they were.

American diplomats in Jakarta and foreign policy makers in Washington reacted positively as the events in Indonesia were unfolding. They viewed the events as a golden opportunity for a radical political change in Indonesia. They expected that what was happening in Indonesia would encourage anti-Communist groups to destroy the PKI once and for all, paving the way for American business in Indonesia. Such views and expectations are well-reflected in the internal diplomatic correspondence among American diplomats and policy makers themselves and in their communication with their counterparts in other Western countries.

(1) Views on the October 1, 1965 Events

As it was quoted in the beginning of this paper, on October 1, 1965 a telegram was sent from Jakarta to Washington which began with the sentence "A

power move which may have far-reaching implication is under way in Jakarta."[38] This was a situation report written by the CIA and was sent to U.S. President Johnson. For the American diplomats and policy makers, the "far reaching implication" that they hoped for from the October 1, 1965 events in Jakarta was certainly a radical change in the Indonesian politics which eventually would benefit the U.S. and its Cold War allies. Although it was not clear as who was the true mastermind(s) behind the military operation, the report stated that Sukarno must have a prior knowledge of the events. In other words, the report believed that Sukarno was involved. Moreover the report also accused Indonesia's First Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio and Communist top leaders of being part the plot.[39]

After reading the report Acting Secretary of State George Ball in Washington worried that the October 1, 1965 affair would threaten U.S. interests in Indonesia. In his conversation with Defense Minister McNamara, Ball said that what happened in Jakarta in the early hours of October 1, 1965 "has a very bad smell". He referred to the situation in the Indonesian capital as "not a healthy situation". In other words, Ball thought that from what happened on October 1 the PKI would come on top of the situation while the Indonesian Army (in which the U.S. had many collaborators) was in deep trouble. Ball and McNamara were even talking about the possibility of evacuating U.S. citizens in Indonesia.[40]

Just a few days later, however, the two top U.S. foreign policy makers realized that what happened was quite the opposite: PKI leaders were accused of being the main culprits behind the bloody events, and now they were in hiding. Meanwhile the Army was on top of the situation and played a central role in hunting down the leaders of the communist party. Learning about the situation American diplomats and foreign policy makers were pleased. They were also pleased because thanks to the bloody military operation now doors were open for the possibility of a deep political change in Indonesia. They were optimistic that Indonesia's top leadership would pass from Sukarno to new "figure or figures", even though it was not clear yet as who the "figure" or "figures" would be.[41] To accelerate the process of a power change from the hands of President Sukarno, Ambassador Green suggested that Washington

covertly sent signals to General Nasution (Indonesia's Minister of Defense) and General Suharto that Washington was always ready to assist whenever there was a need.[42]

In order to increase popular hatred toward the Communists Green recommended that the U.S. spread false news about the PKI. Green believed that the false would be useful in generating such public hatred. Said Green: "Spread the story of PKI's guilt, treachery and brutality" with a note "This priority effort is perhaps most needed immediate assistance we can give army if we can find a way to do it without identifying it as solely or largely US effort".[43] Along with Green, the British government also reacted positively to the events, despite the violent nature of the events. Expressing such a positive reaction Andrew Gilchrist stated: "I have never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change…" [44]

It was obvious that the operation of the September 30 Movement was a low-quality military operation that was not prepared well enough. From the way the movement implemented its operation there is an impression that there was no solid leadership, no clear command for supporters from outside Jakarta (although probably they were not many), and it was not clear as what was the ultimate goal of the movement. We saw that following the kidnapping and murders of the generals the movement announced the formation of the so-called "Revolutionary Council", but the criteria for the recruitment and the assignment for each of the council's members were not clear. As a result, the movement was easily detected by its opponents, including by General Suharto who held a leading position in crushing the movement. Interestingly enough just few hours *before* the operation was to take place, Suharto had been told about it by Colonel Abdul Latief, one of the top leaders of the September 30th Movement.[45] The movement was easily overpowered and soon it was exploited as a justification for massive military and civilian operations to wipe out the PKI throughout Indonesia. So easy it was to destroy the movement, Simpson said, "It was poorly planned and so clumsily executed that it seemed almost preordained to fail…"[46]

From a different angle, however, what the September 30 Movement did—along with its brutality and failure—was very beneficial for the U.S. with all its political and economic interests in Indonesia. If the September 30 Movement did not launch the failed "coup" perhaps the PKI would increasingly played a leading role in the Indonesian politics, while one of its agendas was taking over foreign companies, including U.S-owned companies. PKI could also gradually bring Indonesia under a heavy influence of Communist China, while encouraging the Indonesian government to keep opposing the British in Malaysia. In the December 8, 1965 telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta to the State Department in Washington it was clearly stated: "Pressure for removing foreigners from direct control [of] extractive raw material production had been building for years…" It further stated that: "If the September 30 movement had not been launched or had not been aborted, removal of foreign oil companies would have been certainty."[47]

(2) Views on the Mass Killings and Imprisonment

The rumors about the Communist women slicing the dead bodies of the Generals before the bodies were thrown into an old, unused well were not the end of story regarding the Indonesian political turmoil following the October 1, 1965 events. Roughly three weeks after the kidnapping and killings of the Generals in Jakarta, a wave of mass killings began to take place in other places in Indonesia. In the third week of October 1965 mass killings started to occur in Central Java, followed by similar mass killings in East Java in November. In December mass killings also took place in the island of Bali, just east of East Java.[48] Sporadic killings also happened in other parts of the country, such in North Sumatra and East Nusa Tenggara.[49] As a result by the end of 1965 and early 1966 at least half a million of Indonesians were killed while many more were tortured and imprisoned.

From the correspondence among U.S. foreign policy makers one can see how the U.S. government was very pleased that the Indonesian Army in collaboration with many civilian groups hunted down and killed anybody

who were suspected of being member of the PKI or being ideologically leftist. They were equally pleased that the Army was trying to remove President Sukarno and his supporters from Indonesian politics. On October 22, when mass killings started to take place in Central Java, these policy makers saw the event as an encouraging result of U.S. policy toward Indonesia up to that point. They viewed the series of violent events as "a striking vindication of U.S. policy towards that nation [Indonesia]". What they meant by "U.S. policy" was "keeping our hand in the game for the long-term stakes…"[50] At the same time these policy makers were also grateful to what the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta in responding to the current political situation in Indonesia. "Our Embassy is performing well", said the content McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant for National Security, to President Johnson.[51]

On October 27-28, 1965 the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta reported that mass killings were taking place in Central Java, causing a great loss of lives. Even though there were so many lives lost in the event, the report bore no sense of empathy for the victims. Moreover, although the embassy was unable to determine who were the perpetrators of the mass killings the report accused of the PKI as the killers.[52] In reality, however, it was exactly the opposite. PKI members were the ones who were being rounded up and killed, along with people who were not members of the PKI but were suspected of being leftist-leaning. Only on October 29 did the embassy correct itself by reporting that PKI members were not the perpetrators but the victims. It was also reported that mass killings took place in Aceh, North Sumatra, Central Java and Bali.

With regard to the number of those who were killed, the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta flatly stated "We frankly do not know whether the real figure is closer to 100,000 or 1,000,000." However, it soon added, "… but believe it [is] wiser to err on the side of the lower estimates, especially when questioned by the press."[53] From this kind of statement one can assume that for them the death of many Indonesians was just a matter of number. It appears that the most important thing for them was not truth, justice, or respect for human lives. For them the most important things were political and diplomatic interests. For these kinds of interest it did not really matter if they had to

lie to the public through the media. It seems that for them it was all right if 100,000 people were killed, as long as they were Indonesian and communist.

U.S. foreign policy makers knew that the mass killings were fully supported by the Indonesian Army, and according to the Director of the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs David Cuthell the Army was aware of the U.S. government's support. He said, "The Army knows that all three United States governments [Pentagon, CIA and the State Department] approve of its actions against the PKI, and that all three are disposed to help the Army in this effort."[54] It was this assurance of the U.S. government support that helped the Army felt confident in encouraging and facilitating the anti-Communist purge. Moreover, it was thanks to the encouragement and support of the Army that many Indonesian civilian groups were eager and felt justified in killing their fellow citizens, whom they thought were communists. Everywhere the motto "to kill or to be killed" could be heard, and it helped convinced many people that it was better for them to kill the communists rather than being killed by them. Meanwhile the spreading of the idea that the conflict with the communists was a "holy war" against atheists helped increase the willingness and courage of many in committing the mass murders.[55]

Cuthell then urged the U.S. government to promptly and openly support the Indonesian Army in its efforts to eradicate the PKI. He believed that in its "life and death" struggle against the PKI "the Army deserves our support."[56] Reacting to Cuthell's suggestion the White House Staff and the U.S. Department of Defense felt that "it is important to assure the Army of our full support of its efforts to crush the PKI..."[57] One of the supports that Washington wanted to give to the Army was sending them "tactical communication equipment."[58]

The CIA emphasized that no matter what the format of the support was, it was always important that the US lend a hand to the Indonesian Army. The CIA also reminded Washington that the support should be given secretly. Public knowledge of any American support to the Army would not only embarrass them, but could also undermine their efforts in crushing the PKI. At any rate the CIA was pleased that in the midst of uncertain political

situation the Indonesian Army was taking forceful actions to attack the PKI; to destroy its existence as a political party; and to prevent the future emergence of a political party similar to the PKI. The CIA then repeated to the foreign policy makers that they should seriously consider support for the Indonesian Army, because otherwise the U.S. would miss "a unique opportunity to ensure a better future for U.S. interests in Indonesia." [59] In addition, the intelligence agency asked the support for the creation of "black radio" broadcast to Indonesia with the sole purpose of discrediting the PKI in the eyes of the Indonesian people. For this the CIA had begun recruiting Indonesians to host the program.[60]

On November 22, 1965 American intelligence officers reported on how people who were accused of being members of the PKI were treated. They said: "Party members and sympathizers are being rounded up and interned by the military; others are being purged from local government positions; and in Central Java PKI adherents are reported to be shot on sight by the army." Again there was no expression of regret or empathy for the victims, even though they were executed summarily, without any legal process. Instead they praised the Army for being so ruthless in carrying out the executions.

In early December 1965 Ambassador Green reported that through Adam Malik the U.S. had given him 50 million Rupiah to support "KAP-Gestapu" in its operations to exterminate the PKI. KAP-Gestapu (Komite Aksi Pengganyangan Gerakan 30 September or Committee for Exterminating the September 30 Movement) is an Army-supported civilian group which was assigned to arrest and kill people who were accused of being communist. It was reported by Green that: "The KAP-Gestapu activities to date have been important factor in the army's program, and judging from results, I would say highly successful." He then continued," This army-inspired but civilian-staffed action group is still carrying burden of current repressive efforts targeted against PKI, particularly in Central Java."[61] Green assured policy makers in Washington that they should not be worried about the support being known by the public. The chances for any public revelation, according to Green, were "as minimal as any black bag operation can be…"[62]

In a further development it appeared that the U.S. (as represented by the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta) did not only want to support the anti-communist purge indirectly, but also directly. One of the actions it took was providing thousands of names of suspected Communists to the Indonesian Army. The Army then used the names to track down the Communists and killed them. Robert J. Martens, a political officer at the Embassy acknowledged giving the names and said: "It is true that I passed names of the PKI leaders and senior cadre system to non-Communist forces during the six months of chaos between the so-called coup and the ultimate downfall of Sukarno."[63] With regard to the number of names he gave to the non-Communist forces he simply said "a few thousand at most", although certainly he knew the exact number because he was the one who provided the names. In order not to implicate other diplomats (especially Ambassador Green) and foreign policy makers he stated that it was his own idea and he did it alone.[64] Clearly it is difficult to imagine that Martens prepared thousands of names of Indonesian just by himself, and it is equally difficult that he would do such a grave matter without the blessings or at least the knowledge of his diplomatic superiors. No less difficult is to understand what right did he have to hand over names of citizens of another country in order to be killed without proper legal procedures.

U.S. foreign policy makers were aware that the 1965 mass violence was not only directed toward those who were accused of being Communists. They knew that it was also directed toward Chinese-Indonesians, who certainly did not have any connection with the September 30 Movement or with the PKI itself. But these foreign policy makers provided no comment or expression of regrets to this act of violence. They only saw it as part of the Army's efforts to find justification to cut diplomatic relations with China. Understandably the U.S. government supported the Army's intention to cut diplomatic relations with China, since even long before the 1965 Tragedy took place the U.S. had already considered Communist China as the greatest threat to its interests in East and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia.[65]

(3) Hopes Out of the 1965 Tragedy

Out of the October 1, 1965 events and the mass killings that took place in many parts of Indonesia, American foreign policy makers expressed their hopes on Indonesia. On October 22, 1965, at the beginning of mass killings in Central Java, an intelligence report said that with no mercy the Indonesian Army slaughtered fellow Indonesians who were suspected of being Communists without any consideration whether or not they had anything to do with the September 30 Movement. The report said: "In practice it [the Indonesian Army] has made no distinction between those elements directly involved in the 1 October insurrection and other 'safer' party members when making arrest and purging local government machinery".[66] With such brutality, they hoped, the PKI would have no chance in any way to re-emerge.

Continuing the report, through telegram number 1166 dated October 23, 1965, the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta expressed its hope that in its conflict with the PKI and President Sukarno, the Indonesian Army would prevail and would be able to take over the government. Moreover the Embassy hoped that the taking over of the government by the Army would bring a change for the "better", in which the anti-Western attitudes would be gone and U.S. interests in Indonesia would be protected. Based on these hopes the Embassy urged Washington no to hesitate in supporting the Army. The report said:

> The [US] Embassy [in Jakarta] suggested that the outcome of the power struggle between Sukarno and the Army had the potential for a significant shift in Indonesia's foreign policy. Complete victory by the Army might well make expansionism and concomitant anti-Westernism outmoded. Even a partial victory would produce a change for the better. The central question was how to help the Army to win, but without revealing that assistance and thereby becoming a handicap rather than an asset.[67]

Responding to report foreign policy makers in Washington immediately declared its support for the Embassy's suggestion. They were pleased that the military and civilian operations to crush the PKI went "fairly swiftly, and smoothly." At the same time they were very quite impation to see the departure of Sukarno and the birth of a new government in Indonesia. They said:

> [It] appears from here that Indonesian military leaders' campaign to destroy PKI is moving fairly swiftly, and smoothly... and that Sukarno might be travelling abroad before long giving military even freer hand to develop and install new government. May well be that there developments will move so rapidly that we may be confronted within weeks with situation we have hoped from, i.e. a new government, emerging or in being, that we can begin to talk to and deal with.[68]

They hoped that indeed soon there would be a new government under the Indonesian Army, a government that the U.S. "could deal with"—meaning a government that would be willing to accommodate U.S. interests in Indonesia. A few days later, on December 22, 1965—when the mass killings in Java and Bali began to slow down—Ambassador Green sent some "good news" to Washington. It was reported that now Indonesia's political orientation had started to turn to the "right" and that the PKI was no longer a significant threat. Green also said that the Jakarta-Peking (Beijing) was in a bad shape, while Sukarno was increasingly losing his political clout. In the meantime the Army was politically on the rise. Green hoped that this kind of development would continue down to the local level.[69]

More pleasing for Green was the fact that thanks to the mass killings of the people who were accused of being Communists Indonesia was now undergoing what he called "basic political revolution", which included: the worsening President Sukarno's public image; the increasing political position of the Army; and the changing of Indonesia's foreign policy from being leftist-oriented to be more Western-oriented. Most important of all, he said, was the fact that the "Indos [Indonesians] are starting to do normal business with us again".[70]

The belief that Sukarno would no longer be the center of the political power in Indonesia particularly delighted Green. He believed that now the political center had shifted further and further from Sukarno and his supporters to the Army and its civilian collaborators. He further believed that the new government which was going to replace the Sukarno government would be a government "with which we [the U.S.] can deal realistically on matters of common concern."[71] Green concluded that what had happened

on October 1, 1965 and its aftermath really facilitated the emergence of a new government which would be in line with Washington and would be supportive to the interests of the United States in Indonesia. He hoped that the new year of 1966 would usher the birth a "new order" in Indonesia which would be "infinitely more healthy [sic.] and more promising than what we had before Oct 1."[72] It is interesting to note here that the new government which later emerged and replaced the Sukarno government indeed called itself the "New Order" government (*Pemerintah Orde Baru*).

Continuing this hope, on December 30, 1965 the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed to the Secretary of Defense their expectation that in 1966 President Sukarno would be definitely pushed from power by the Army. They also hoped that the fall of Sukarno would benefit the U.S., including the need for U.S. security in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia region. The Joint Chiefs of Staff then stated that "The US interests would be best served if the government which follows President Sukarno's removal were to be pro-Western."[73] Reacting gladly to the political development in Indonesia the CIA reported that Indonesia was in "a major turning point in its history" while adding that "the era of Sukarno's dominance has ended."[74]

In mid-February 1966 Ambassador Green went to Washington. He wanted to report directly to Washington the foreign policy makers what had been happening in Indonesia since October 1965, and suggesting the steps that the U.S. should take to exploit the political changes that had been taking place in the country. On February 14, 1966 he was delighted to personally meet Secretary of Defense McNamara to convey his reports. He said that what was happening in Indonesia since the failed "coup" of October 1, 1965 greatly benefited the U.S. He gladly reported that the PKI had been destroyed, the Asian-African solidarity was in disarray and that the Jakarta-Beijing axis was no longer effective, while Sukarno's image in the eyes of his people was eroding.[75] Green added that the Communists "have been decimated by wholesale massacre" which was done by "the Army, as well as Moslem political groups".[76]

Similar report was given by Green to President Johnson when he met the President in the White House the next day, February 14, 1966. He told

Johnson that "the abortive coup last October 1 has resulted in a crushing of the Communist Party; .... a blow to Sukarno's pretentions as leader of the 'new emerging forces' against the Western world; and a certain loss of prestige and standing for Sukarno among his own people..."[77] As part of the report he predicted (and hoped) that Indonesia would soon enter a period of transition of power from President Sukarno to his successor, even though it was not clear as yet who the successor would be.[78]

Barely a month after Green met Secretary McNamara and President Johnson, a very decisive political event occurred in Indonesia. On March 11, 1966 General Suharto sent three of his closest military subordinates to force President Sukarno to sign a letter which would give Suharto a power "to restore order". Initially Sukarno hesitated to sign the letter, but later he gave in and signed it. The letter was officially called "*Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret*" (The March 11, 1966 Letter of Command), but in Indonesia it has been popularly known by its acronym, "*Supersemar*". Just like what Green had predicted and hoped for, Suharto manipulated the letter and used it not only to restore order but also to gradually take over power from President Sukarno.

