

OPERATION HAIK:  
THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION  
AND THE  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
IN INDONESIA, 1957-1958

by

DOUGLAS BLAKE KENNEDY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	iv
CHAPTER:	
1 INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
2 EVOLUTION OF COVERT OPERATIONS: 1957 . . . . .	11
3 FROM COVERT TO PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS: 1957-1958	43
4 OPERATIONS: March-May, 1958 . . . . .	62
5 CONCLUSION . . . . .	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	100

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

When Dwight D. Eisenhower entered the Oval Office in 1953, the perceived menace of a monolithic, communist conspiracy aimed at conquering the "Free World" provided the focal point for his foreign policy. Central to this threat of a communist takeover was the destructive nuclear capability recently acquired by the Soviet Union. The lethality of the nuclear storehouses of both the United States and the Soviet Union dictated that the Eisenhower administration counter the international communist threat--one that always was believed to be coordinated from inside the Kremlin--without direct confrontation with the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

Eisenhower had focused his campaign on the "ideological struggle against communism," which he felt the Truman administration had ineffectively pursued.<sup>2</sup> He also encouraged the "rollback" of communism, which was a strategy dedicated to liberating those satellite states that the Soviets continued to dominate through intimidation and control, and strove to prevent the influence of communism in the Third World. Eisenhower viewed his election victory as a mandate to carry out a more active

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1990), 436-37, 484.

<sup>2</sup> John Prados, President's Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II Through Iranscam (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986), 90.



policy against Soviet-inspired communism.<sup>3</sup> Hidden behind his confrontational rhetoric, however, remained the principle that the support and encouragement to Eastern European nations in the Soviet sphere, and the developing governments in the Third World, did not include actual U.S. overt assistance that might lead to conflict with the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> President Eisenhower's emphasis on avoiding conventional warfare also was affected by his understanding of the public's wariness of conflict after the Korean war.<sup>5</sup>

President Eisenhower's diary reveals the extent to which he feared the communist expansion. He acquired much of his attitude towards the Communists from the late secretary of defense, James Forrestal (1947-1949), who had supported the thesis that the Soviet Union was set on destroying democracy and all forms of representative government. Forrestal had cautioned Eisenhower on this Soviet ambition during World War II. Ike reflected on this in his diary, noting, "I never had cause to doubt the accuracy of [Forrestal's] judgments on this point."<sup>6</sup> Eisenhower's biographer, Stephen Ambrose, highlights the extent to which this idea affected him, citing an entry in Eisenhower's diary dated January 27, 1949, where he wrote:

- (a) The free world is under threat by the monolithic mass of Communistic Imperialism.
- (b) The U.S. must wake up to prepare a position of strength from which it can speak serenely and confidently.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Immerman, The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), 122.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose with research associate Richard Immerman, Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981), 238.

<sup>5</sup> Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, The CIA and American Democracy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 63.

<sup>6</sup> Immerman, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Ambrose and Immerman, 236.

Although he feared the military and political assault on the free nations by the Soviets, President Eisenhower exhibited an even greater apprehension regarding uncontrolled U.S. spending on the military during peacetime. He well understood the relationship between military strength and economic stability. As John Lewis Gaddis suggests in his analysis of the Eisenhower administration's containment policy, one goal was to avoid destruction of that which was being defended.<sup>8</sup> Eisenhower recognized that the United States did not have unlimited resources to counter Communist designs. The president's main objective became balancing the maximum level of deterrence while minimizing costs.<sup>9</sup>

President Eisenhower believed he could meet this objective of deterring the Soviet Union while at the same time countering the rising and threatening tide of international communism through his strategy of the "New Look" and the employment of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).<sup>10</sup> The president, along with Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency (DCI), recognized that the United States could not militarily contain the monolithic Soviet system everywhere; the emphasis for Dulles became the ideological and political struggle against the communist system.<sup>11</sup> Eisenhower supported this position, and that is why he replaced his long-time friend, Walter Bedell Smith, with the more active and covert operations-minded Dulles, as the

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<sup>8</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 134-136.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed account of President Eisenhower's strategy, and implementation of that strategy, see Gaddis, 127-97.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Grose, Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles (New York and Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), 269-70.