Understandably Green welcomed the "Supersemar" affair. In his report to the foreign policy makers in Washington he called the signing of the letter Indonesia's "peculiar form of military coup". He reported to Washington: "At long last Sukarno has pushed his luck too far, and his plans to dump top army leadership and bring known-Communist in as Army Minister have triggered army action to curb his power. Way coup handled preserves Sukarno as unifying force and establishes Army's legitimacy. Army believes both of these are essential."[79] In Washington Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs Robert Komer conveyed this latest "good news" from Green to President Johnson. Komer assured the President that Indonesia would no longer become a communist state, and would no longer become a threat to the interests of the United States and other Western countries in Southeast Asia. He reminded the President that "Indonesia has more people—and probably more resources—than all of mainland Southeast Asia", and therefore the U.S. should explicitly support Indonesia's de facto government, namely

the Indonesian Army. Komer further conveyed to the President that what the Indonesian Army has done in destroying the PKI was a "success" which should be consolidated and followed through skillfully. For this he suggested that the U.S. should send "a few thousand tons of surplus wheat or rice" to the new Indonesian government.[80]

The suggestion was promptly granted. U.S. government agreed to sell 50.000 tons of rice to Indonesia. The sending of the rice, as it turned out, marked a "turning point" in U.S. attitudes toward Indonesia from being suspicious and antagonistic into being confident and cordial. While viewing Indonesia under Sukarno as a communistic state which threatened the interests of the U.S. and its allies, the U.S. viewed Indonesia under Suharto as a pro-Western nation which would guarantee U.S. interests and the interests of other Western nations. Washington expected that the new Indonesian government under the Army would continuously accommodate and support U.S. economic and political interests in Indonesia itself as well as in the region.

And there it was. Marked by the sending of the rice, relations between the U.S. and Indonesia continued to improve, both economically and politically. The new Indonesian government under General Suharto was always ready to accommodate the interests of the United States and its cold war allies. Meanwhile, U.S. foreign policy makers were pleased because many things in Indonesia were happening in accordance with their plans. The failed "coup d'état" did happen. The "clash" between the Indonesian Army and the PKI occurred, and indeed it was followed by operations to annihilate not only the PKI, but also of any leftist element in Indonesia. More importantly President Sukarno was pushed from power and was replaced by a military government that was not only anti-Communist but also was willing to support U.S. interests in Indonesia and beyond. They were all satisfied.

The Views of the 1965 Tragedy's Victims

The satisfaction that American diplomats and foreign policy makers enjoyed following Indonesia's 1965-1966 political upheavals, however, was different from how millions of Indonesians felt about the events, especially those who became victims of the upheavals. Without fully understanding

what was going on in the national and international levels, they viewed and experienced the upheavals as a personal tragedy which forever ruined their lives and the lives of their families. As we will see, they were arrested, tortured, and imprisoned without knowing what their guilt was and without legal due process. In addition to those who survived the upheavals, at least half a million of others were killed.

(1) Views on the October 1, 1965 Events

One of those who survived the upheavals was Samsul Ahmad (not his real name). He was a former freedom fighter during the Indonesian war of independence, and in 1965 he was the Secretary General of the BTI (Barisan Tani Indonesia), the Indonesian farmer's front associated with the PKI. When the events of October 1, 1965 occurred he did not know what was actually going on. "I heard about the events of October 1, 1965 through the RRI [Radio Republik Indonesia, the official radio of the Indonesian government]," he said. It was also from the radio that he heard about the formation of the "Revolutionary Council" along with the list of names of the council's members. Some names he recognized, but others he did not. He was surprised that his name was not on the list. In Ahmad's mind, if the Revolutionary Council was really prepared, his name would be included, because he believed he held a quite important and strategic position in the PKI, namely as the General Secretary of the BTI. In addition, he was also member of the MPRS (Indonesia's Temporary People's Council Assembly) and there he held a position as one of the Council's top leaders. For Ahmad, this is suspicious. "At least there is a political process that didn't connect with the previous process," Ahmad continued. That is why he was doubtful about the so-called "coup attempt" in October 1, 1965 by the September 30th Movement. He then thought, perhaps the so-called "coup" was just created by certain people in order to pursue some certain hidden goals.

In Ahmad's views, in general the events of October 1, 1965 were very vague, very hard to comprehend. "So, how should I say it?" he asked. He provided his own answer:

> We were dragged to the matter without having enough understanding of what was going on. What the real problem was, we didn't know. Why did suddenly these things happen? We ourselves [PKI members] did not know. What the background of the events was, we didn't know. If I were asked about this, I would not have any answer. Even if you ask the top leaders of the party, they would not know either. They were all scattered to different directions. [81]

Ahmad said that after the October 1, 1965 events the PKI's leadership was in disarray. There was no unity among the PKI leadership in responding to the events. Shortly after the kidnapping and murders of the Generals, PKI leaders went to different directions without any coordination. Ahmad found it particularly curious that during that time outside Jakarta nothing significant happened. To him it means that most of the members of the PKI outside Jakarta did not know what was actually going on in the capital city and had no plans to cause a rebellion or anything like that. Again, for Ahmad the notion of PKI launching a "coup" is really doubtful. [82]

According to Ahmad, before October 1, 1965 events Lieut. Col. Untung was not widely known. His political position was not clear. Even though Untung was said to be the leader of the September 30th Movement, which later was associated with the PKI, the connection between Untung and the PKI was never clear. [83] Said Ahmad, "Suddenly there was this new figure called Lieut. Col. Untung. Who was Untung? I had never heard of his name before. I went to the Presidential Palace quite often, since I was member of the MPRS, but I rarely came across a person by the name of Untung." [84]

If what Ahmad said is true—that as a PKI insider he did not know much about PKI's involvement in the October 1, 1965 events—then perhaps it was also true what the American policy makers had discussed with each other with regard to the idea of provoking the PKI to launch a premature or failed "coup". As we recall, for many months before October 1, 1965 they were talking about provoking the communist party to launch a poorly-prepared coup so that the Indonesian Army would have justification to crush the communist party.

Just like Samsul Ahmad, Yanti (she is only known by one name) was also a victim of Indonesia's 1965 Tragedy. As we have mentioned above, on October 1, 1965, after being kidnapped in Jakarta, the generals were brought to a certain location near the Indonesian Air Force headquarters at Halim Perdanakusuma, and after being killed the their bodies were dumped into an old well in the village of Lubang Buaya. When these events took place Yanti was in the Lubang Buaya area. She was there along with other women to receive paramilitary training as volunteers against the formation of the Federation of Malaysia which was sponsored by the British.

One day, very early in the morning in October 1965, as she recalled, Yanti and her fellow volunteers were captured by a group soldiers under the accusation that they were involved in the killings of the General. They were then forced to line up at the sports field where the volunteers usually had their paramilitary training. There Yanti and all the other women were forced to completely take off their clothes. While being naked they were yelled at and were told by the soldiers that they had been used by the PKI to kill the generals. The soldiers then accused them of slicing the dead bodies of the generals, especially the generals' genitals, and gouging out their eyes. For the next few days they were tortured, sexually harassed and raped. Yanti herself was raped several times in several locations. She was only 14.

On one occasion Yanti was brought in to a room where she was going to be "interviewed". In the room there were soldiers and a number of other people with cameras, acting like journalists. Yanti was then forced to say "yes" every time they asked her a question, including when they asked her whether she was participating in torturing and killing the generals or not. Yanti's "acknowledgement" was then published in the media, and because of that her family became target of people's disgust and revenge. The family then had to move from one place to the other, until one day it was too much for Yanti's father and he passed away.[85]

Yanti's story demonstrates that Ambassador Green's October 5, 1965 suggestion to "spread the story of PKI's guilt, treachery and brutality" was seriously implemented and it was implemented effectively. Moreover, Yanti's story demonstrates an example of how civilians became random targets of

such campaign. Without any formal indictment Yanti and her colleagues were tortured, humiliated and sexually abused in order to "prove" that the PKI was guilty and deserved to be treated brutally. Whether the 14-year-old girl had anything to do with the PKI, let alone with the murders of the generals, it did not quite matter to the soldiers. Furthermore , the brutality against Yanti and others reflects the November 22, 1965 "Intelligence Memorandum" which stated that the Indonesian Army randomly captured and killed anybody who was suspected of being communist, whether the person actually had anything to do with the September 30th Movement or not.[86] The goal was to create a mass hysteria directed to crush any leftist element in the country.

Trikoranto (a pseudonym), another victim of Indonesia's 1965-66 mass violence, has a different but familiar story. Just like Samsul Ahmad, he was also a freedom fighter during the Indonesian war of independence between 1945 and 1949. He was born in Kutoarjo, Central Java, in 1926, but that same year his parents were exiled by the Dutch colonial government to Boven Digul, West Papua. In 1940 he returned to Java with his mother. During the war of independence he fought against the Dutch and the British in West Kalimantan. After the war ended he was active in politics and joined the PKI. By President Sukarno and the Indonesian Minister of Education Prijono he was sent to study for a Master's degree at Waseda University, Japan. He completed the study in 1965. In 1970 he was captured and was arrested by Army soldiers under the order of General Suharto. Trikoranto said: "In 1970 I was captured and was forced to confess that I was a Digul boy. Then I was tortured until I became impotent." He continued: "By Suharto I was sent to Buru Island and was tortured. I was released after I almost died of yellow fever, malaria and tuberculosis."[87]

(2) Views on the Mass Killings and Imprisonment

Back to Samsul Ahmad. When rumors began to spread about the PKI being the *dalang* (mastermind) of the October 1, 1965 events, Ahmad went into hiding in order to avoid arrest. He moved from one place to another. He realized that even though during the war of independence he had risked his

life in fighting against Indonesia's enemies, now his status was a fugitive. He was being hunted by the soldiers of his own country. Meanwhile, learning that Ahmad became a fugitive, his mother-in-law was shocked. She had a heart attack and shortly afterwards she died. Samsul Ahmad was heart-broken. Around the end of December 1965 while hiding in Bandung he was captured and detained.[88]

Following his capture Ahmad was brought to a military headquarters and was interrogated and tortured. So unbearable were the pains from the tortures that every time after being interrogated he was unable to walk and had to be carried in a stretcher. As a political prisoner he was moved from one prison to another. From Bandung he was moved to Nusakambangan Island, which was located south of Central Java. From there he was exiled to Buru Island in the Moluccas.[89] In total he was imprison for 15 years. He was never told was his guilt, and he was never brought to court of justice or tried according to the law.[90]

As it had been expected by American foreign policy makers, the operations to destroy the PKI occurred in many places and were directed at hundreds of thousands of people regardless whether they had anything to do with the September 30th Movement or not. One of them was a young man from Yogyakarta who goes by his nickname "Al Capone". He was captured in his home, located in a small neighborhood in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. After being captured he was brought to a local Army headquarters. There he was interrogated and was beaten up until his body was full of bruises. What was his guilt, his interrogators did not tell him. [91] Shortly afterwards he was sent to the Wirogunan prison, still in Yogyakarta. During his imprisonment his family was allowed to pay a visit, but under the condition that they had to give a certain amount of rice *(beras)* or money to the prison officials. [92] He was 19.

In July 1969 Capone was moved to Nusakambangan Island, far away from his home. "Any hope for me to be near my family was now gone," said Capone. Even worse, in mid-September 1969 he was transferred to Buru Island, joining thousands of other political prisoners. At times as a political prisoner he felt like a trash that was dumped in an abandoned place. Uttered Al Capone: "We were moved from one place to another, as if we were smelly,

disgusting trash. We were kicked around and thrown away. [The purpose is] to make us continuously miserable and fearful." [93] Capone said that during their exile in Buru Island the political prisoners were ordered to carry out forced labor and were being watched day and night. If the prison officials considered a prisoner did not follow the rule they would not hesitate to beat him up or simply to execute him. As Al Capone still can recall, among those who were executed were Suwarno from Prambanan, Yogyakarta, who was executed on November 3, 1972; Gatot Widodo, who was executed on November 16, 1973 while looking for firewood; and four of Gatot's colleagues who were executed the next day, November 17, 1973. [94]

According to Capone, there was also a political prisoner who was shot by a prison official but survived. His name was Djuhendi, and he was originally from West Java. When he was shot, the bullet hit the left part of his chest, but somehow he survived. The bullet went through Djuhendi's body, hit the left arm of Sukadi from Yogyakarta, and stopped there. The bullet remained in Sukadi's arm until he died in 2001. [95] Capone still remembers, in Buru Island some prisoners chose to commit suicide. From them the sufferings were too. In March 1972, for instance, Drs. Mustadji Sangit from East Java committed suicide by hanging. There was also Mukidi who committed suicide by drinking pesticide.

In Yogyakarta the operations to crush the PKI hit another victim by the name Mujilah (not her real name). In 1965 she lived in the Prambanan area, just east of Yogyakarta. One afternoon, while tending one of a younger sibling, a group of men came to her and asked if her name was Mujilah. Once she said yes, these men then loaded her onto a military truck and took her to the village head's office. From there she was sent to Wirogunan Prison in Yogyakarta. This was a case of mistaken identity. The name of the person that these men wanted to arrest was indeed Mujilah, but the Mujilah that they were ordered to arrest—she was a school teacher—was not home. Because of that they mistakenly took the other Mujilah, even though this Mujilah was only 14 years old at the time. Nevertheless this "wrong" Mujilah was imprisoned for 14 years without any legal or court procedures. From Yogyakarta she was moved to a women's prison of Plantungan, located in the northern part

of Central Java. In October 1960 she was released, but without any apology whatsoever from the government. [96]

Rahardjo, another 1965 Tragedy survivor from Yogyakarta, went through a similar experience. In November 1965 he received an invitation from the office of the village head, telling him that he was going to be given a certain letter from a local military headquarters. But once he was at the office he was seized and thrown into a military truck. He was then sent to Yogyakarta prison and spent some time there, before being moved to another prison in Ambarawa, Central Java. From Ambarawa he was transferred to Nusakambangan Island, and was later exiled to Buru Island. During his imprisonment and exile he was never told what his guilt was, and there was no court procedure for his case. He was only relieved in 1979. There was similarly no apology in any form from the Indonesian government. [97]

Sutini was never a political prisoner. Yet, because of the anti-communist purge in 1965-66 she suffered greatly up to the present. Her story began in August 1966 when his father was summoned to the office of the village head *(lurah)* to play the traditional Javanese *gamelan* orchestra to celebrate Indonesia's Independence Day. Sutini's father declined the invitation because he had a previous engagement. But because of that he was threatened that if he continued to decline he would be accused of being a communist. Sutini's father was persistent and did not go to the village head's office. Two weeks later he was captured and detained. He was sent to the Wirogunan prison in Yogyakarta and he stayed there for four years. After that he was transferred to Nusakambangan Island and spent another nine years there. In total he was imprisoned for 13 years. During his father's imprisonment Sutini's family suffered greatly. They were mocked by others as being members of the PKI and because of that they were avoided by neighbors and relatives. "Since my father was put into prison, my family suffered a lot," Sutini said. "My mother was still caring for a baby who was only 6-month old and couldn't work. All of our belongings were sold in order to be able to buy foods for us and for my father in prison," she continued. [98] Even though Sutini was still very young at that time she had to work every day to support her family. Sutini's sufferings became worse when later she was matched and had to marry a

man she had never known. The man was a former political prisoner who had been exiled in Buru Island. Because of that she was now a daughter of a "communist" and a wife of another "communist". To make things worse, the stigma of being communist continued to be given to her two sons buy her neighbors. [99]

Just like what Donald Ropa of the U.S. National Security Council Staff had said in the memorandum that was sent to President Johnson's Special Assistant Walt Rostow on April 18, 1966, among those that became the targets of the Army's anti-Communist operations were Chinese Indonesians. [100] Many Indonesians with Chinese background were captured, tortured, imprisoned or killed without any clear reasons. One of them was Budi Kho (not his real name), a Chinese-Indonesian from Magelang, Central Java. Initially, when there were operations against suspected communists in 1965-66 nothing happened to him. He moved from Central Java to Jakarta, and worked there as a journalist. But one afternoon in 1969, as he had just returned from work, Kho was captured by the police. Then he was sent to Salemba Prison in Central Jakarta. "Violence happened incessantly during my incarceration," he said. In 1971 he was moved from Jakarta to Buru Island. During his time in Buru he suffered a lot, physically and psychologically. Along with other political prisoners he was ordered to do forced labor, until he was released in 1979. Said Kho:"I was confused. One day, I was suddenly captured and arrested without any court procedures. Also one day, I was suddenly released." [101] He received no explanation, no apologies.

As we have discussed, in an intelligence memorandum dated November 22, 1965 it was said that many victims of the Indonesian Army's anti-Communist operations were captured and summarily executed. [102] This was exactly what Yong Witono (not his real name), a Chinese-Indonesian eyewitness from Karanganyar, Central Java, saw. He said:

> Around early December [1965] I was on my way home from a local hospital in Solo to Karanganyar. When I was passing near Bengawan Solo River, I saw a gathering of many people who were tied up with ropes. There were soldiers among them, and judging from their uniform I think they were from the KOSTRAD. Then the tied-up people were lined

> up along the bank of the river. I thought to myself, What is going on? Following a little conversation between the soldiers and the detainees, I saw the soldiers began to shoot the people who were lined up along the river. Their dead bodies went straight to the river…[103]

Yong Witono himself was never arrested, but his father was among those Chinese-Indonesians who were captured and imprisoned during the 1965 Indonesian upheavals. Because of that his family suffered very much.

(3) Hopes Out of the 1965 Tragedy

Different kinds of hope emerged out of the political upheavals that happened in Indonesia in 1965-66. As we have seen, the American diplomats and foreign policy makers hoped that the political upheavals would provide enough justification for the Indonesian Army to destroy communism and to reorient Indonesia's economy and politics toward the West. These kinds of hope, however, are different from (not to say in contrast with) the hopes of the Indonesians who became victims of the efforts to destroy communism and to reorient Indonesia's economy and politics.

Most of the victims and survivors of the 1965 Tragedy, interestingly, urge one another not to harbor any hatred toward anybody. They want that the bitter experience of the past became a valuable lesson for Indonesia as a nation, without any desire to take revenge or anything that might hurt other people. Samsul Ahmad, for instance, wanted to say to his fellow Indonesians: "What has happened is not my personal problem. It's a problem of all of us as a nation… The bad things that happened yesterday, let's leave them alone. What is important … now is that the truth should be told."[104]

For Yong Witono, another victim, the 1965 Tragedy really made him sad and painful. However, he suggests that people should let go the past experience and that they should not keep any desire for revenge. He said: "Let bygone be bygone, and now let's try to be better than the past. What happened [in 1965] was indeed very bad for us, but let us not make it a source of revenge for the powers that be or for those who hate us."[105] As if he knew what the foreign policy makers and the Indonesian collaborators were

doing, Witono believes that what happened then was a game of politics by those who were in the centers of power. His family and other families were just victims of these politically powerful people. He said: "We are merely… victims of high level politics of the time." [106]

Meanwhile Yanti, who was one of the victims of the Army soldiers' brutality near the Indonesian Air Force Headquarters at Halim Perdanakusuma, only has one simple hope. She hopes that before she dies she can to meet the families of the Generals who were kidnapped and murdered. To them Yanti wants to say that she was not the torturer and murderer of the Generals. Said Yanti: "I only have one wish before I die. And that is to meet the family of the Generals." But she said she will not tell them about the 1965 events, "because those events are beyond my knowledge and comprehension." Instead, she continues, "I only want to tell them that I am not one of those who killed the Generals, let alone one of those who tortured them." She concludes her hope by saying: "If before I die I can meet them, I will be very happy and very pleased. That's all I want." [107] Looking at their views now we can see how different are the hopes of the victims of Indonesia's 1965-66 political upheavals and the hopes of those who initiated, designed and supported the upheavals.

Beyond Imagination

By looking at the 1965 Tragedy from the perspective of the foreign policy makers as well as from the tragedy's victims hopefully we can have a more comprehensive picture of that human tragedy which was full of tears and bloodshed. From the perspective of the U.S. diplomats and foreign policy makers (and their counterparts from other Western countries) apparently the 1965 Tragedy was a matter finding the best ways to crush the PKI and President Sukarno, and the best ways to initiate the birth of a new government in Indonesia which would be anti-Communist, Western-oriented, and willing to serve the interests of Western countries in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia.

From the perspective of the tragedy's victims, however, the 1965 Tragedy was a miserable personal tragedy, and at the same time a national tragedy which was very confusing, heart-wrenching and deadly. It was confusing

because many of those who became victims did not really comprehend what was going on around them in their *kampungs* of villages, let alone in Jakarta or Washington. For them everything moved so suddenly and quickly. Suddenly they were captured and imprisoned without any legal process as expected from a country which is based on the supremacy of law. It was heart-wrenching, because suddenly they were also accused of many things that they did not commit or understand. More often than not, before they were able to explain themselves they were already tortured and beaten up. It was also deadly, because within a short period of time what happened in the few months between the end of 1965 and early 1966 claimed the lives of at least half a million Indonesian citizens.

By looking at the events of 1965-66 from two different angles we are able to see not only how policies were considered and formulated by the policy makers, but also how those policies were implemented—with all the damage they have caused in the real lives of the real people. From the documents that we studied, we can see that U.S. foreign policy makers supported operations of the Army and other anti-Communist groups to eliminate the communists and supporters of President Sukarno. Before October 1, 1965 the support was given through covert operations to provoke the clash between the PKI and the Indonesian Army. After that date the support was given in the forms of distributing certain information and disinformation (including through "black radio" programs) with the intention of generating public sense of hatred toward the PKI and the submission of death lists containing names of PKI members to be killed.

As we have seen, on October 1, 1965 the "clash" which had been designed and expected by the foreign policy makers did take place. As we have also seen in the midst of uncertainties surrounding the October 1 events, one-sidedly some people from the Indonesian Army stated that the events were masterminded by the PKI. Based on this one-sided accusation then a series of military and civilian operations was launched to destroy the PKI in very brutal, extra-judicial and inhuman ways.

From what happened in 1965-66 we can see that the "price" that the Indonesians had to pay for the emergence of a Western-oriented government

was very high. Other than the Generals who died violently on October 1, 1965, hundreds of thousands of other Indonesians had also died violently, while many more greatly suffered for the rest of their lives. We saw that other than being caused by Indonesian local actors who wanted to grab power, all these events were also designed and provoked by foreign governments, including the government of the United States.

It should be noted, however, that in the United States itself not all of the country's citizens agreed to what their government did to Indonesia. This was reflected in a letter to the editor published in the *New York Times*. The letter said: "If our struggle is only against Communists, and not against all those for whom torture, slavery, massacre and war are permissible methods of politics, if we welcome this slaughter or remain silent, do we deserve to survive?"[108] Indeed, the American foreign policy makers did welcome the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians and decided to remain silent about it, but that does not mean that all of the American people supported the policy makers' actions.

Based on the above observations this section intends to encourage any effort to write about the 1965 Tragedy that includes as much as possible perspectives—not just the perspective of those who benefitted from the tragedy, but also the perspectives of those who were the victims of it. In other words this section wants to support the type of Indonesian history writing which does not only reproduce the official accounts of the events, but also the accounts that come from the people, both the victims and the perpetrators.

No matter what the events were, if in a period of a few months and not in a state of war hundreds of thousands of people were captured, incarcerated, tortured and killed by their fellow citizens without any clear legal justification and procedures, those must be extremely appalling events that (should) disturb the conscience of every regular person. And that was exactly what happened in Indonesia in 1965. In that year and in the following years people were captured, incarcerated, tortured and killed at will, without any legal process and outside the boundaries of humanity. Seen merely from the perspectives of political, economic and regional security interests certainly those sufferings and deaths do not mean much. But from the perspectives of

humanity the sufferings and deaths are a human tragedy beyond imagination. That is why events like that should never happen again.

Universal

Every human life is very precious. Human values are universal, and each one of us is part of it. Suffering of one person is suffering of all humanity; a violent death of one person is a violent death of all humanity. That is why we should not ignore the sufferings and deaths caused by other people simply because we benefit from those sufferings and deaths.

It is now about time that a formulation of social, economic, and political interests in the national and international levels considers the values that are inherent in the life of each human being. Why? Because human values are universal, and each one of us is part of it.

Endnotes

1 Originally written for the conference "New Perspectives on the 1965/66 Tragedy", Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, February 11-13, 2013. Slight editorial modifications have been made.

2 "Memorandum for President Johnson" (October 1, 1965) in *FRUS, 1964-1968*, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 300.

3 "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Acting Secretary of State Ball and Secretary of Defense McNamara", October 1, 1965, in *FRUS, 1964-1968*, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 301.

4 "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Acting Secretary of State Ball and Secretary of Defense McNamara", October 1, 1965, in *FRUS, 1964-1968*, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 302; "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the Under Secretary of State (Ball) and Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Helms)", October 7, 1965, in *FRUS, 1964-1968*, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 316.

5 "Memorandum from the Director of the Far East Region (Blouin) to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (McNaughton)", October 4, 1965, in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 306.

6 Like other Indonesians mentioned in this paper, Sukarno only had one name.

7 Howard Jones Presentation at 1965 Chief of Mission Conference, "American-Indonesian Relations," Jones Papers, Box 22, HI. Simpson, 157.

8 "Memorandum Prepared for the 303 Committee", February 23, 1965, in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 235-237.

9 Memo from Ambassador Gilchrist to Mr. Peck in the Foreign Office, May 20, 1965, FO 817/80313, UKNA. Simpson, 161.

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11 Bunker Report, Part I, General Conclusions, April 23, 1965, NSF, Indonesia, v. 4, LBJ Library; John Subritzky, Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation, 1961-5 (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc, 2000), 143; Editorial, "Bung Karno and the United States", Indonesian Herald, April 2, 1964. Simpson, 156.

12 Memo from M.J.C. Templeton to Edward Peck, December 19, 1964, Foreign Office General Correspondence Files, FO 371-15251, DH 1015/112, UKNA. Simpson, 144.

13 Peck, 27 November 1964, brief, PRO, FO 371/175250, DH 1015/99. Subritzky, Confronting Sukarno, 126.

14 Bradley R. Simpson, Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2008), 303.

15 Letter from Neville Maxwell, Senior Research Officer, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, to New York Review of Books, June 5, 1978. Simpson, 304.

16 Simpson, 156.

17 Simpson, 157.

18 Airgram from Jakarta to State, May 8, 1964, RG 59, Central Files, 1964-1966, POL 12, Indonesia, NA. Simpson, 162.

19 Airgram from Jakarta to State, May 8, 1964, RG 59, Central Files, 1964-1966, POL 12, Indonesia, NA. Simpson, 162.

20 "Telegram 1358 from Jakarta to State, January 14, 1965, NSF, CO Files, Indonesia, v. 3, LBJ Library. Simpson, 145.

21 CIA, Special Memo, Office of National Estimates, January 14, 1965; Telegram 1358 from Jakarta to State, January 14, 1965, both in NSF, NIES 55, Box 7, LBJ Library. Simpson, 146.

22 Telegram 1358 from Jakarta to State, January 14, 1965, NSF, CO Files, Indonesia, v. 3, LBJ Library. Simpson, 146.

23 Telegram 285 from Foreign Office to Jakarta, February 11, 1965, FO 371-181490, UKNA; Simpson, 154. Subritzky, Confronting Sukarno, 144.

24 Easter, "British and Malaysian Covert Support," 205. Simpson, 163.

25 George McT. Kahin, "Menuju Masyarakat Egalitarian" in Baskara T. Wardaya, Mencari Demokrasi (Jakarta: Institut Studi Arus Informasi, 1999), 189-211.

26 In this first Indonesian general election, out of about 30 political parties participating in the election the PKI ranked as the fourth most voted party. See Herbert Feith, The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962/1968), 434-435.

27 Simpson, 158.

28 "Telegram from Jakarta to State, August 8, 1965, NSF, CO Files, Indonesia v. 4, LBJ Library.

29 Simpson, 166.

30 Simpson, 149.

31 Simpson, 150.

32 See for instance, "Sukarno Moves toward Peking", New York Times, January 16, 1965; "Bond with China Cited by Sukarno", New York Times, February 6, 1965; "Sukarno: The Other Asian Problem", Reader's Digest, May 1965. Simpson,150.

33 Simpson, 149.

34 Simpson, 150.

35 Office of Current Intelligence No. 0783/65, March 17, 1965, NSF, CO Files, 1964-1965, Indonesia, Memos, v. 4, LBJ Library. Simpson, 164.

36 Simpson, 158.

37 "Intelligence Memorandum, The Upheaval in Indonesia" (Washington, October 6, 1965), in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 310-316.

38 "Memorandum for President Johnson" (October 1, 1965) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 300.

39 FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), hlm. 300; "Memorandum for President Johnson" (October 1, 1965). This document contains situation report prepared by the CIA.

40 "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between Acting Secretary of State Ball and Secretary of Defense McNamara" (October 1, 1965), in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 301-302.

41 "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the State Department" (October 5, 1965) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 307.

42 "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the State Department" (October 5, 1965) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), hlm. 307.

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45 Latief, 31, 129.

46 Simpson, 172.

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48 With regard to the killings in Java and Bali, see Robert Cribb (ed.) The Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 1990/2004). Regarding the killings in Bali itself, see Geoffrey Robinson, The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

49 For extensive testimonies of the 1965 Tragedy's survivors in East Nusa Tenggara, see Mery Kolimon and Liliya Wetangterah (eds.), Memori-Memori Terlarang: Perempuan Korban & Penyintas Tragedi '65 di Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT: Yayasan Bonet Lelangupir, 2012).

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54 "Memorandum from the Director of the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs (Cuthell) to Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Bundy)" November 3, 1965, in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 349.

55 For an investigative journalistic reporting on the 1965 Tragedy from the perspective of the perpetrators, see Tempo weekly magazine, 1-7 October 2012.

56 "Memorandum from the Director of the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs (Cuthell) to Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Bundy)" November 3, 1965, in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 350.

57 "Memorandum from the Assistant for Indonesia (Nuechterlein) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Friedman)", November 4, 1965, in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 352.

58 "Memorandum from the Assistant for Indonesia (Nuechterlein) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Friedman)", November 4, 1965, in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 352.

59 See "Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency" (November 9, 1965), FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 361-352.

60 Simpson, 172.

61 See "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State" (December 2, 1965) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 379.

62 See "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State (December 2, 1965) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 380.

63 Lihat "Editorial Note" in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 386-387.

64 See "Editorial Note" in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), hlm. 386-387.

65 The document stated: "… The unabated drive against remaining Communist sympathizers in government ministries has been augmented by the initiation of a concerted campaign against the Chinese residents in Indonesia. The sacking and burning of the Chinese Communist embassy and related pressures against the Chinese without official Indonesian restraints indicate to our Embassy that the new leaders in Indonesia may be attempting to force Peking to break relations with Indonesia." See "Memorandum from Donald Ropa of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Rostow)" (April 18, 1966) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 428.

66 See "Intelligence Memorandum" (November 22, 1965) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), hlm. 378.

67 "National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL INDON-US. Lihat FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 337.

68 See "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Indonesia" (December 16, 1965), in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 385.

69 According to Green,"Indo[nesian politics has continued to move in the "right" [meaning no longer leftist, BTW] direction since our last assessment …. PKI is no longer a significant political force, and Jakarta-Peking axis is in tatters. Meanwhile, army has gained in political experience and has further consolidated its position. Most notable change, however, has been further weakening of Sukarno's prestige and marked failure of his mid-November bid to get full authority back in his own hands. This failure has opened real possibility of far-reaching changes in local power structure during next few months…" Lihat "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Depart-

ment of State" (December 22, 1965), in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 388.

70 See "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State" (December 22, 1965), in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 388-389.

71 See"Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State" (December 22, 1965), in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 390.

72 See "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State" (December 22, 1965), in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 390.

73 See "Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara" in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 390-392.

74 OCI No. 0481/66, January 3, "The changed Political Scene in Indonesia". See FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 393, see footnote.

75 See "Memorandum of Conversation" (February 14, 1966) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC, United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 399.

76 See "Memorandum of Conversation" (February 14, 1966) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 400.

77 See "Memorandum of Conversation" (February 15, 1966) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 404-406.

78 "Memorandum of Conversation" (February 15, 1966) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 405.

79 "Telegram from the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State" (March 12, 1966) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 417.

80 "Memorandum from the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Komer) to President Johnson (March 12, 1966)" in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 419.

81 Baskara T. Wardaya, et.al (ed.) *Suara di Balik Prahara: Berbagi Narasi tentang Tragedi 65* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2011), 212.

82 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 212.

83 In the evening of September 30, 1965 Mr. Irsyad (only known by one name)—who was then the Head of the Presidential Palace Protocols, was sitting next to Lieut. Untung at the Istora Senayan Stadium where President Sukarno was giving a speech in front of thousands of people. According to Irshad even though that evening Sukarno's speech was much longer than scheduled there was no sign that Untung was uneasy because he wanted to execute a certain big plan. Instead, he looked calm and normal. The question for Irsyad was, whom did Untung meet after the event at Istora Senayan Stadium was over. (Source: This writer's interview with Irsyad, February 13, 2012.

84 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 212-213.

85 Ita F. Nadia, *Suara Perempuan Korban Tragedi '65* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2007), 80.

86 See "Intelligence Memorandum" (November 22, 1965), FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), 378.

87 Email correspondence, January 12, 2013; personal interview, January 13, 2013.

88 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 213-214.

89 For one of the first accounts on the life as political prisoners on Buru Island, see Hersri Setiawan, *Diburu di Pulau Buru* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2006).

90 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*,217.

91 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 223. (Tutur Al Capone: "Aku ditangkap atau 'diciduk' pada tanggal pada tanggal 21 Desember 1965 di rumahku oleh aparat beserta massa. Lalu diriku dibawa atau digiring ke "K.M.K." [Keamanan Militer Kota] atau sekarang disebut "KODIM" [Komando Distrik Militer] yang terletak di Jalan P. Mangkubumi, sebelah utara pintu Statiun Kereta Api Tugu, Yogyakarta. Di sini aku diinterogasi oleh aparat setempat. Dalam proses tersebut pukulan demi pukulan pun bersarang di wajah dan di sekujur tubuhku.")

92 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 225-226. Kata Al Capone: "Waktu itu ada ketentuan dari DanKam bahwa setiap keluarga Tapol '65 diharuskan menyetorkan beras sebanyak 10 kilogram atau kalau mau dapat menggantinya dengan uang sebesar Rp 25,- pada tahun 1967. Keluarga yang tak bisa setor baik beras maupun uang tidak diperbolehkan bezoek maupun mengirim makanan."

93 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 229, 233.

94 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 258.

95 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 259.

96 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 291.

97 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 302-304.

98 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 311.

99 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 314. She and her suffering family are featured in the documentary 40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy (2009) produced by Dr. Robert Lemelson of UCLA.

100 "Memorandum from Donald Ropa of the National Security Councuil Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Rostow)" (April 18, 1966) in FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), hlm. 428.

101 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 273.

102 See "Intelligence Memorandum" (November 22, 1965), FRUS, 1964-1968, Volume XXVI (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2001), hlm. 375.

103 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 284.

104 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 218.

105 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 285.

106 Wardaya, *Suara di Balik Prahara*, 285.

107 Media, 85-86.

108 Letter to the New York Times, January 17, 1966. Simpson, 171.

Part 5

After 1965

Introduction

The tragic events of 1965-66 were no small events. However, due to efforts to hide the events from the public, for decades afterwards people have only minimal understanding of the events. For many Indonesians it is still not clear on what did actually happen between the evening of September 30 and the early hours of October 1, 1965; who were actually the mastermind behind the kidnapping and later killing of the generals; why were hundreds of thousands of members or suspected members of the Indonesian communist party—so far away from the location—were accused of being involved in the generals' killing in Jakarta; or why were they executed before being tried in the court of justice. It is difficult to find answers to questions like these. During its rule the government of President Suharto, who took over power from President Sukarno, only allowed the people to use the narratives that it produced to know about the events of 1965-66. Any attempt to find other narratives were discouraged or even suppressed. As a result all forms of human rights abuses that took place in 1965 and afterwards—including the banishment of thousands of political prisoners at the penal island of Buru—have never been properly addressed.

The sections in this part invite us to discuss issues regarding the devastating events of 1965-66 and their impacts. The first section will remind us the important of truth finding efforts, as part of steps toward reconciliation. The second session is an attempt to look at the suffering of the political prisoners who were exiled in Buru Island from a broader context. The third section will bring us to the real people who actually suffered because of the injustices of 1965-66. Meanwhile the last section is a reminder that true democracy cannot be built on false narrative or manipulation of a country's own history.

***

1. Truth-Finding and Reconciliation in Indonesia[1]

Truth is powerful and it prevails. —**Sojourner Truth**

AS WE HAVE seen in the previous part, when on October 1, 1965 six top military generals and a high-ranking military officer were kidnapped and killed in Jakarta, the military-controlled media reported that the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party) was behind the "coup". Beginning at the end of that month waves of mass killings occurred, especially in the Central Java, East Java and Bali provinces. The massacre was done by a combination of military and civilian elements of the Indonesian society. Among the civilian elements, many perpetrators were religiously motivated. Looking from the number of victims and the relatively short period of time in which they were killed, it was a national tragedy.

Very Encouraging

Despite its magnitude, it has not been easy to do truth-finding works regarding the tragedy. *First*, it is because the military, who were involved in the massacre, became rulers of Indonesia for the next 32 years, under the New Order government of President Suharto, who himself was a military general. Some theories link Gen. Suharto with the event of October 1, 1965 and more strongly with the communist-purge that followed. *Second*, because

many of the former perpetrators were religiously motivated. These people are now reluctant to "reconcile" with people whom they considered communist, and for them communists are "atheist". They believed, it was necessary that the communists were killed, imprisoned or marginalized because they did not believe in God *(kafir)*. *Third*, the Suharto government continuously used the rhetoric and propaganda of "the latent danger of communism" as a way to create fear in order to make it easier for the government to control the country's population. During the Suharto regime this kind of rhetoric and propaganda worked very well. *Fourth*, because of the rhetoric, the propaganda, and other factors, many former victims were either reluctant or afraid to tell their stories. In this kind of situation any truth-finding attempt becomes very difficult.

Despite the difficulties, and in a way against all odds, many efforts have been made for the truth-seeking and truth-finding of the 1965 Tragedy. A number of former victims have published books or articles regarding their views or experience on the 1965 Tragedy. Through such publication they have opportunities to tell the Indonesian society their side of the story which hitherto had been repressed by the government. Other books on the 1965 Tragedy have also been published by Indonesian scholars, especially historians. Other than books, people have also made documentary films regarding the Tragedy.