CIA chief.<sup>12</sup> Eisenhower also recognized that the United States had to counter the Soviet's own aggressive clandestine operations. He wrote, "I have come to the conclusion that some of our traditional ideas of international sportsmanship are scarcely applicable in the morass in which the world now founders."<sup>13</sup>

The CIA provided Eisenhower the means to continue the war against communism without relying on overt capabilities, and without taxing the American economy. The agency had expanded rapidly since its inception by the National Security Act of 1947. It had a "loosely defined" mission that included the authority "to perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting national security as the [National Security Council (NSC)] will from time to time direct."<sup>14</sup> This broad mission statement became enhanced through NSC 4/A in December 1947, a directive that allowed the agency to employ covert psychological operations. Within six months, the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 292, 306, 322. When Admiral Sidney Souers, the first director of the Central Intelligence Group (CIG--the precursor to the CIA), heard that Allen Dulles was to become Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith's deputy of the CIA in 1950, he stated that although Dulles had the necessary experience, he had "become too single-minded about clandestine operations against communism." In January 1949, Allen Dulles gave James Forrestal, secretary of defense, the final draft of the Dulles-Jackson-Correa report evaluating the CIA's first year in operation. In the 193-page report, Dulles discussed the distinction between the clandestine collection of intelligence, and the requirement of covert operations:

The collection of secret intelligence is closely related to the conduct of secret operations in support of national policy. These operations, including covert psychological warfare, clandestine political activity, sabotage and guerrilla activity, have always been the companions of secret intelligence. The two activities support each other and can be disassociated only to the detriment of both. Effective secret intelligence is a prerequisite to sound secret operations and, where security considerations permit, channels for secret intelligence may also serve secret operations. On the other hand, although the acquisition of intelligence is not the immediate objective of secret operations, the latter may prove to be a most productive source of intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Andrew, For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 202. This concept of the high moral ground derived from Henry Stimson, President Hoover's secretary of state, who disbanded most military intelligence after World War I because, "Gentleman do not read other's mail."

<sup>14</sup> Anne Karalekas, History of the Central Intelligence Agency (Laguna Hills, CA: Aegean Park Press, 1977), 15.

NSC in directive 10/2 authorized the agency to use a “range of covert operations directed against the Soviet Union, including political warfare, economic warfare, and paramilitary activities.”<sup>15</sup>

The range of CIA activities not only grew with these new directives that amended its initial, vaguely defined charter, but they also received further encouragement after early operations that the Eisenhower administration viewed as successes. The two most significant covert schemes included the overthrow of Premier Mohammed Mossadegh of Iran in 1953 and the toppling of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman of Guatemala a year later. Both operations replaced “communist-associated” leaders with more moderate, pro-American leaders.<sup>16</sup>

The CIA gained further prestige after the release of the Doolittle Report on September 30, 1954. President Eisenhower had commissioned this group, headed by retired Air Force Lieutenant General James H. Doolittle, to provide him with a “comprehensive review of the factors of personnel, security, cost, and efficiency of covert operations.”<sup>17</sup> While the group’s conclusion supported future covert actions, it criticized the management skills of Allen Dulles. President Eisenhower told the group that the DCI’s exceptional ability made-up for his lack of administrative talent; and that his agency took “a strange kind of genius to run it.” In any event, the president had received justification for increasing the functions of the CIA.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 28-29; Prados, 28.

<sup>16</sup> Karalekas, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Prados, 109.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 109-12; Andrew, 211-12; Ambrose and Immerman, 187-88.

In the middle of his second administration, Eisenhower continued to show his enthusiasm for the CIA's role in stemming the spread of communism by authorizing a covert action in Indonesia. Later known as Operation HAIK (pronounced "hike"), this covert operation mirrored its predecessors in Iran and Guatemala.<sup>19</sup> The Eisenhower administration wanted to change the trend of Indonesian President Achmed Sukarno from his left-leaning stance to a more anti-Communist and pro-American attitude.