Moreover, for the last several years the Indonesian civil society has pushed the government to enact a law for the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In 2004, under the leadership of President Megawati, the Indonesian government did sign a law for the formation of the Indonesian TRC. Many Indonesian NGO's also work to build international networking and collaboration on the issue. This includes getting attention from foreign governments on the issue and contacting Indonesians who were forced to live in exile because of the 1965 Tragedy.

The research center that I directed, namely PUSDEMA (Pusat Kajian Demokrasi dan Hak-hak Asasi Manusia/Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies), is one of many examples made by the Indonesian civil society in the effort of truth-seeking and truth-telling regarding the 1965 Tragedy. It

combines academic works with the documentation of testimonies of former victims of the 1965 Tragedy. It also connects former victims of the tragedy with a wider world, in Indonesia and abroad. So far public response to the center's works is very positive and very encouraging.

Making It Difficult

During the Suharto government there were many obstacles intended to hinder any attempts to find the truth about the 1965 Tragedy and to build reconciliation between former victims and the Indonesia society in general. Books that were not in line with the government's official version of the tragedy were either banned or burned. Last year thousands of highs school textbooks were burned in public. Films that might tell the story different from the government's side of the story were also banned. Meanwhile the government created a one-sided film that depicted the PKI as the guilty party and perpetrators of the 1965 Tragedy. For many years students and the general public were compelled to watch the four-hour long film over and over again. Any organization or gathering suspected of being left-leaning were intimidated and attacked.

Unfortunately such obstacles are continued even after Suharto stepped down in 1998. Groups of thugs under the guise of religious slogans often attack public forums related to the tragedy. The burning of history textbooks in public continues even until last year. For reasons that were not very clear, in late 2006 the 2004 law on the formation of Indonesian TRC was suddenly revoked.

Despite the above difficulties the Indonesian civil society's efforts for truth-telling and reconciliation continue. Slowly but certainly.

The specific progress in Indonesia with regard to the 1965 genocide is the fact that now Indonesians can talk about the issue more openly. Here the word "more" needs to be emphasized, because although there is now greater freedom to talk about the issue compared to the past, any discussion about the 1965 Tragedy remains carefully watched by the government. Today people can publicly hold discussions about the idea of doing settlement

on the tragedy, but government agents are usually present—albeit quietly. At the same time, in part thanks to pressures from the people, in 2008 the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (a government institution) formed an ad hoc committee to launch a truth finding effort on the 1965 Tragedy. For Indonesia the formation of the committee is quite a good progress and the 800-page report that the committee produced in 2012 demonstrated the seriousness of the commission's members to find the best ways to deal with 1965 issues. Unfortunately upt to the writing of this section Indonesia's Attroney General's Office turned down the report making it difficulet for the public to access to the researrch finding.

Important

Just like Indonesia, Korea has some periods in its history that were marked with acts of injustice and violence. Both nations have been trying to deal with the violent past. With Korea, however, it seems greater progress has been made. With the case of the Kwangju uprising, for example. It was a tragedy with many people killed and it remains a mystery as who did what, etc., but Koreans can talk about it openly than can Indonesians talk about the darks periods of their history. In this regard we Indonesians need to learn from the Korean people. Some parties in Indonesia reject the idea of forming truth-finding and reconciliation commission because they thought it is a "western" idea that is not compatible with Indonesia as an Asian nation. By studying the truth-finding and reconciliation activities of South Korea Indonesian can see for themselves that truth-finding and reconciliation is also done by a fellow-Asian nation.

To anybody and any nation of the world history is very important. We cannot fully understand the present and make plans for the future if our knowledge of the past is insufficient or distorted. By learning from our history—both the bright and the dark sides of it—we can better comprehend our past and present, and therefore we are better equipped to plan for the future. On the contrary, distorting the past will only distort our understanding of ourselves now an in the future. So it is very encouraging to see that more

and more Koreans are willing to learn about their past by promoting the idea of having truth-finding committee and supporting its works. The eventual goal is not so much about opening old wounds, but to build a present and a future that are based on truth, reconciliation and justice. And on this matter, it is important that Korea and Indonesia learn from each other.

Note:

1 Originally a remark given to Commissioners of the South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Seoul, April 2, 2008. Some editorial adjustment has been made to the original version.

2. Buru Island Prison and the Convergence of Interests[1]

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

THE ANTI-COMMUNIST events of 1965-66 in Indonesia were unquestionably disastrous events. Not only did the events involve killings of hundreds of thousands of innocent Indonesian citizens, but also include torture, imprisonment, discrimination against, and stigmatization of many others. At the same time the events gave birth to a new government that would reorient Indonesia politically and economically in order to benefit a select few. The incarceration of more than 10.000 political prisoners in the remote island of Buru during the period of 1969-1979 was part of the disastrous events. As an inseparable part of the 1965-66 events the Buru Island incarceration program by the New Order government under President Suharto had many aspects and can therefore be seen from many different approaches.

Academic Context

In a work called "Buru Island: A Prism of the Indonesian New Order" (2016) Sindhunata Hargyono[2] offers one of those approaches. The paper shows how the way the New Order government treated the political prisoners in the island of Buru was not only very repressive but also had far-reaching impacts outside the penal island.

If I may underline some of the main ideas, the paper demonstrates to the reader how the program of incarcerating Indonesian political prisoners

in Buru Island by the New Order government was worse than the similar program that had been done by the Dutch colonial government in Digul, West Papua. While in Digul prisoners' lives were quite well-respected, in Buru Island, on the contrary, the normal lives of the prisoners were turned upside-down, and were marred with degrading and repressive practices. In Buru the lives of the political prisoners were considered "superfluous". Moreover, the repressive and degrading practices in Buru Island can be seen as a "prism" through which the *unicolor* of repressive practices toward the political prisoners was dispersed into *multicolor* of repressive practices throughout Indonesia during the reign of the New Order government.

Hargyono believes that the repressive practices in treating the political prisoners in Buru Island was an expression of the New Order government's totalitarian desire, the same desire that was expressed by the same government throughout its repressive rule in Indonesia. In other words, according to him, to a certain degree the repressive practices of the New Order government during its 32-year rule was very much inspired by the "success" in repressively treating the political prisoners in Buru. The difference is merely a matter of scale. While in Buru the targets of the repressive practices were rather limited and homogenous, namely the political prisoners—hence "unicolor"— outside the island the targets of the New Order's repressive practices were the general population of Indonesia, hence "dispersed multicolor".

In reading Hargyono's work, one will find that the paper is not only well-researched, but is also well-argued, well-written, and well-versed. This is a very good work. In the process of arguing, Hargyono backs up every important statement and contention with literature reference, making it more credible and convincing. Early in the beginning of the work the writer provides the reader with an overview of what he wants to say in the rest of it, followed by literature review on the topic, helping the reader knows where his work stands among other works on related topic. By so doing he lets the reader see the academic context of the issues being discussed and the approach being used in dealing with the paper's topic.

Convergence of Interests

Without doubting the validity of the approach and the soundness of the argumentation, there seem to be other possible ways of looking at the case of the Buru island incarceration. One of them is by looking at the case as part of the broader international and domestic political dynamics of the period.

In the 1960s, as we all know, the world was in the midst of the Cold War antagonism, and Indonesia was not free from its influence and impact. On one side of the antagonism was the Eastern bloc, led by the communist Soviet Union, while on the other was the Western bloc led by the capitalist United States. During this period the Soviet bloc was quite pleased with the fact that there was strong communist following in Indonesia, marked by the steady growth of the Indonesian Communist Party (the PKI), especially since 1955. But the existence and the growth of the PKI were exactly what worried the United States, along with its Western allies.

The US worried that the PKI might push Indonesia to move closer and faster into the communist camp, and would prevent the US from incorporating Indonesia into its global liberal-capitalist system. The inclusion of Indonesia into the global liberal capitalist system, US policy makers had thought, would make it easier for Western nations to gain access to the country's abundant natural resources, including the gigantic gold deposit in West Papua. In addition to the natural resources, Washington also considered Indonesia important because of its potential as great market, due to its large population. Moreover, Washington also viewed Indonesia as strategically located, since it is situated between the two continents of Asia and Australia, and between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. The existence and growth of a big communist party such as the PKI (the third largest in the world), was considered a serious threat to US political and economic interests in Indonesia.

The US was further concerned that Indonesia's President Sukarno was gradually siding with the PKI, and also with the Cold War's communist camp of the Cold War, despite his country's officially non-aligned position. Sukarno's leftist inclination was clearly reflected in his rhetoric, which was increasingly anti-Western, while displaying his fondness with socialist

or communist ideas. And Sukarno was not alone. He was supported by a growing number of Indonesians, including the country's academics and intellectuals.

Seen from this, the massive anti-communist purge of 1965-66 in Indonesia was actually part of (or at least in line with) efforts by the Western bloc of the Cold War antagonism to eliminate not only Eastern bloc's influence in Indonesia but also to remove obstacles to Western sphere of influence over Indonesia along with its political and economic potentials. Despite the uncertainty of the involvement of the PKI as an organization in the killings of Indonesian top Army generals on October 1, 1965, for instance, Western countries supported the use of the generals' killings as a "pretext" to terminate the communist party once and for all. Western nations never offered any kind of objection or regret to the fact that in the wake of the October 1, 1965 incident hundreds of thousands of Indonesians were killed and many others were tortured, incarcerated and discriminated against.

From this Cold War antagonism's context we can see that the incarceration of the political prisoners in Buru fell along the line of Western bloc's intention (if not efforts) to eliminate communist influence from Indonesia's social, cultural and political process in the post-Sukarno period. It so happened that many of the prisoners of Buru Island (the "*Golongan* or Category B" prisoners) were actually intellectuals, artists, writers or movie producers. From the Western bloc's point of view, the incarceration of these people was an important part of ensuring the security of Western political and economic interests in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the domestic political factors in Indonesia during the period was no less important. Since the success of gaining the fourth place in the general elections of 1955—out of about 30 political parties that participated in the election—the PKI showed a growing number of followers and national prominence. With more than 3 million members, the PKI soon became the largest communist party in the world outside the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China. Such development worried many people in Indonesia, especially among the Army officers. These officers were concerned that the PKI would soon take over power from President Sukarno. Before such

possibility became reality, some of them thought a move should be taken in order to pre-empt the PKI's possibility to create chaos and took over power. Then-Major General Suharto was one of those who (quietly) wanted to pre-empt the PKI in seizing power.

Clearly, while the US and its allies strongly eager to get rid of Indonesia's communists and leftist intellectuals, Suharto silently had his own but similar agenda. He, too, wanted to get rid of communists and leftist intellectuals from Indonesia. He saw them as an obstacle to his ambition to seize power in Indonesia. It is public knowledge that when in 1965-66 massive killings were taking place in many parts of Indonesia Suharto refused to prevent or stop them, not to say he secretly endorsed the unspeakable violence to his fellow-Indonesians. In the wake of the killing, namely in March 1966, he practically grabbed power from President Sukarno's hand, and in 1967 he made himself sworn-in as the Acting President. Soon afterwards, in 1969—as we have seen—he decided to send suspected left-leaning intellectuals and activists to Buru Island. The decision was part of his way to eliminate possible threat not only to his power but also to Western political and economic interests in Indonesia that he wanted to support. Curiously enough, the very first law that Suharto signed as the Acting President was the Law number one of the year 1967 (UU 1/1967), which allowed foreign corporations to invest and operate in Indonesia—especially in the gold-rich West Papua.

Seen from the perspective of the international and domestic politics of the 1950s and 1960s it becomes clear that the massive violence that took place in Indonesia during the period was not only caused by domestic factors, but also by international dynamics. Needless to say, the incarceration and the repressive treatment of political prisoners in Buru Island was part of this massive violence. The incarceration program and its implementation, therefore, can be seen as a locus where domestic and international interests converged.

On the international side Western nations agreed that in the wake of the 1965-66 killings potential obstacles to their access to Indonesia's natural resources—especially anti-Western leftist intellectuals, including Sukarno— were incarcerated in remote places, such as Buru Island. On the

domestic side the repressive policy and practices that occurred under the New Order were more than just refraction of repressive measures in Buru. Both—the repressive measures inside and outside Buru island—were parts of Suharto's attempt to build a new, post-Sukarno, pro-Western Indonesia that was open to foreign investment. Suharto believed that the act of repressively incarcerating suspected leftist intellectuals in Buru was important in order to eradicate impediments that might prevent foreign companies from operating in Indonesia. The operation of foreign companies, Suharto further believed, not only would improve Indonesia's economy, but also help his political position as Indonesia's top leader—and would benefit his family and cronies.

In short, the repressive manners of the New Order government in Buru as well as in Indonesia in general was a manifestation of the convergence of interests of domestic and international actors, especially Suharto and his supporters on one side and Western nations on the other.

Access

The New Order government's incarceration of political prisoners in Buru Island from 1969 to 1979 was indeed very repressive and inhuman. It had serious impact not only on the political prisoners themselves but also on the Indonesian population in general. The general repressive nature of the New Order government during its rule, however, was not merely inspired by violent measures in Buru. Instead, both the repressive practices that took place inside and outside the Buru Island were part of Suharto's efforts to secure his own political power, as well as to open Indonesia for foreign companies. In the context of the Cold War the repressive policies that Suharto implemented were in line with the interests of Western bloc nations to have access to Indonesia's rich natural resources and to its great market potential.

Endnotes

1 Originally a discussant paper presented at "The 2016 Arryman Symposium" sponsored by the ISRSF (Indonesian Scholarship and Research Support Foundation), Jakarta, 24 June 2016. Published in the symposium's proceeding.

2 Sindhunata Hargyono, "Buru Island: A Prism of the Indonesian New Order", *The 2016 Arryman Symposium proceeding* (ISRSF: Jakarta, 2016), pp 5-27.

3. Keeping Hope in a Marginalized World[1]

Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future. —**Lewis B. Smedes**

MANY STUDIES THAT discuss the issues of Indonesia during the tumultuous year of 1965 focus on the murders of the army generals that occurred on October 1 of that year, and the alleged *coup d'état* that followed. These studies are particularly interested in answering the question of who actually was the *dalang* (puppet master) or mastermind behind the murders (Anderson and McVey 1971; Fic 2005; Roosa 2006).

There are fewer studies addressing what happened *after* October 1, 1965, namely the mass killings and imprisonment of Indonesians who were accused and suspected of being members of the PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*; the Indonesian Communist Party). Hundreds of thousands of people were killed in the next two and a half months, while many others were imprisoned and/or executed summarily without necessary legal procedures—making it a national (if not international) tragedy. Still, studies of this period are far fewer in number than the studies of the alleged coup.

Even fewer studies have been done on the survivors of the tragedy. Many of these survivors are those who were imprisoned under extremely harsh conditions but managed to survive until they were released. Upon their release, these survivors were allowed to return to society as "free" people, but in reality they were marginalized and discriminated against.[2]

The scarcity of studies on the survivors was in part because during the rule of President Suharto, which began shortly after the killings of 1965, Indonesians were not allowed to discuss the events of 1965 openly outside the parameters that had been set up by the government. Now that the Suharto government is gone—as he was forced to step down in 1998—more studies on these survivors are needed in order to understand the events of 1965 and its impact more comprehensively.

This section is an attempt to look at the impact of the 1965 events more broadly, focusing on the experiences and perspectives of some of the survivors. It will look at how the 1965 tragedy caused damage in their lives; how they feel about it; what expression and language they use to express their feelings; and how they cope with the situation, especially with the marginalization and discrimination that they have to bear.

The Background

As previously discussed, in the wake of the events of October 1, 1965 General Suharto, head of Indonesia's KOSTRAD (*Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat*; Army Strategic Reserve) took control of the military leadership. Supported by his close associates, Suharto announced that the PKI was the mastermind behind the kidnapping and murders (Suwarno: 2009). The fact that the three main leaders of G30S were actually Army officers with close relations to General Suharto was disregarded.

Following the announcement, about three weeks after the event, a series of mass arrests and killings of people who were accused of being communist began to take place. During the last two weeks of October 1965, widespread killings occurred in Central Java. More massive bloodbaths took place in East Java during the month of November, followed by similar mass murders in Bali in December 1965 (Cribb 1990; Robinson 1995; Suryawan 2007). There were also similar killings in other parts of the country, but most of them were smaller in scale and many occurred after 1965. In total, about half a million Indonesians perished during this period.

Along with the killings, thousands of people who were suspected of being communists were arrested, interrogated and sent to prisons in different locations throughout the country. Many of the prisoners died of summary executions, tortures, maltreatment and hunger. In 1969, thousands of male prisoners were moved to the remote island of Buru, located in the eastern part of the country. Meanwhile many women prisoners were sent to the infamous prison of Plantungan, located in Central Java.[3] Family members of those who were killed and imprisoned were stigmatized as communists and traitors to the nation's five principles of Pancasila.[4] They were considered "dangerous" people who should be avoided and discriminated against.

The Official Narrative

In telling the above events, General Suharto and his "New Order" government created their own narrative. According to Suharto's official narrative, the main culprit of what happened on October 1, 1965 was the PKI. It says that the PKI masterminded a "rebellion" (even a *coup d'état*) against the government on the morning of October 1, 1965, by kidnapping and murdering six Army generals along with another high-ranking officer. Because of this gruesome act of violence, according to the narrative, the people of Indonesia were enraged and in the next several months they spontaneously launched a counter attack against the communists. They "ran amok" and killed thousands of members of the PKI. In the aftermath of the killings, the government caught and arrested suspected communists who survived the massacre and put them in jail.

In the chaotic situation of 1965-1966, still according to this narrative, President Sukarno officially appointed Major General Suharto to take control of the country and to use any means necessary to restore order, including a ban against the communist party. Suharto "succeeded" in carrying out the order. He was even able to start a "better" government that eventually replaced the "incompetent" government of President Sukarno.

This narrative has suggested that due to Sukarno's multiple mistakes (along with the mistakes of his supporters) it was justified that Sukarno be detained under house arrest until his death in 1970. While the Sukarno

government was dubbed *Orde Lama* or the "Old Order", Suharto and his supporters called their own government *Orde Baru* or the "New Order", suggesting that this was a much better and capable government. The new government considered itself a "total correction" to all the errors made by the old and unfit government of President Sukarno.

During the rule of the Suharto government, this kind of narrative prevailed and was rarely contested or challenged. Even worse, this narrative was often elaborated with invented details that in essence legitimized the rule of the New Order and justified all kinds of atrocities and repressions against the people (McGregor 2007).

An example of this was the elaborate story of the *Pesta Harum Bunga* (Flower Fragrance Party). It was said that the Flower Fragrance party took place on October 1, 1965 near an unused well in the Lubang Buaya (which literally means "crocodile hole") district where the bodies of the generals were dumped. According to this story, members of Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, a women's organization associated with the PKI) held an "orgy" of violence where they mutilated the private parts of the generals and danced around the dead victims' bodies while wearing skimpy dresses. Regardless of whether or not this was an accurate description of events (the story has never been proven true), this kind of elaborated story was important for the New Order government to perpetuate an impression (and later a "memory") of how the PKI-associated Gerwani were cruel and sadistic. Moreover it became some kind of "warning" or reminder to the people that any political involvement of a women's organization could result in such cruel and even sadistic practices. This warning, in turn, was useful as a means of justification for controlling women organizations throughout the country since 1965, especially by limiting women's political aspirations and activities.

At the same location where the orgy of violence allegedly took place, the New Order government built a grandiose monument called *Monumen Tujuh Pahlawan Revolusi* or "Monument of the Seven Heroes of the Revolution". The monument is intended to demonstrate the bravery and dedication of the generals who died on October 1, 1965, and how the PKI and Gerwani were terribly immoral and violent. It is important to note that according

to the depiction on the monument, the brave and dedicated ones were all military personnel, while all the violent, immoral and sadistic villains were civilians. For the militaristic New Order government, this kind of monument is necessary at least for several reasons: (a) that there is a close association between the word *pahlawan* (hero) and the military; (b) that in the October 1, 1965 military operation launched by the G30S, the Army was merely a victim of the PKI's conspiracy and cruelty; (c) that the massacre and imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of Indonesian citizens in the wake of the military operation were justified; (d) that the dethroning of President Sukarno was also justified, because he associated himself with the PKI; (e) that the discrimination against former political prisoners and people who are associated with them is right and encouraged. The same government made other efforts to justify its version of narratives about the 1965 tragedy, such as producing an anti-PKI film called *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*, *The Treason of the September 30th Movement/PKI*, and compelling the public (especially students) to watch it every year.

The Marginalization

Under such circumstances it became very difficult for the former political prisoners of the 1965 tragedy and their families to live normal lives. It was almost impossible for them to enjoy life as free citizens and/or equal members of society. They were considered dangerous, former "traitors" to the nation and were part of the so-called "latent danger of communism." They had to be closely watched, lest they start another "rebellion" or a *coup d'état* against the Indonesian government.

As a consequence, they were denied jobs, put under constant surveillance, and required to regularly report to the local authorities or neighborhood leaders, while their identity cards were given the special code "E.T.", indicating that they were *Eks-Tapol* or *Eks-Tahanan Politik*, meaning former political prisoners. Their rights as legitimate citizens were ignored. At the same time their voices were silenced. They were not only denied the rights to write and speak in public, but were also not allowed to write

anything related to the 1965 tragedy, especially writing stories that would be different from the official narrative of the government. The New Order government of President Suharto firmly controlled any possible discourse about what happened in 1965 and related events thereafter.

Following the fall of President Suharto from power in 1998 there were hopes that the situation would change for the better. The hopes were never realized and the marginalization of former political prisoners and their families continued. An honorable attempt by the late President Abdurrachman Wahid on March 15, 2000 to apologize to the victims was met with much criticism and opposition. To this day the victims and former political prisoners of 1965 continue to suffer marginalization, stigmatization, and discrimination.

Fighting for Justice

This section aims to explore the ways in which the former political prisoners express their feelings and deal with marginalization, stigmatization and discrimination. Some of the subjects of this section are members of an association of former political prisoners in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, called Sambung Roso, which literally means Connecting Feelings.[5] This is a forum in which members regularly meet and help each other as fellow political prisoners of Indonesia's 1965 tragedy. Different from other associations of former political prisoners, Sambung Roso has no political agenda. Its focus is more on maintaining *persaudaraan* (friendship or brotherhood) among themselves while helping each other in times of need. Other subjects belong to a similar group called Kipper (Kiprah Perempuan or Women's Activities). Just like Sambung Roso, Kipper is also a non-political forum of former political prisoners who try to help and support each other. While members of Sambung Roso are men, members of Kipper are women.

I came to know about Sambung Roso and Kipper partly because I often joined their meetings and visited their families. I also often invited them to participate in the academic forums dealing with Indonesian history held by Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta where I work. Members of

Sambung Roso and Kipper belong to different religions: Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism. Most (but not all) of the subjects in this section, however, are Christian. This is in part because when I asked members of Sambung Roso and Kipper to write down their experiences and feelings regarding their status as former political prisoners, the ones that submitted their writings were mostly Christians.

It is interesting to see that despite the accusation that they were communist, in reality each of the members of Sambung Roso and Kipper belongs to an organized religion. In the case of members who are Christian, some of them were already Christian prior to 1965, while others became Christian during their imprisonment. Part of the reasons why they became Christian was because during their imprisonment the church (especially the Catholic Church) helped them and the families they left behind. It should be noted that even among members of Sambung Roso and Kipper who are in favor of the PKI's ideas in the past, there is no notion of contradiction between supporting the ideals of the communist party and their faith as religious persons. For them, fighting for justice and working for the people's welfare is part of their faith in God and their love of their nation, Indonesia.

The Suffering and the Coping Strategies

In dealing with post-1965 difficult situations, these former political prisoners have tried their best to adapt themselves to the harsh circumstances and to find some coping strategies in order to survive. There are several strategies that have been adopted, such as joining a religion, deepening their personal faith in God, or forming various associations of former political prisoners. In the testimonies below we can see examples of how some former political prisoners in the Yogyakarta area describe their experiences, feelings, emotions and coping strategies regarding the marginalization they suffer.[6] The testimonies presented here are based on the written (i.e. handwritten) testimonies of the subjects. Before writing their testimonies they knew that the testimonies would be used as materials for public presentation in academic forums. In order to keep their privacy, the names of the subjects being used in this section are not their real names.

(1) Agnes Sumaryanti[7]

Agnes Sumaryanti lived in Yogyakarta. While studying in high school she joined the IPPI (Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia), an association of Indonesian youth and students in which President Sukarno was an honorary member. After finishing high school she joined the PMKRI (Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia), an association of Indonesia's Catholic Students, specifically university students. In December 1965 Sumaryanti was arrested on the accusation that she was a member of Gerwani, the women's organization closely associated with the PKI. She denied the allegation but nonetheless was arrested. After four months of detention and interrogation she was released because there was no proof whatsoever that she was a Gerwani member or a communist.

Following her release, Sumaryanti continued her studies while working part-time as a schoolteacher. Life went on as usual. But to her surprise, two years later in 1968, she was again arrested. The local authorities said that since Sumaryanti had been arrested before, she must be a communist. Several military personnel took her by force from her boarding house. She was handcuffed, brought to a military post, interrogated about something of which she had no knowledge, and was humiliatingly tortured. "I was often interrogated and was forced to take off all of my clothes so that I was totally naked," she said. "I was then forced to kiss the genitals of each one of them [the interrogators]. ... I was laid on the floor, face down, and they stepped on my body. Then they shaved my hair… I fainted."[8]

At first she was imprisoned in Yogyakarta, but in 1971 she was transferred to Plantungan, a women prison and former lepers' colony located on the northern coast of Central Java. She was kept there for the next six years before she, along with about 450 other prisoners, was transferred to Bulu prison located in Semarang, the provincial capital of Central Java. In Bulu prison the women were indoctrinated (in the form of what was called *Santiaji* programs) and were told, "to repent (*bertobat*) from being rebels, prostitutes and atheists". Thanks to Amnesty International, the non-governmental organization concerned with human rights issues, Sumaryanti and all the other prisoners were released from prison on September 27, 1978.

In coping with the situation, Sumaryanti tries to be mentally strong. She relies on her faith. She deeply believes that God will always strengthen and help her: "I remain optimistic that God is full of love for each of His creations. That is why I always believe that solutions will be provided for all of the problems that I have." [9] That is why, she said, "I will do anything in order to get my life back".

Another way for Sumaryanti to cope with the situation is looking after her children. She has worked several jobs with the main purpose of providing the best possible education for her children. She simply ignores negative comments that come from her cynical neighbors. For her, "in the eyes of God, all jobs are honorable." The important thing for Sumaryanti now is not crying over her misery but to work hard: "Now I don't need to cry over my situation anymore… This is not a time to sit back and fold hands. It's time to work hard."[10]

Not happy with working hard just for her own interests and the interests of her children, Sumaryanti wants to turn her unfortunate situation into efforts to work for fellow former political prisoners. She says:

> Then I began to think of the fate of those who are also marginalized like myself. [I realize] that my children are beginning to settle down. Now it's time for me to speak up. I decided to start speaking up about all the lies that had misled this nation. I did this so that all the cruelty that has been done to my nation will not happen again. The dark picture of my beloved nation's past was enough. I want to see my homeland peaceful and prosperous, in which the law is upheld, justice realized, and all the children of this nation become bright and dignified. I know this is not easy. But I have to do this, because this is an obligation that I get from the people who have been oppressed like me…[11]

With almost no fear she began to speak out publicly about all the injustices that she and other political prisoners had to endure during their years of imprisonment. Sumaryanti often spoke at different forums discussing issues related to the 1965 tragedy. She has also appeared in several documentary films.[12]

Sumaryanti expects that the international community will pay attention to the survivors of the tragedy and help them: "I hope the international community can help lessen the burdens of the 1965 tragedy, financially and spiritually. For us, who are already 60 years old or older, please help us by sharing our living costs."[13]

She also pleads for the children of former political prisoners: "For our children and grandchildren, please help us with jobs and education". She repeats her request to help survivors of the 1965 tragedy by saying: "We, the victims of the 1965 tragedy who are already nearing the end of our life, are never tired of hoping in God's generosity. Please be the extension of God's loving hands."[14]

(2) Rahmono

Rahmono, another former political prisoner, was born into a farmer's family in the district of Sleman, Yogyakarta. A few years after completing junior high school, he entered a teacher's training school in 1962. On November 19, 1965 he was called to the office of the village leader. To his surprise, upon arriving at the office he was asked to get into a military truck. He was then sent to a local military detention center and forced to "confess" that he was member of Pemuda Rakyat: a youth organization that had close associations with the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party).

In February 1966, Rahmono was transferred to an island prison off the southern coast of Central Java called Nusakambangan. He spent three years on the island. After that he was transferred to the notorious prison-island, Buru Island. There he spent ten years in very harsh prison conditions. In 1979, along with other prisoners, he was released, but his identity card was given the sign "E.T." indicating that he is a former political prisoner.

Upon his release Rahmono got married and built a family. Due to his history, he started everything basically from scratch. After years of hard work he was happy to be able to own a simple home. Although Rahmono was lucky enough to survive the massive earthquake that struck Yogyakarta

in 2006 killing more than 5,000 people, unfortunately his home did not; like many other houses it collapsed.

Reflecting on all the difficulties and sufferings that he has been through, and realizing his status as a former political prisoner, Rahmono says all he can do is, *"cuman nrimo"* or just accept whatever happens to him. In the past he regularly received financial aid for the poor from the government, but without any apparent reason the aid was canceled. He never protested the cancellation because he thought the reason must be because he is a former political prisoner; he was afraid of causing a larger problem for himself and his family.

Responding to the situation Rahmono turns to God. He hopes that "God will give His blessings to some people or humanitarian institutions so that they will open their hearts and be willing to help me".[15]

(3) Fransiskus Sumbogo

Fransiskus Sumbogo was a teacher in a vocational junior high school in Yogyakarta. In the morning he taught in the school and in the afternoon he delivered milk to his father's customers, because his family owned a small business selling cow's milk. During his spare time he also gave private lessons to the son of a Chinese Indonesian family. The father of the family was an expert in acupuncture. From that man, Sumbogo learned how to do acupuncture.

In 1965, Sumbogo was arrested on the accusation that he was a communist. First he was imprisoned in Yogyakarta, and then he was moved to the town of Semarang and Nusakambangan prison-island, before eventually being moved again, along with others, to Buru Island. In 1979 he was released. Upon his release he opened a simple store selling household goods. He also practiced the acupuncture skills that he had learned before his imprisonment. In order to enhance his skill he took acupuncture lessons at Bethesda Hospital in Yogyakarta.

Expressing his emotions after the imprisonment, Sumbogo says he *"rumaos tersingkir"* or feels marginalized. Responding to that kind of feeling,

he tries "to remain strong in this situation, to be grateful that I am still alive. And this is because the blessings from God, who is Lord Jesus Christ Himself."[16]

At the same time Sumbogo feels bad because many of his fellow former political prisoners suffer from stress and from lengthy sickness without getting any proper help. Some have even died in very miserable ways as marginalized persons. He hopes that there will be help for them, especially in the form of access to "Jamkesmas" (Jaminan Kesehatan Masyarakat), a public health program run by the government.

(4) Theresia Sumirah[17]

Marginalization and stigmatization are not only suffered by former political prisoners, but also by members of their families. An example of this is Theresia Sumirah of Yogyakarta, the daughter of a former political prisoner.

Sumirah's father was arrested in approximately August of 1966. The reason was that when asked by a neighborhood official to participate in a traditional arts performance (*ketoprak*), he refused because he had some other business to do. The neighborhood official felt offended and threatened Sumirah's father by saying that he would make an announcement to the neighborhood that he was a communist. Two weeks later the official returned accompanied by a policeman. The two arrested Sumirah's father. He was put in the Yogyakarta prison of Wirogunan for four years, before he was transferred to the Nusakambangan prison-island where he served the next nine years.

While her father was in prison, Sumirah's mother and siblings suffered terribly, including her youngest sister who was only six months old when her father was arrested. The mother had to divide the children among her relatives so that they could survive. Luckily the Catholic Church in Yogyakarta helped the family, but that assistance was not enough. To help support her family, Sumirah worked as a domestic helper for another family since the age of fourteen. A few years later she was asked by her mother to marry a man she hardly knew, which she did. Only after the wedding did she know that her husband was a former political prisoner. "So both my father and

my husband are former political prisoners," she said. "My heart, which had suffered from my father's imprisonment, now suffered even more because of this [situation]." Sumirah and her family lived very poorly, and she became the subject of many offenses by her neighbors and relatives.

Feeling that the pressures were too much to bear, in 1988 Sumirah decided to move to Kalasan, a district east of Yogyakarta. Unfortunately, even there she became the target of attacks by her new neighbors once they knew that her husband was a former political prisoner and that her father was also a former political prisoner. When her oldest son was just four months old, a neighbor threw a chicken nest filled with fleas at her house. As a result, the boy soon suffered from flea infestation and became ill for a long period of time. On another occasion, when the boy was a little bit older, a neighbor submerged him in the nearby river with an intention to harm him.

The treatment of the boy and his younger brother by the neighbors was particularly cruel. This was despite the fact that they did not have anything to do with what happened in 1965. The boys were often set up as if they committed a crime (such as stealing a bike), and then were beaten up by the neighborhood kids. At one incident one of the boys' torturers was actually a local religious leader, who happened to be the grandfather of a local military personnel.

Feeling that the rejection and suffering in Kalasan was too much for her family to bear, Sumirah decided to move back to her old neighborhood. But in the old place she was again the subject of animosity and maltreatment from her neighbors and from her own relatives.

One of the strategies that Sumirah found in dealing with her situation was to join a Catholic organization called KKIT (Kerabat Kerja Ibu Teresa, or the Colleagues of Mother Teresa of Calcutta). In this organization she says she finds peace, respect and friendship. Being among fellow members of the KKIT, Sumirah says, "I feel that I am regarded as a human being and that I am capable of helping others".

Outside of KKIT, the treatment that she received from people has been very harsh, Sumirah continues, but "I am always patient in dealing with all

it". She always has hope, and the most important factor in keeping that hope alive is her faith in God. Sumirah says,

> I always believe that God is all knowing and merciful. God will never Ignore His servants. God asked me to carry a small cross, and I was able to do it. Then He asked me to carry a bigger cross, then an even bigger one ... My strength always comes from God. I surrender all my problems and the problems of my family to God, and God gives me strength. The offenses, tortures, false accusations, humiliation... I can bear them all with patience.[18]

(5) Ahmad Basuki

Ahmad Basuki was a traditional artist specializing in Javanese singing and *ketoprak*, a traditional Javanese performance. In 1965, without any clear reason, he was arrested and sent to prison. First he was detained at the Fort Vredeburg prison and then he was moved to the Wirogunan prison, both located in Yogyakarta. "I was arrested, put in prison, without any clear reason. No trial, no nothing. Just put in the prison," he said. "The food was bad. Everything was robbed from me and I was *ora diuwongke* (not considered a human being)." Not until 1969 was he released.

During his imprisonment Basuki tried to cope with the situation by being *sabar* (patient) and maintaining his innocence. Upon his release he opened a store called "Roti Kembang Waru", selling various kinds of bread. He seems to do well in the business, but remains very concerned about his fellow prisoners. He is not happy with Indonesia's current socio-political situation, which he feels is unjust toward former political prisoners as well as to the people in general. He expresses those concerns by composing Javanese traditional poetic songs and often recites the songs at Sambung Roso gatherings. He feels fortunate to be a member of Sambung Roso and hopes the best for the association. In one of the songs he expresses his description of Sambung Roso, originally in his mother tongue Javanese, translated below into English:

A Song for Sambung Roso[19]

Sambung Roso, an association of brothers
Always one in how we feel
Only yearns to work together in unity
In living as brothers
Who have gone through the same
Experience of the past.

Let's unite our hearts (and will)
Working together
To make our life better
And not continue to be victimized
By the greedy political leaders.

In Indonesia today
there are many crooked leaders
They only look after their own interests
Without thinking of the needs of the people
Who live difficult lives
And who are confused everyday.

These leaders are very corrupt
They rob the people without feeling guilty
Stealing people's money
Immune from any legal procedures
My hope is
This terrible situation will end soon.

Ahmad Basuki also writes songs that incorporate his views and comments on the current situation of Indonesian politics. In one of his songs he writes, again originally in Javanese:

Pangkur[20]

For whom is actually this country
For the people or just for the government
Because that is what it seems
If this country is for the people
Certainly the people would have been happy, just and prosper

But if the people are only for the government
Then it is only the leaders who prosper.

Whom do members of the Parliament represent
Do the people really feel that they are represented
If things go as they should be
If members of the Parliament really represent the people
The situation would be better
The Parliament represents the people
Fighting for the suffering people.

For whom are actually those co-ops
For the people or just for the co-ops themselves
If those co-ops are for the people
Certainly the people would prosper
But in reality the people are there for the co-ops
As a result it is only the officials who get rich.

For whom are the just laws
I believe the laws should be for the people
But the laws are confusing
Never taking side with the people
The leaders on top are very greedy
Laws and justice
Are being sold and bought.

(6) Petrus Sumarwan

Sumarwan was an English teacher who lived in Yogyakarta with his wife and four children. In 1965 he was suddenly arrested with no warning whatsoever. Without any necessary legal procedures he was incarcerated in the Wirogunan prison in Yogyakarta on the grounds that he was a communist sympathizer. During the first few years Sumarwan's wife regularly visited him in prison, along with their children, with the hope that he would soon be released. About six years into his imprisonment, when his release hadn't come, his wife told him that she couldn't wait for his release any longer. She wanted a divorce and to remarry. For Sumarwan the request came like

thunder out of the blue. He was surprised and saddened but could not do anything. He had to swallow the bitter pill.

In coping with the situation Sumarwan wrote poems. He wrote the poems in Indonesian and then translated them into English. They were written in small notebooks with the Indonesian and English versions of the poems side by side.

Below is an example of his poetry with an English translation by the writer himself:

At the Crossroad

1965:
Without any thunder or storm-clouds as warning
It came suddenly like a big tornado
Striking this Land of Peace / Without mercy
Plates and bowls flying
Making us tremble full of goose bumps
Many people fell to the ground
CUT INTO TWO
BROKEN
GROUNDED
CAST AWAY
And ...
At gunpoint
Your father was taken to prison.