The Indonesian affair in 1957-1958 remains relatively obscure compared to the actions in Iran and Guatemala because the U.S. operation did not achieve the results of the previous two operations. A recent monograph, however, by Audrey R. and George McT. Kahin, provides a critical account of events in Indonesia. In keeping with current interpretations of the Eisenhower administration, the Kahins support the influential role of President Eisenhower in directing the events. The Kahins, however, continue to emphasize the role of the CIA as a primary reason why the administration took the stance it did, contending that the agency's biased analysis put the administration on a futile path toward intervention.<sup>20</sup>

The actions of the Eisenhower administration, however, as viewed through its NSC meeting notes, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' telephone conversations, and various other communications, show that Operation HAIK developed from Eisenhower's desire to prevent communism from influencing the affairs of Indonesia. As Fred I. Greenstein portrays in The Hidden-Hand Presidency, President Eisenhower's

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<sup>19</sup> John Ranelagh, The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 268.

<sup>20</sup> Audrey R. and George McT. Kahin, Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia (New York: The New Press, 1996.)

leadership style allowed him to carry-out his objectives without deeply involving himself, so he could maintain that semblance of plausible deniability.<sup>21</sup> Eisenhower knew about all CIA operations attempted during his administration, but was adroit enough not to leave a paper trail leading to him.<sup>22</sup> The evidence surrounding Operation HAIK, as John Ranelagh concludes, shows that the CIA acted on the orders of the president or his appointed supervisors. The “rogue elephant” role often attributed to the agency did not apply in the Indonesian case.<sup>23</sup>

The events in Operation HAIK also reveal the influence of John Foster Dulles in the Eisenhower administration. As Richard Immerman suggests, the president and secretary of state influenced one another in the development of the administration’s foreign policy, a change from the earlier interpretation that Dulles instituted all policy initiatives, but the final decision always rested with the president’s desire.<sup>24</sup> As the staff secretary to President Eisenhower, Brigadier General Andrew J. Goodpaster, Jr., once said about Foster Dulles, “When we got into an issue which was really of profound significance to the security interests of the United States, he would quite regularly say to Eisenhower, ‘Mr. President, you’ve got to tell me what to do.’”<sup>25</sup> Again, it was Eisenhower’s leadership style that allowed another central figure in the conduct of

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<sup>21</sup> Fred I. Greenstein, The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as a Leader (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1982.)

<sup>22</sup> Andrew, 218.

<sup>23</sup> Ranelagh, 11.

<sup>24</sup> Richard H. Immerman, ed., John Foster Dulles and the Diplomacy of the Cold War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 9-10.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in H.W. Brands, Jr., Cold Warriors: Eisenhower’s Generation and American Foreign Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 26.

foreign affairs, like Dulles, to seem as if he alone controlled events instead of responding to presidential leadership.<sup>26</sup>

The secretary of state drew firm lines in the cold war era. Like Eisenhower, he saw the conflict as more than opposing ideologies, but of deep moral importance. He recognized a difference between “neutralism” and “neutrality,” the former the more disgraceful of the two terms. In the Third World, those countries espousing “‘neutralism’...tended to shun any preference for freedom over tyranny, religion over atheism.”” In a frequently cited conversation between Dulles and Sukarno in December 1958, after the ill-fated rebellion, Sukarno questioned Dulles’ seemingly hypocritical stance on neutrality. He wondered how the secretary of state could support Washington’s own policy of neutrality on the West Irian situation, the Middle East Israeli-Arab dispute, and the conflict between Pakistan and India, but yet condemns Indonesia’s position to remain neutral in world affairs. Dulles answered the charge by explaining this difference between moral and political issues. Supporting “neutralism” in the cold war era meant not drawing distinctions between good and evil.<sup>27</sup>

The Eisenhower administration had watched the affairs in Indonesia with interest, specifically in regard to Sukarno’s supposed indifference to the sides of the cold war. Yet the American administration believed that the Indonesian populace was succumbing to communism. The country had continued to stumble along under its parliamentary government since its independence from the Netherlands on December 27, 1949.<sup>28</sup> In

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<sup>26</sup> Greenstein, 87-92.