1968:
Old walls with rusty bars
Separating happy families
But because of her faith
Your Mother waited faithfully
She was holding to The Cross
So that she didn't slip
All of you grew up in her hands
Without work there wouldn't be any fruit.

Ages changed
Time passed
In every second events come and go
Promise and the fidelity in keeping the promise
Someone's background is being evaluated
Everything developed
Moved
Changed
Tested by time.

That was also how it was with your Mother's heart
Growing to different directions
The earth where she stood began to shake
The rope where she leaned broke off
Her smile was not as nice as before
But for the sake of your unity and future
Your Father tried to understand as best as he could
I tried to patch the cracks
Connecting things that were separated
With a lot of courage and patience
Even when this heart felt like it was cut by a knife.

1971:
But history said things differently
Your Mother was hard-hearted
She was hard-headed
Promises flew high
What the heck
Didn't care
Fidelity was replaced with lust.

And now
July the thirtieth
Your Father and Mother were at the crossroad
Your Mother opted for the blind alley
She sacrified her faith
The Cross was put away
She was too brave to make the decision.

Joko, Rini, Totok and Bambang[21]
My beloved children
Let everything go
Humans are merely actors
In this world theather
Let there be no hatred or grudges.

Nothing to regret
Even though your Father is not Palgunadi
Who found Dewi Angraini
Who remained faithful until death did them apart.

MY MESSAGE:
No matter what
She remains your Mother
Respect her and take care of her
Even though she was unfaithful just like Banowati.[22]

Some Reflections

As we can see from the testimonies, there are various ways by which Indonesian former political prisoners of the 1965 tragedy cope with their marginality: forming a social association, deepening their faith in God, joining a church group, working for their children's education, working for the interests of fellow political prisoners, or expressing themselves through writing songs and poems.

The difficulties they have had to face are immense, yet it is amazing to see how they cope with their situations and hope for the best. Faith in God is very important for people like Sumaryanti, Sumbogo and Sumarwan; it helps them to persevere despite any and all obstacles. In the case of Sumaryanti, faith in God motivates her to work hard not only for the sake of her own interests but also for the interests of fellow former political prisoners. In many cases faith is the reason for Sumaryanti and others to survive in the face of stigmatization, discrimination and marginalization.

The testimonies show that when viewed through the eyes of the victims, what happened in 1965 in Indonesia was very different from the official

narrative created by the Suharto government. The expressions of feelings, emotion, and the strategies of coping with the situation demonstrate that at the personal level the events of 1965 are not just about an attempted *coup*, or military heroes, or the immoral Flower Fragrance Party, or people's revenge. It is more about ordinary people who lived far away from Jakarta and were falsely accused of doing something that they did not. It is about the years of suffering and humiliation that was endured because of such accusations. It is about people whose voices have been suppressed for many years. By letting them speak and by listening to their voices we can see how serious and deep is the suffering of the victims of the 1965 tragedy. These people have suffered greatly even though they had nothing to do with communism, let alone with the PKI.

As long as stories and the expressions of feelings of people like Agnes Sumaryanti, Fransiskus Sumbogo, Rahmono, and Theresia Sumirah are repressed, and as long as only the official government narrative is being told, people's understanding of Indonesian history—especially with regard to the 1965 tragedy—will remain incomplete, one-sided, even distorted. The official narrative could easily justify or even promote all kinds of injustices against members of society, including practices of marginalization, discrimination and enduring political stigmatization.

It was evident that President Suharto's New Order government did not only politicize history by practicing what might be called "politics of remembering", but also implemented what could be called "the politics of forgetting." It selectively determined which events of the past could and should be remembered, and which ones ought to be forgotten. For the sake of its own interests, the government was often willing to create certain "historical events" that were easy to remember and that in turn could be used to influence people's thinking and attitudes, as shown in the case of the fanciful story of the Flower Fragrance Party.

Another impact of the government's domination in history narration—with all its efforts to politicize what is remembered and forgotten about the past —is the emergence of the so-called "amnesia of history". Because history writing and discussion were so limited and heavily controlled by the

government, many Indonesians have become oblivious to many events of the past, including those that are important to remember and learn. Even if they remember certain past events, the memories they have regarding those events is usually only partial and largely in accordance with the government's narrative. Even worse than that, the amnesia is not only related to events that occurred way back in the past, but also to practices of violence and human rights abuses that took place in more recent times, such as those that have taken place since the fall of the Suharto government in 1998. Many Indonesians willingly ignore the background of many abuses, the motives and the identity of the perpetrators, or even the continued suffering of the victims.

It is very rare (not to say never) that persons from high level positions are held responsible in a fair system of justice for acts of violence that they either initiated or that are within their realm of responsibility. This situation is potentially upsetting, but after a while it seems that people have gotten used to it and think of it as something "normal". Consequently, it is not difficult to understand why nobody has ever been held responsible for the mass killings and detention that occurred in 1965 and after. This means that if today or tomorrow similar acts of violence or human rights abuses happen again, there is no guarantee that someone will be prosecuted or held responsible. This especially applies to violence that involves religious or military elements, or a combination of both.

It is important to note that the collective memories that are partial and manipulated are still being used even today, many years after the fall of President Suharto and his government. During the national election of 2004 and local election of 2005, in various locations throughout Indonesia, banners were prominently displayed warning people of the "latent danger of communism"—forty years after the PKI was said to be annihilated. This is an example of how the memory of the 1965 tragedy is still being manipulated and used as a political tool. Another example was a letter sent by a cabinet Minister banning the use in the 2004 school curriculum of history as a subject, because the government feared that the use of the curriculum would encourage students to question the official version of the 1965 tragedy.

Indeed, alternatives to the Indonesian government's official narrative on the 1965 tragedy are badly needed, and these alternative narratives must include the voices of former political prisoners and their family members.

Endnotes

1 Originally published in Thomas Stodulka and Bridget Rottger-Rossler (eds.), *Feelings at the Margins: Dealing with Violence, Stigma and Isolation in Indonesia*. Berlin: Campus, 2013.

2 A few works have focused on the survivors, such as Ita F. Nadia, *Suara Perempuan Korban Tragedi '65* (Yogyakarta: 2009); Hersri Setiawan, *Kidung Para Korban; Dari Tutur Sepuluh Narasumber Eks-Tapol* (Yogyakarta: Pakorba and Pustaka Pelajar, 2006).

3 For a personal account on the experience of living as a woman prisoner in Plantungan Prison, see dr Hj. Sumiyarsi Siwirini C, *Plantungan: Pembuangan Tapol Perempuan* (Yogyakarta: PUSDEP and IHJR/ Institute for History, Justice and Reconciliation, 2010).

4 These five principles are: Beielf in one God; humanity; unity; democracy; and social justice.

5 There are other associations of former political prisoners and their family such as Pakorba (Paguyuban Korban Orde Baru; Association of the New Order's Victims; LPRKROB (Lembaga Perjuangan Rehabilitasi Korban Rejim Orde Baru; Forum for the struggle for Rehabilitation of the New Order Regime's victims); and YPKP 1965 (Yayasan Penelitian Korban Pembunuhan *1965*/1966; The Foundation for Victims of the 1965/1966 Killings).

6 Similar testimonies can be found in Baskara T. Wardaya (ed.). *Truth Will Out: Indonesian Accounts of the 1965 Mass Violence* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing), 2013. Some of the subjects in this section (with different pseudonyms) are also featured in the book.

7 See Sumaryanti's fuller testimony (with a different pseudonym) in Wardaya (2013), 147-152.

8 Written Testimony, March 2010. See a slightly different translation in Wardaya (2013), 148.

9 Written Testimony, March 2010.

10 Written Testimony, March 2010.

11 Written Testimony, March 2010. See Wardaya (2013), 152.

12 Such as the documentary called *Perempuan Yang Tertuduh* (Lembaga Kreativitas Kemanusiaan, Jakarta, 2007).

13 Written Testimony, March 2010.

14 Written Testimony, March 2010. See Wardaya (2013), 152.

15 Written Testimony, March 19, 2010.

16 Written Testimony, January 2010.

17 See Sumirah's fuller testimony (with a different pseudonym) in Wardaya (2013), 136-146.

18 Written Testimony, April 2010. See Wardaya (2013), 140. Along with her family, Sumirah is one of the subjects in the documentary film called *40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy* by a University of California-Los Angeles professor, Dr. Robert Lemelson (2009). See http://www.40yearsofsilence.elementalproductions.org

19 Written on January 17, 2010.

20 Written on February 21, 2010.

21 Pseudonyms for his children.

22 A figure in the Mahabarata epic who is known for being good-mannered but unfaithful.

Part 6
Academic Responsibility

Introduction

One of the ways an authoritarian government can pursue in order to dominate its people is by controlling the people's memory of the collective past. Meanwhile, two of the many ways of controlling people's memory is by allowing them to know about the past only through the narratives that the government itself produces, and by preventing them from having access to the records of the past. And that was exactly what the New Order government—and its surviving supporters—has done to the people of Indonesia. As part of its attempt to control the way of Indonesians to understand their own history—and not questioning the government's legitimacy and practices—the New Order government controlled the Indonesians' understanding of the collective past, especially the past that related to the violent events of 1965-66. In addition to producing its own version of the events for the sake of controlling peoples' memory, the same government was controlling archival records pertaining to the 1965-66 issues. As a result, for many years—even long after the New Order government fell from power in 1998—the people of Indonesia were (and are) prevented from having free access to the records.

The sections in this part deal with issues related to government's willingness to be open on issues related to the horrible events of 1965-66. As will be discussed in section one, following President Suharto's stepping down from his political throne, there was some openness in addressing the 1965 issues. Gradually, however, the openness diminished and walls were erected to prevent the public from freely discussing the 1965 topics. Since the installment of President Joko Widodo's government in 2014 there have been greater openness, but people remain uncertain if the openness would lead to official support for addressing the topics. Section two emphasizes the importance of documentation on records related to past human rights abuses, despite all the restrictions by the government and other anti-communist groups. The important role (if not duty) of academics on this matter is very important, and it is being emphasized in the third section of this part of the book.

1. Cracks in the Wall: Indonesia and Narratives of the 1965 Mass Violence[1]

If we were flowers / You were the wall /
But in the wall / We have planted seeds /
One day we will grow together /
With the conviction: you have to crumble /
In our conviction /
Everywhere tyranny has to crumble /
–Wiji Thukul[2]

WHEN IN OCTOBER 1965 those six generals were abducted and killed, the events took most Indonesians by surprise. Certainly the events themselves did not come out of the blue.[3] Yet they astonished everybody. Due to the scarcity of media and the news censorship that was soon imposed, it was difficult for the general public to monitor the development of the events from one moment to the other. Only later did they learn that in addition to the generals who were violently murdered, a lieutenant was also killed, along with the daughter of one of the generals. Three of the generals were killed in their homes, while the other three were still alive when they were brought to the southern outskirts of the capital, before eventually also being killed. The bodies of the six generals and the other military officer were then dumped in an unused well, located in a village called Lubang Buaya, not far from Jakarta.

As it was not immediately clear who actually masterminded the bloody events, a variety of information, rumors and speculation circulated in the first days following the violence. One group which called itself "September 30th Movement" claimed responsibility, declaring that its main intention was to save Indonesian President Sukarno from a government takeover

which they believed was about to be launched by a council of generals in the Indonesian National Army (TNI).[4] The main personnel of the September 30 Movement were three Army officers—namely Lieutenant Colonel Untung, Colonel Abdul Latief and Brigadier General Soepardjo—but others may have been directly or indirectly involved. Among the possibilities were the top leaders—but not the rank-and-file members—of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

Before it was clear who was responsible for the kidnapping and killing, a group of Army officers under the control of Major General Suharto—who then was the commander of the Indonesian Army's Strategic Command—declared that the PKI, which was the Army's political archrival, was the mastermind of the bloody events. Suharto and his group then waged a propaganda campaign saying that the PKI had not only plotted the kidnapping and killing, but also planned to launch a *coup d'état* before changing Indonesia from a nation based on the political ideology of Pancasila (Indonesia's national Five Principles) to a "godless" communist ideology. The propaganda campaign also spread the rumors that women members of the PKI mutilated the bodies of the generals while erotically dancing around the generals' dead bodies.

Despite being at best half true, the campaign was effective in spreading anti-communist sentiment among Indonesians, especially on the islands of Java, Bali, and Sumatra (particularly North Sumatra) and later in other places. Under the command of Army's Special Forces (RPKAD) commander Lieutenant General Sarwo Edhi Wibowo, military units were dispatched from Jakarta to other parts of Java in order to raise the level of public anti-communist sentiment and to transform anti-communist sentiment into collective violence against those who were accused of being members of the PKI or of being communist sympathizers. Under the provocation and coordination of Army units, civilian groups apprehended, arrested, tortured, and killed those who were considered to have something to do with the killings of the generals in Jakarta—although most of them never personally set foot in the capital city.

The major mass violence against alleged communists started in Central Java around the third week of October 1965. In November it spread to East Java, and in December similar violence took place in the island of Bali.[5] At a less-massive scale, the violence also occurred in other parts of the country, continuing until 1968. At the end, it was estimated that a total of between 50,000 to 1,000,000 civilians were killed during the violence, mostly in the last three months of 1965. Many more were tortured, imprisoned, exiled and discriminated against.

Beginning in early 1966, a phased takeover of national leadership took place in Jakarta, in which the left-leaning President Sukarno was gradually pushed from power. Slowly but certainly he was replaced by none other than General Suharto. Suharto appointed himself as the person charged not only to maintain order, but also to preside over political matters, before he made himself acting-President and then officially the President of Indonesia in 1967.

Suharto's ascension to power was soon followed by militaristic and authoritarian style of government. Moreover, it implemented policies favorable to foreign investment-friendly. During Suharto's presidency, many major Western corporations did business in Indonesia, exploiting the country's rich natural resources and favorable market potential as one of the most populated nations on earth. Suharto would rule Indonesia for the next three decades, before he himself was pushed out of power in 1998 in the midst of social, economic and political upheavals.

Viewed in a broader context, the gory events of October 1, 1965 and the mass violence that took place afterwards, were not simply a matter of crime and punishment. Realizing that the mass violence against suspected communists did not only involve mass killings but also torture, incarceration, destruction of properties, exile, even withdrawal of citizenship, it was clear that the series of violence were more than spontaneous act of revenge, as often claimed by the Suharto government.

Despite common claims, especially in the West, that the violence was part of the Indonesian custom of "running amok", it was also clear that the sustained violence was actually carried out in stages involving planning,

coordination and control, especially by the Army's Special Forces.[6] Historian John Roosa describes in detail that "the typical pattern was for the victims to be detained first, taken out at night, trucked to an isolated spot in the countryside, shot, stabbed or bludgeoned to death, and then left in unmarked mass graves or dumped in a river.... [C]old-blooded executions, not frenzied mob attacks, accounted for most of the deaths."[7] Such a pattern in no way indicated that the acts of killing and torture were simply expression of spontaneous traditional customs.

Kammen and McGregor argue that attacks on the PKI were only the first stage of a plan to reorganize Indonesian society from the old-Sukarno style of people-oriented and anti-foreign investment government into an elite-oriented society with close ties with Western business interests. In their words, the mass violence that spanned from the second half of 1965 to the end of 1968 was a "counter-revolution" which aimed "to curtail the mass mobilization and popular participation unleashed by the national revolution; to destroy the social bases of Sukarno's left-leaning political system, called Guided Democracy; and to establish a new pro-Western military authoritarian regime."[8]

In yet broader context, the 1965 violence in Indonesia had strong international dimensions. Bradley Simpson, for instance, demonstrates that more than just national political upheaval, the 1965 mass killings in Indonesia and their aftermath "were a form of efficacious terror, an indispensable prerequisite to the overthrow of Sukarno, to Indonesia's reintegration into the regional political economy and international system, and to the ascendance of a modernizing military regime." In Simpson's words "[t]he mass violence against the Indonesian Left ... had a political and economic logic apparent to officials in London, Washington, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Moscow and elsewhere..."[9]

The narratives

Despite the complexities of the events of 1965 and what followed afterwards, the Suharto government's official narrative was rather simplistic and self-serving. The narrative essentially said that the PKI solely masterminded the

Army generals' abduction and killing on October 1, 1965 and planned to change the state's ideology of Pancasila to that of communism. And because of that, this narrative implies, the PKI deserved the hardest punishment possible. The narrative also implies that any harsh measures taken against suspected communists in the wake of the October 1, 1965 events were justified, even necessary.

With regard to the massacres that took place after the killing of the generals in Jakarta, the government simply stated that they were part of "spontaneous" acts of revenge by patriotic Indonesians against the Communist Party which had planned to change the nation's political ideology. In other words, the government's narrative suggested that the mass killings were not coordinated and were deemed necessary as well as justified in order to save the country from the nefarious forces of the communism.

Throughout its reign, the Suharto government also tried to perpetuate the notion that the PKI and its communist ideology remained the main danger to the nation. Because of this perceived danger people were asked to be vigilant, regardless of the fact that the Communist Party had been annihilated. But the alleged threat continued to be reiterated as if the PKI had returned to life in order to haunt and influence the people. The Suharto government then used every method available to reproduce the notion, be it through monuments, rumors, radio and television programs, names of public spaces, propaganda films or books[10]— all with the intention of supporting the official narrative of the 1965 events and to justify the authoritarian rule of President Suharto and his supporters.

One of the propaganda films used by the Suharto government to promote its version of the 1965 events was a docudrama film called *Penumpasan Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (or *Suppression of the Treacherous Plot of the September 30th Movement/the PKI*). Produced in 1984, the film portrayed in visual form the official narrative that the PKI was indeed behind the brutal abduction and murders of the generals in the early hours of October 1, 1965. It also showed how Sukarno was unreliable as President because of his dubious attitudes toward the PKI, while on the other side Suharto was very determined and reliable as an alternative leader. Beginning in 1985,

students were required to see the film every year on September 30, while at the same time it was also shown on national television.

Meanwhile one of the books containing the official narrative of the Suharto government was written by government historian Nugroho Notosusanto, called *40 Hari Kegagalan "G-30-S" 1 Oktober – 10 November* (or *The 40-Day Debacle of the September 30th Movement from October 1 to November 10 [1965]*), published in 1967. Another official book was called *Gerakan 30 September: Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia: Latar Belakang, Aksi, dan Penumpasannya* (or *The September 30th Movement: The Attempted Coup of the Indonesian Communist Party: It's Background, Actions and Eradication*).[11] It was published by Indonesia's State Secretariat's office as late as 1994, and was widely known as *buku putih* (or the "white book") pertaining to the official (read: "true") history of the 1965 events.[12] In sum, these books, official proclamations, and repeated screenings of a film created an official narrative that became a "wall" bolstering the Suharto government.

The wall of political taboo

Under the rule of President Suharto and his self-proclaimed "New Order" government (1966-98) the official narrative on 1965 events was very well-guarded. Production and interpretation of history regarding 1965 were backed by the Indonesian military.[13] Public access to military documents regarding the period was very difficult if not impossible. At the same time, it was also difficult to ask potential informants to share their knowledge or experiences about 1965 for concerns of personal safety.[14] Any criticism of the official narrative was met with pressures either from the government or government supporters. Any open and critical public discourse on the period became a political taboo. As Zurbuchen puts it: "Divergent perspectives, controversial events, and critical voices were not allowed to compete alongside the official record."[15] Like an impenetrable wall, this taboo stood firm and was well-guarded. In the midst of such a situation it was almost impossible for Indonesians and foreigners alike to talk critically about the violent and determining events of 1965-68.[16]

As reflected in the title of the propaganda film mentioned above, along its propaganda the government encouraged (if not mandated) the people that every time they mentioned the term "G30S" (the September 30th Movement) they had to add it with the suffix "/PKI". This was considered important in order to strengthen the imposed popular belief that the PKI was the sole mastermind of the abduction and killing of the generals on October 1, 1965—and therefore deserved harsh consequences.

During the Suharto government any narrative on 1965 events that was different from the official one was either banned or discouraged. The banned narratives included victims and witnesses' testimonies, as well as any scholarly account of what happened during the tumultuous period. Among the academic accounts of the events that was banned was a 162-page paper written by professors Benedict Anderson, Ruth McVey and Frederick Bunnell of Cornell University, called *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965 Coup in Indonesia* (also known as "Cornell Paper").[17] In the wake of the publication of the paper Anderson was banned from entering the country for 26 years. During the same period, any forum intended to publicly discuss the 1965-66 events was also prohibited.

Meanwhile, the manufactured fear of *bahaya laten komunis* or the "ever-present danger of communism" continued to be reproduced and circulated among the Indonesian population. One of the ways of keeping the fear afloat was by discriminating and stigmatizing former political prisoners of the mass violence. Among the discriminating measures taken was putting a special identifying code on the identity cards of former political prisoners. Such measures, in turn, made it difficult for these former political prisoners to live as a regular citizens or ordinary members of society.

Because of the banning of narratives other than the government's version, many questions regarding the 1965 events went unanswered. Among these questions were questions about the true position and role of General Suharto, especially before the events of October 1, 1965 and afterwards; the roles of foreign agencies in the events, knowing that in the post-1965 period many foreign business interests benefited from Indonesia under Suharto;

and the fact that many non-communists also became victims of violence by the Army and its civilian supporters.

The fall of the wall?

All this began to change when in 1998 President Suharto was forced out of power in disgrace. The Asian economic crisis of 1997 was followed by economic instability in Indonesia; the instability was followed by socio-political upheavals. Widespread student demonstrations against Suharto's authoritarian rule ensued. As a result in May 1998 the president was forced to resign. He was succeeded by his vice-president, B.J. Habibie, who served as an acting president until 1999.

Under the Habibie transitional government, the firm wall of political taboo regarding the narratives of the 1965 events appeared to shake and break. As the authoritarian style of government was succeeded by a more open-minded presidency, academics and the public as well as former political prisoners from the 1965 period began to talk openly about the events of 1965 and what followed afterwards, recounting histories different from the Suharto government's version. As Mary Zurbuchen puts it, during this period "a flood of relief and euphoria inundated the landscape of public awareness".[18]

The compulsory annual *Penumpasan* film screenings stopped playing in 1998.[19] In 2001 then-President Abdurrachman Wahid (1999-2001)—on behalf of his fellow-members of the Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama—apologized for the organization's involvement in the 1965 violence. In 2004 a law regarding the formation of a truth and reconciliation commission (*Undang-undang Komisi Kebenaran dan Rekonsiliasi*) was enacted by then-President Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-04), the daughter of the first Indonesian President, Sukarno. A growing number of people—especially among academics and human rights activists—began to mention orally or in writing the term "G30S" without adding "PKI".

Non-governmental organizations were established to address the 1965 events, including demands for truth-seeking and truth-telling initiatives and the rehabilitation of the wrongly-accused political prisoners. Grassroots

initiatives regarding truth and reconciliation related to the violence of 1965-66 were introduced to the public. In 2005, for instance, in the town of Surakarta, Central Java, an initiative began to set up networking among survivors of 1965 events to promote the idea of reconciliation. Small groups were organized locally to support each other among fellow survivors. Every once in a while members of these groups gather together to hold a seminar, workshop or film screening. The main purpose of such NGOs is to connect the survivors while promoting reconciliation at the local level.

To make use and to underline the momentum of the relative freedom in discussing 1965 in the post-Suharto period, a conference on 1965 and related issues was held at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) on 6-7 April 2001. The conference was intended "to pursue research interests in how the past is being revisited and re-interpreted in the Indonesian present."[20] Papers from the conference were published in a book form, called *Beginning to Remember: The Past in Indonesian Present*, published by Singapore University Press in 2005 and edited by Mary S. Zurbuchen. One of the questions being addressed during the conference was : "Why is it ... that we have seen in Indonesia since 1998 so few thorough investigations, commissions, trials, textbooks overhauls, rehabilitation, or other examples of 'getting to the bottom of' any one of the host of dimly understood incidents *(peristiwa)* that so many believe to have taken place?"[21]

A similar conference took place at the National University of Singapore in 2009. Viewing the mass violence that started in 1965, the aim of the conference, according to its organizers, was to further understand "the counter-revolutionary violence in Indonesia between 1965 and 1968". The conference was also aimed at understanding "the broad contours of the attack and the regional peculiarities of the violence," putting the events in a broader context.[22]

The wall re-erected

Despite this progress, the former hegemonic anti-communist atmosphere regarding the 1965 events gradually returned. In early 2000's, as initiatives

for dealing with 1965 issues were taking shape, so too were counter moves to discourage people from talking about the issues. Rumors of the re-emergence of communism began to be spread among the people. Public discussions on 1965 began to be discouraged or simply attacked. In other words, the anti-communist "wall" began to be re-assembled and re-erected, while the political taboo on talking about 1965 slowly returned.

Although they were heads of state, the presidents had only very limited political space (and political will) to change the situation. President Wahid's apology to the victims of 1965 violence, for instance, was not widely supported by fellow members of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization, and was generally ignored. To the surprise of many, in 2006 the law regarding the formation of a truth and reconciliation commission was annulled, less than two years after it had been enacted under the Megawati presidency. In the same year, the Indonesian government decided that in all history textbooks the suffix "/PKI" had to be put back after the word "G30S".[23] In addition, all textbooks that did not use the suffix had to be banned and removed from schools shelves. As a symbolic gesture of the banning of such books, officials of district attorney's office in many cities burned the books in public. One of the book burning events took place in the town on Depok, just outside Jakarta. It was witnessed by the town's mayor who was also a former State Minister of Research and Technology.[24]

In 2012 the government-sanctioned Commission on Human Rights presented a report—after three years of research—to the government, but the report was simply ignored and has never been followed up. Earlier that year, there were reports that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014) would apologize to the victims of the mass violence, but the apology never materialized. The failure to apologize was in part because of pressures from politicians and members of anti-communist groups.[25] But at the same time it was also due to the fact that President Yudhoyono himself is married to the daughter of the late Sarwo Edhi Wibowo, who was—as mentioned above—the commander of the Army's Special Forces which led the anti-communist purge in 1965 and afterwards.[26] Any apology on 1965 or any serious efforts to look into 1965 violence, it was feared, might implicate Yudhoyono's own

late father-in-law. As a result, there was no serious action on dealing with 1965 issues. This situation continued until the very last day of President Yudhoyono's government in October 2014.

Cracks in the wall

With the accession of the government of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo (since October 2014), the situation in Indonesia regarding 1965 began to change. In his presidential election campaign, Joko Widodo had promised that finding solutions to past human rights abuses would be one of his priorities if he were elected president. When he was indeed elected president, and as his government was relatively more accommodating to the wishes of the people, there were signs that the president wanted to be more open in discussing the 1965 issues and looking for a lasting solution. As *Time* magazine noted, "President Joko Widodo, the first leader of Indonesia to have no ties to the military or political elite, has repeatedly expressed his commitment to settling past human-rights violations, including the 1965–66 mass killings."[27] In May of 2015, Jokowi's Attorney General announced a government-backed reconciliation committee with the task of dealing with the 1965 mass violence along with other cases of past human right abuses. There were also reports that the president would apologize to the families of the survivors of past human rights violations.[28] In his state address to members of parliament on August 14, 2015, President Joko Widodo repeated his commitment to find solutions for human rights issues related to the 1965 anti-communist pogroms.[29]

Meanwhile, forces against any idea of dealing with the 1965 issues continued to be influential.[30] Leaders of certain military and civilian (especially religious) groups opposed any moves to address 1965, usually arguing that the PKI had truly been guilty of a coup attempt, and that any form of apology to the 1965 victims would be seen as a call for the return of communism in Indonesia. Even one minister in the President's own cabinet—a retired Army general—declared that it was not proper for the government to offer an apology for the suppression of the PKI.[31] When an International People's Tribunal on 1965 was held in The Hague in November

2015, a number of government officials offered negative comments on the tribunal. Some forums and events called to discuss 1965 were also attacked, including one in West Sumatra on 22 February 2015 and another in Solo, Central Java, two days later. In October 2015, in the midst of uncertainty between government pressures and self-imposed censorship, panels on 1965 during the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival in Bali were cancelled.[32] On February 2016 a forum at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, in which a guest lecturer from the Netherlands was going to talk about 1965, was also cancelled following pressures by Indonesia's national intelligence body.[33]

Yet despite the strong opposition, numerous forms of initiatives to address the 1965 issues continued at the grassroots level. While some public forums on 1965 were disrupted, others could be held without any difficulty. In Central Java a number of government officials held dialogues with 1965 survivors. In Central Sulawesi a city mayor publicly apologized to the former victims of the 1965 mass violence residing in his jurisdiction. In East Nusa Tenggara church groups encouraged former victims of the same violence to speak up and tell their stories.[34] Through the Commission for Human Rights and *Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban* (Witness and Victims Protection Body) the Indonesian government provides health services programs for the former victims of 1965 violence. The Ministry of Culture and Human Development even provides funds for the survivors and their family members with training for income-generating skills.

When in November 2015 some young human rights activists held an event called *"Museum Bergerak"* (Moving Museum) in which they displayed artefacts which belong to the survivors of 1965 violence while they were imprisoned, the event went ahead undisturbed.[35] In the same month a choir group which consisted of women survivors successfully performed Sukarno-era patriotic songs at the opening of an international arts festival in the city of Yogyakarta. Around the same time at Gadjah Mada University, a state university in Yogyakarta, academic forums on 1965 convened, again without any interference. In early December 2015 a number of young Indonesian artists held a major arts exhibition with the 1965 violence as the main theme in a prominent cultural center in Jakarta. Despite some initial

worries that it was going to be the target of protest, the exhibition went well and received positive public reaction and media coverage.[36] Meanwhile, books containing narratives on 1965 violence that are different from the New Order government's official story can now be published, distributed and discussed freely.[37]

Reasons abound to doubt that Indonesia will ever have the courage to seriously address the issues of 1965 mass violence. At the same time there are also many reasons for optimism. Despite political bickering among members of the political elite in Jakarta, at the grassroots level initiatives to address the 1965 events are flourishing, especially efforts to provide broader space for the former victims and survivors as inseparable members of Indonesian society. Like small cracks in the wall of political taboo in discussing past human rights issues, local and national initiatives to tackle the issues of 1965 are growing.

To Crumble

As expressed in the quotation from Wiji Thukul's poem above, people have been planting seeds of flowers of hope. They hope to see them grow in the wall of tyranny constructed from the narratives of 1965 tragedy established by the Suharto government. "One day we will grow together," Thukul wrote. "Everywhere tyranny has to crumble."[38] Whether or not the cracks on the wall of tyrannical narrative on 1965 mass violence in Indonesia will someday make the wall crumble we do not know. But we can always hope it will. Indeed, we share the conviction that everywhere tyranny has to crumble.

Endnotes

1 Originally a paper presented at the CCSEAS conference at the University of Ottaca, Ottawa, Canada, October 15-34 2015 and was published in David Webster (ed.), *Flowers in the Wall: Memory, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor, Indonesia and Melanesia* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017).

2 This is a quote from a poem called *"Bunga dan Tembok"* (The Flower and The Wall), written by an anti-Suharto poet-activist Paulus Wiji Thukul during the final years of President Suharto's rule. Thukul later mysteriously disappeared. See http://sastranesia.com/puisi-bunga-dan-tembok-karya-wiji-thukul/ Retrieved 3 March 2017

3 Douglas Kammen and Kate McGregor (eds.). *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-68*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2012, 13.

4 Asvi Warman Adam, *Seabad Kontroversi Sejarah [The Age of Historical Controversy]*. Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2007, 65-66.

5 Robert Cribb (ed.). *The Indonesian Killings 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali*. Melbourne: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University 1990. See also Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

6 Kammen and McGregor, 7.

7 John Roosa, "The September 30th Movement: The Aporias of the Official Narratives", in Kammen and McGregor, 47.

8 Kammen and McGregor, 4.

9 Bradley Simpson, "International Dimension of the 1965-68 Violence in Indonesia", in Kammen and McGregor, 51. See also Bradley R. Simpson. *Economists with Guns: Authoriatrian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

10 Roosa, in Kammen and McGregor, 25.

11 *Gerakan 30 September: Pemberontakan Partai Komunis Indonesia, Latar Belakang, Aksi dan Penumpasannya*. Jakarta: Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1994.

12 Roosa, in Kammen and McGregor, 31.

13 Mary S. Zurbuchen (Ed.), *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005, 4.

14 Kammen and McGregor, 6.

15 Zurbuchen, 5.

16 M.C. Ricklefs, a well-known scholar on Indonesian history who was based Australia, wrote a 500-page book on history of Indonesia. But it dedicated only one single page on 1965 events. See Kammen and McGregor, 5. Other Western Indonesianists also avoided being overly critical for fear of losing access to Indonesia.

17 Benedict Anderson, Ruth T. McVey and Frederick P. Bunnell, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965 Coup in Indonesia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1971.

18 Zurbuchen, 3.

19 Asvi Warman Adam, "September Affair in History Courses", paper presented at "The 1956-1966 Indonesian Killings Revisited", Singapore, 17-19 June 2009, 3.

20 Zurbuchen, xv.

21 Zurbuchen, 13.

22 Kammen and McGregor, ix-x.

23 Adam, 3.

24 Adam, 5.

25 *Tempo.Co.*, 5 August 2012.

26 *Jakarta Globe*, March 2, 2014.

27 *Time*, September 30, 2015.

28 *Time*, September 30, 2015.

29 *DetikNews*, August 18, 2015.

30 *Time*, September 30, 2015.

31 *DetikNews*, 20 August 2015.

32 See http://www.pen-international.org/10/2015/the-ubud-writers-and-readers-festival-bans-the-last-in-a-long-line/ and http://mojok.co/2015/10/ubud-writers-readers-festival/ Assessed on February 4, 2016.

33 See http://ruangtempur.blogspot.co.id/2016_02_01_archive.html Assessed February 4, 2016.

34 See Mery Kolimon, et. al. *Forbidden Memories: Women's Experiences of 1965 in Eastern Indonesia*. Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2015.

35 The idea of setting up a "moving museum" came from the fact that in Indonesia it is almost impossible to build a stationary or permanent museum on 1965 events that are not in line with the governmnent's official narratives on the events.

36 *Tempo*, 20 Dece[illegible] 2015.

37 See for instance Asvi Warman Adam, *Seabad Kontroversi Sejarah*. Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2007.

38 *https://kumpulanfiksi.wordpress.com/2011/09/03/puisi-puisi-wiji-thukul/ Assessed 26 Januari 2015.*

2. Documentation of the 1965-66 Anti-Communist Purge[1]

Fundamental violation of human rights always lead to peope feeling less and less human. —**Aung San Suu Kyi**

THE WAVES OF the 1965-66 violence, especially in the provinces of Central Java, East Java and Bali, curiously enough, coincided with the arrival of Army personnel in each of these places. The Army personnel were coordinated by the Indonesian Special Forces commanded by Lieut. Col. Sarwo Edhie Wibowo.[2] This indicates that the mass killings were far from being spontaneous as it was often perceived. They were instead systematically planned and coordinated by the Indonesian Army leadership. As later would be known, the systematic killings were the results of collaboration between the military and certain civilian groups. Many of these civilian groups were religiously motivated.

Following the massacres, the Indonesian Army and its civilian supporters gradually pushed President Sukarno from power and built a new, authoritarian government called the "New Order". For the next three decades the New Order government ruled Indonesia with a military style, in which military officers and retired military personnel controlled government positions almost in every level. People's freedoms were limited, including the freedom of expression. The communist party was officially made the scapegoat of the 1965-66 events and—as mentioned above—was banned. Marxism/Leninism was also officially prohibited from public discourse.

Meanwhile the former political prisoners related to the 1965-66 events were excluded from the society. They were not allowed to work as civil

servants or to get involved in politics. Their family members were stigmatized and marginalized from the country's social and political life.

Who Keeps the Human Rights Records?

Under the New Order rule most of the archives related to the anti-communist purge remained in the hands of the government of General Suharto. Even the official letter from President Sukarno to Suharto (the so called "Supersemar" or the Letter of Order of March 12, 1966) that eventually was used by Suharto to take over power from President Sukarno has been "missing". Up to this day no one is certain about the whereabouts of the letter. Only copies of the letter appeared to the public. Many people, however, doubt that these "copies" were real copies of the original letter, assuming that the original had been altered in such a way, to accommodate the interests of certain parties.

At the moment no one is sure where the documents related to the violence of 1965-1966 are stored. Some believe that most of them are kept in the military institutions or in the possession of certain families which have certain military connection. One of the military institutions that might have relevant documents is the military museum in Jakarta called "Museum Satria Mandala". Public access to the document section of the museum is limited, if not non-existent.

State institutions such as the ANRI (Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia or National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia) in Jakarta do not keep the 1965-66 documents. It has many collections of documents on Indonesian history from the colonial period and the period after the 1965 Tragedy, but there is almost nothing on the human rights abuses that occurred in 1965-66.

There were efforts by the New Order government to collect and publish documents on 1965-66 violence, but most of the documents collected in the publication are those that are written from the point of view of the government and the military. A book called *Fakta2 Persoalan Sekitar "Gerakan 30 September"* (1965)[3], for instance, is a good example of this. Collected and published by Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Darat (the Indonesian Army Information Center, Jakarta) the book contains collection of statements, official documents and newspaper reports (especially the ones

published in the Army's official newspaper *Angkatan Bersendjata*), which all put the blame on the PKI as the mastermind of the September 30 Movement and the killing of the generals. An example of documents published in this book is a newspaper report titled "Pengakuan Dirwan: AIDIT ada di Lobang Buaya Tanggal 1 Oktober waktu Djendral2 kita dibunuh"[4] which accused the leader of the PKI directly involved in the violence against the generals. In the same book there is also a document titled "Pengakuan Sekretaris II CC PKI Jogjakarta 'G 30 S' memang didalangi PKI—1 Oktober Aidit betul di Jogjakarta—Blocnote yang berbitjara"[5], which put the PKI and its leader as the agents responsible for the October 1, 1965. Similar type of military documentation can be seen in a book called Sejarah TNI-AD Kodam VII/ Diponegoro, prepared by Sejarah Militer Kodam VII Diponegoro, and published by Semdam VII/Diponegoro in 1971.[6]

In the last several years, however, there have been some initiatives among ANRI's staff members to conduct oral history projects on the eyewitnesses of important past events. These staff members carry out interviews with certain Indonesian public figures, such as political leaders, cultural personas, or prominent artists. They also made interviews with people who have connection with certain important events in Indonesian history, in which some of the survivors of the 1965-66 violence are also interviewed and recorded. The survivors were asked about their experiences and views regarding the events of 1965-66 along with the impacts on their personal lives and the lives of their families. The number of the survivors interviewed and documented, however, is still relatively limited. Part of the reasons is because of the lack of personnel that ANRI has for carrying out the project. More fundamental reason is the difficulties in interviewing the survivors that is caused by the fact that the survivors are often very hesitant to be interviewed by people who have connection with government institutions (in this case, ANRI).

Meanwhile a number of civilian groups, such as NGOs and academic institutions, have been trying to create their own collections of materials related to the 1965-66 anti-communist purges. These groups include Elsam (Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat /Institute for Policy Research

and Advocacy), Jakarta; ISSI (Institut Sejarah Sosial Indonesia/ Indonesian Institute for Social History), Jakarta; Lingkar Tutur Perempuan (Circle of Women's Narratives), Jakarta; PEC (People's Empowerment Consortium); Sanata Dharma University's PUSDEMA (Pusat Kajian Demokrasi dan Hak-hak Asasi Manusia/Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies), Yogyakarta; and JPIT (Jaringan Perempuan Indonesia Timur/Eastern Indonesian Women's Network) in Kupang, West Timor.

ISSI, for instance, states that it has collections of 390 audio interviews, 4,000 titles of publication, along with a good number of photographs and audio-visual interviews.[7] In its website it posts summaries of the audio interviews in the internet, so that the public can access them.[8] Some of the documents owned by the institute are also posted on its website, making them accessible to the public.[9] Elsam collected documents related to the 1965-66 violence and also posts them online in their website.[10] In 2012 Tempo weekly newsmagazine (Jakarta) published a special issue on the 1965 anti-communist purges containing interviews with former perpetrators of the 1965-66 violence. By publishing the interviews the magazine offers some form of documentation on the events, which could be instrumental for future researchers.[11]

Before and After

With regard to the question whether the documents on the past human rights abuses such as Indonesia's 1965-66 violence should be kept inside or outside the country, I think it would be better if the documents remain within the country. Despite the still-limited access to the human rights documents in Indonesia under the current government, keeping the documents in the country is better than moving them abroad. Part of the reasons is because there is still hope that with the passage of time government control of the documents will someday be less rigid. When that moment comes, it would be much easier for Indonesian researchers to access the documents. In order to make such change happen, however, there is a great need to persistently push the Indonesian government to loosen their control on the documents

and to make the documents more available for the general public, especially to academic researchers.

Outside Indonesia there are collections of documents on Indonesia during the period of 1965-66, although not too many documents that directly deal with the 1965-66 massacres themselves. One can find such collections at the National Archives II in College Parks, Maryland and at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, Austin, Texas, both in the United States. Personal accounts from the anti-communist and anti-Sukarno diplomatic perspectives can be found in the book by the US Ambassador to Indonesia when the events of the 1965-66 occurred, namely Marshall Green. The book is called *Indonesia: Crisis and Transformation, 1965-1968*, and was published in 1991. It is interesting to realize that despite the political and humanitarian scale and impacts of the events, only after about 25 years that the former Ambassador wrote and published his accounts on the events. Similar accounts were written by a former American political adviser at the US embassy in Jakarta during the period, namely Robert Martens. He wrote his personal accounts (and his role in the events) in a manuscript that is called *The Indonesian Turning Point, 1965-66*. Martens was known for his acknowledgement in giving lists of thousands of Indonesians who were suspected of being communist and who later were killed.[12] Howard P. Jones, United States Ambassador to Indonesia from 1958 to 1964 (just shortly before the anti-communist purge took place), also talked about the events of 1965-1966 in his book called *Indonesia: The Possible Dream* (published in 1971 and 1977). Unfortunately in the book he does not discuss much about the massacres themselves. He writes more about the political situation before and after the anti-communist massacres.

Documentary Films

In order to make sure that documents or archives on past human rights abuses are well-kept and are accessible to the public there should be international guidelines (supervised by the United Nations if necessary) on the matter. So far Indonesia does not have such guidelines. Such guidelines are important for merely for national purposes, but also for broader academic purposes.

In the current political regime of Indonesia, in which both military and civilian supporters of the 1965-66 massacres are still very influential on the country's current politics, it is almost impossible to think of having the public to be allowed to access documents on past human rights abuses. A change in this regard will only possible if there are pressures from the Indonesian themselves as well as from outside the country.

In the meantime people should continue efforts that have been done in finding alternatives to such regime. Examples of such efforts include the formation of a fact-finding team in 2003 headed by Dr. Asvi Warman Adam in order to investigate human rights abuses done under the rule of General Suharto, especially with regard to the treatment of the political prisoners in the Buru Island, located in the Moluccas. The team has written a detailed report on the findings but the report will only be published in 2013.[13] In 2007 the Indonesian Commission on Anti-Violence Against Women (also known as *Komnas Perempuan* or National Commission on Women) published a report on the women survivors of the 1965-1966 human rights abused called *Laporan Pemantauan HAM Perempuan: Kejahatan Terhadap Kemanusiaan Berbasis Jender: Mendengarkan Suara Perempuan Korban Peristiwa 1965* (*Report on Women's Human Rights: Crimes against Humanity Based on Gender: The Voices of Women who were victims of the 1965 Events*, published in 2007).

Between 2008 and 2012 the Indonesian Commission of Human Rights conducted investigation on the human rights abuses related to the 1965 Tragedy in many parts of Indonesia and wrote a detailed report on the abuses. When in 2012 the commission submitted some 800-page report to the government, the report was flatly rejected. Since the report is considered a legal document, the public has no access to it. The executive summary of the report, however, is available to the public and is in the process of publication.

Meanwhile there have been publication of interviews with survivors in the form of book, such as *Kidung Para Korban: Dari tutur sepuluh narasumber eks-tapol* (Song of the Victims: From the stories of ten former political prisoners, 2006); *Suara Perempuan Korban Tragedi '65* (The Voices of Women Victims of the 1965 Tragedy, 2007); *Memori-memori Terlarang: Perempuan*

korban dan penyintas tragedi '65 di Nusa Tenggara Timur (Forbidden Mamories: Women Victims and Survivors of the '65 Tragedy in East Nusa Tenggara, 2012); *Suara di Balik Prahara: Berbagi Narasi tentang Tragedi '65* (2011). The book *Suara di Balik Prahara* has been translated into English and was published by Monash University Publishing (Australia) under the title *Truth Will Out: Indonesian Accounts of the 1965 Mass Violence* (2013).

Outside the government documentation on the 1965 anti-communist purge was also done in the form of documentary films. Among those films are *Putih Abu-abu* (White and Grey, Syarikat Indonesia, 2006); *Menyemai Terang Dalam Kelam* (Planting Light in the Darkness, IGP Wiranegara, 2007); *Tumbuh Dalam Badai* (Growing in the Storm, IGP Wiranegara, 2008); *Tjidurian 19* (Tjidurian 19, Abduh Aziz and Lasja Susatyo, 2011); *Die Jongen Kan Zingen* (That Kid Can Sing); *Yang Bertanah Air, Tak Bertanah* (Having Motherland but No Land, A. Dananjaya, 2009); *Jembatan Bacem* (The Bacem Bridge, Yayan Wiludiharto, 2012); *Rante Mas* (The Golden Chain, B.W. Purbanegara, 2009). Documentaries on the 1965 violence were also made by non-Indonesian film producers, such as Chris Hilton (*Shadow Play: Indonesia's Years of Living Dangerously*, 2001); Robert Lemelson (*40 Years of Silence: An Indonesian Tragedy*, 2009); Maj Wechselman, *The Women and the Generals*, 2010); and Joshua Oppenheimer (*The Act of Killing*, 2012; *The Look of Silence*, 2014).

More Open

The human rights abuses that occurred in Indonesia during the anti-communist purges in 1965-1966 were massive, but the Indonesian government continues to deny public access to documents related to the purges. As an alternative, a number of Indonesians and foreign agents conduct their own investigation, documentation and publication on the issue. While we need to encourage such initiatives, we also need to push the Indonesian government to be more open and to make the documents more accessible to the public or at least to academic researchers.

Endnotes

1 Originally a paper presented at the Symposium "The Antonym of Forgetting: Global Perspectives on Human Rights Archives", October 18-19, 2013, at the University of California-Los Angeles, USA.

2 The late Liet. Col. Sawo Edhie Wibowo is the father-in-law of former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

3 *Fakta2 Persoalan Sekitar "Gerakan 30 September"* [Facts Regarding the "September 30 Movement"] (Jakarta: Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Darat, 1965).

4 "Dirwan's Confession: AIDIT [the General Secretary of the PKI] was at Lobang Buaya when our Generals were murdered", p. 262-263.

5 "Confession of the Second Secretary of the PKI's Central Committee in Jogjakarta "G 30 S" was indeed masterminded by the PKI—on October 1 Aidit was indeed in Jogjakarta—Block n[illegible]peaks", p. 265-267.

6 Sejarah Militer Kodam VII Diponegoro, *Sejarah TNI-AD Kodam VII/Diponegoro* (Semarang: Semdam VII/Diponegoro, 1971).

7 See: http://www.sejarahsosial.org/, assessed September 20, 2013.

8 See: http://sejarahsosial.org/arsipsuara/?cat=3&paged=4

9 See: http://www.sejarahsosial.org/?page_id=157.

10 See: http://dokumentasi.elsam.or.id/

11 See the cover story of *Tempo* magazine (Jakarta), October 1, 2012 edition.

12 Robert Martens, *The Indonesian Turning Point 1965-66* (manuscript, publication date not available). See also "Indonesia: U.S. Role in 1965 Massacres Confessions from the U.S. State Department" *Revolutionary Worker* #1116, August 26, 2001.

13 See Baskara T. Wardaya (ed.), *Luka Bangsa, Luka Kita: Pelanggaran HAM Masa Lalu dan Tawaran Rekonsiliasi* [The Nation's Wounds, Our Wounds: Past Human Rights Abuses and the Invitation for Reconciliation] (Yogyakarta, due for publication at the end of 2013).

3. Academics and Past Human Rights Violations[1]

Intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyze actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions. —**Noam Chomsky**

ANY ELEMENT WITHIN the Indonesian society has a role to play in addressing past human rights violations. However, the academic world has a special role to play, because it can open doors for new possibilities in dealing not only with past human rights violations but also with learning the lessons from human rights abuses of the past for the sake of a better future.

The importance of the involvement of intellectuals in Indonesia is not something new. It can be clearly seen in the nation's history. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, for instance, when "Indonesia" as a name for a political entity was barely present in the imagination of the general population of the Netherland's East Indies, young native intellectuals already began to explore and introduce the idea of dismantling the unjust and abusive colonial system, and sought ways to form a new political entity that was going to be free from it.

Even though movements against Dutch colonialism had been around long before, it was only when these intellectuals began to work together that the movement began to progress uninterruptedly and extensively.

As we all know, in 1908 a group of young native intellectuals—in this case students at Stovia Medical School in Batavia—began to form a socio-political group called Budi Utomo. They began to initiate the idea of freeing the people of Java from foreign subjugation.

Soon what they did inspired other young Indonesians from other parts of the archipelago to do the same. They similarly formed groups to work on the ideas of pursuing independence from Dutch colonialism. Jong Sumatranen Bond, Jong Batak, Jong Minahasa are just to name a few.

These intellectuals began to learn, discuss, and explore with each other ideas of forming a modern post-colonial state. They wanted to form a modern and independent state, different not only from a colonial state where they lived, but also different from the pre-colonial systems of feudalism and monarchy.

In the next development, a growing number of intellectuals and academics continued to play important role in cultivating the idea of independence. Leading young political activists of the time such as Sukarno, Hatta, Syahrir, Soepomo and others were all intellectuals who played very crucial role in the formation of Indonesia as a modern nation-state.

Indeed, Kahin (1952) argues that it was thanks to these intellectuals that Indonesia was able to gain independence from the Dutch and eventually established a new nation-state of Indonesia.[2]

Dangerous

As it was in the early days of the independence movement and the young republic, today intellectuals and academics continue to play important role in Indonesia.

This was because the academic world has been regarded as "common ground" or some form of "public space" where people from different walks of life in the society can freely meet, think, explore, exchange (even debate) ideas, and together seek new possibilities for the sake of the nation's future. It is not rare that in the academic world people engage in fierce debates on certain issues. This was because unlike in many other instances, in the academic world differences of opinions are allowed, and in some cases are even expected.

In this regard, the case of the symposium on the 1965 anti-communist purge that was held on April 18-19, 2016 is interesting to see. When a

committee was preparing for the symposium many people were doubtful about its success. While a number of former victims and some academics thought that the symposium was just going to be a trick by the military intended to whitewash the Army's bloody hands in the 1965-66 mass murder, some circles in the military suspected that the forum was just a pretext to open the door for the return of the Indonesian Communist Party.

At the end of the day, however, the symposium went quite well. Despite the earlier security threats it proceeded and ended without any significant incident. One of the recipes for the success of the event was that the symposium was using an *academic* approach. The approach was clearly reflected in the symposium's title, namely *Membedah Tragedi 1965, Pendekatatan Kesejarahan* or "Dissecting the 1965 Tragedy, a Historical Approach". The use of the historical approach indicated that the symposium was going to deal with the 1965 tragedy mainly from an academic perspective.

Thanks to this academic approach the forum became relatively acceptable for many parties. There were certainly voices of dissent—from the military, from certain religious groups, as well as from among the academics themselves—but they did not prevent the committee from holding the first-ever national forum on 1965 sponsored by the central government. At the end of the conference many were quite happy with how the symposium went.

A good number of participants were particularly pleased and felt touched by the closing remarks delivered by Mr. Sidarto Danusubroto—former Police Chief, member of the Presidential advisory committee under President Jokowi and former head of Indonesia's Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly)—who urged the government to initiate national reconciliation and general rehabilitation for all the victims of the 1965 tragedy. Other than representatives from the army, survivors, politicians, and human rights activists, most the presenters in the symposium were academics from different disciplines including history, psychology, political science, anthropology, sociology, and law.

The presence of the academics was important in that they represented the "common ground" of the academic world in which the opposing parties could meet each other in the same forum. The opposing parties

were especially former victims and their families on one side and former perpetrators or supporters of the perpetrators of the events on the other side. In that "common ground" they had the opportunity to discuss the same issue—in this case the 1965 human rights violations—from each of their respective views.

It is not difficult to imagine how problematic it would be to maintain order if for a forum like this the participants came only from the victims' groups and the perpetrators' groups. Personal experiences, old disputes, and emotion-loaded differences of opinion would clash in direct manners with nobody can guarantee the long-term consequences for dealing past human rights violations. Prejudice, distrust and vested interests would prevent the participants from producing fruitful discourse. Only the presence of the academics and the academic approach made the meeting of the two opposing parties possible.

It is not surprising that in the April 2016 forum, despite the attendance of many former victims and perpetrators, due to the strong presence of the academics as source persons for the discussion sessions, the symposium went relatively peacefully. When there were differences of opinions or ideas among the participants, the differences never turned into an uncontrollable situation, let alone physical confrontation.

It was unfortunate that shortly after the symposium academic freedom in Indonesia was again challenged, even repressed. Rumors on the resurrection of communism were deliberately spread, evidence were "found" and based on these "evidence" purges were launched against anything that was considered "leftist". The fear that is created by such repression is clearly dangerous. It will jeopardize not only the nation's academic freedom, but also its future. This is especially because most of the victims of the repression and purges are young people.

The Young

As we have seen, in the early days of Indonesia's history intellectuals and academics played a very important role. They worked together to explore,

introduce, systematize, and find ways to liberate Indonesia from the abusive colonial system. Similarly today intellectuals and academics can continue to play important role in exploring, introducing, systematizing, and finding steps that are needed for dealing with past human rights issues and initiating national reconciliation. It is the task of academics, for instance, to explore and introduce theories pertaining to truth-telling, amnesty, memory, amnesia, rehabilitation, or retributive, restorative and transitional justice that all are necessary for dealing with past human rights abuses. Studies and socialization of such ideas are important to the society before embarking on more specific steps toward national reconciliation.

Other than explaining the meaning of each of the necessary terms, academics can also help the society at large to study how other countries deal with past human rights violations. Many lessons can be learned from other post-authoritarian countries like South Africa, Chile, Argentina, Germany, and others regarding reconciliation, and it is the task of academics to explain such lessons to the public.

With regard to educating the young, academics should help emphasize the importance of promoting school curricula that include discourse related to past human rights issues and how to address them.

Endnotes

1 Originally a paper presented at the occasion of Public Talk on "Academic Responsibility and Past Human Rights Violations" at the University of Indonesia campus, Depok, Jakarta, May 27, 2016.

2 Aparently aware of the value of intellectuals as a means for consolidating power, Suharto and his New Order government took great efforts in using the academic world to shape the way Indonesians (especially the young) understand post-independence history in order to support him and his p[illegible] Suharto, for instance, was particularly interested in using Nugroho Notosusanto as an intellect[illegible] to secure his political power. As President Suharto appointed Nugroho as the president of the prestigious University of Indonesia and later Minister of Education (McGregor: 2008).

Epilogue

It is not rare that people, both in the academic circles and the general public, question the relevance of discussing the past for the sake of present. Hopefully the topics discussed in this book have successfully (at least to a certain degree) offered the reader hints that discussing the past *is* indeed relevant for the present. By discussing the circumstances of the proclamation of independence, for instance, *today* we are reminded once more time that Indonesian independence was a hard-won independence and that the *"dan lain-lain"* (et cetera) in the text of the proclamation reminds us *now* that there are still many homework to do in order to keep and to fulfil the hope of this nation's founding fathers.

By looking at the religious diversity of Indonesia, we remember that this nation is not only multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, but also multi-religious, and that every member of each of the religions (and many other systems of belief) are called to contribute to the nation, especially in keeping the nation remain democratic and diverse. Topics on the interconnectivity of diplomacy and one's personal background during the Sukarno years bring back the awareness on the impossibility of separating the personal and the political, the local and the international, the traditional and the global. They are all interconnected. Even today.

Meanwhile topics related to the anti-communist purge of the 1965-66 offered by the sections of this book make us realize that up to the present

there are still many past human rights issues that have not been adequately addressed in Indonesia. Up to this day the distorted narratives on the events are still dominating peoples' minds, former victims are still waiting for justice, while public access to documents on the 1965-66 atrocities are still being blocked. We cannot ignore these issues and pretend that they are not there. Instead, we need to take them up and regard them as part of the homework that need to be done. We believe that there are many other issues waiting to be worked on, and the ones that are offered in this book are just a few of them.

It is not rare that people, both in the academic circles and the general public, question the relevance of discussing the past for the sake of present. Because of that, it is hoped that the topics discussed in this book have successfully (at least to a certain degree) offered hints that discussing the past *is* indeed relevant for the present. After all, *What's past is prologue*, says Shakespeare.[1] We further hope that by looking back and discussing the relevant events and ideas of the past as prologue for the present, we will be better prepared to start our journey to the future—both individually and collectively.

Note:

1 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act 2, Scene I.

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