<sup>27</sup> Frederick W. Marks III, *Power and Peace: The Diplomacy of John Foster Dulles* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishing, 1993), 75.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics, 1957-1959* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 1.

Indonesia's first democratically held election in 1955, the Communist party received almost a fifth of the voting percentage.<sup>29</sup> Added to this, the influence of the army in the Indonesian government created even more discord within the nation. Regional commanders, some with the rank as low as lieutenant colonel, held substantial power, especially on the islands away from the central government on Java.<sup>30</sup> In February 1957, President Sukarno, impatient with the ineffectiveness of his government, which he blamed on his lack of power in this parliamentary system, announced the redesign of the government that became known as "guided democracy." This *konsepsi* (conception) of a new political system took power away from the democratic parliament and gave it to Sukarno and a smaller conglomeration of the more influential parties, of which the Communist party was one of the principles. This action generated protest from many within the government, but especially from the regional commanders who saw the authoritarian rule by Sukarno as even more harmful to the ineffective government that was once in place.<sup>31</sup>

President Sukarno had hoped that the tightening of control would assist him in governing the islands, and that some of the strongest support would come from the army. The regional commanders on the outer islands of Sumatra and Sulawesi, however, remained staunch in their protest to Sukarno's mishandling of economic affairs between Java and the outer islands, and to his insistence to include the Communist party in his

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<sup>29</sup> Kahin, 50, 255n29. The Kahins, borrowing from information from Herbert Feith's, The Indonesian Elections of 1955 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1957), discuss the Communist party's rise to the fourth largest party in Indonesia. The party won 86 percent of the vote on the island of Java, and held 39 of the 257 seats in Parliament (The National Party had 57; the Islamic Party, Masjumi, had 57; the second largest Muslim party, the Nahdatul Ulama, had 45.)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 46-50, 54-61.

<sup>31</sup> Lev, 1; Kahin, 65, 77.



new government. The army commanders, as well as other civilian leadership, did not want to give Sukarno and the central government more power, but desired increased regional autonomy themselves.<sup>32</sup>

On March 2, 1957, one regional commander, Lt. Col H.N. Ventje Sumual, declared the establishment of "Permesta," or the "Total Struggle" movement in his northeast region of Sulawesi. He usurped governmental powers for the region, which the central government could not contest because Sukarno's government still lacked sufficient power.<sup>33</sup> Some other regional colonels on Sumatra and Sulawesi desired to change the trend of the Sukarno government away from its authoritarian, left-leaning organization, and followed Sumual's example. By mid-1957, they looked for assistance, and found enthusiastic support from the Eisenhower administration and the CIA.

Examining the entanglement of the CIA in Operation HAIK reveals President Eisenhower's objectives in his foreign policy. The faith he placed in the agency to counter the expansion of communism paralleled his fear of greater confrontation with the Soviet Union. It was his understanding of the threat of communism to the free world and his reliance on the CIA that instigated the affair. More importantly, though, the operation showed the president's enthusiasm towards countering communism at a low intensity conflict level. When the situation demanded an increase in commitment of overt support to achieve success, he chose to reevaluate the situation and not get further involved.

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<sup>32</sup> Lev, 15-18, 28; Kahin, 54, 57-66, 68-69; Barbara S. Harvey, Permesta: Half a Rebellion (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 40.

<sup>33</sup> Lev, 15; Kahin, 63-65; Harvey's account discusses the role of Permesta in the rebellion that eventually ensued.

## CHAPTER II

### EVOLUTION OF COVERT OPERATIONS: 1957

The rebellion in Indonesia that in 1958 became front page news had its roots in activities conceived during the preceding year when outer island rebels, along with dissenting voices on the main island of Java, gained the backing of the United States through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).<sup>1</sup> The controversy surrounding Operation HAIK--the CIA's code name for a project to support the dissidents--would continue to resonate through the years since 1958. One could argue that the circumstances of the Cold War, coupled with the administration's perception of Indonesian President Achmed Sukarno and the Eisenhower administration's reliance on the CIA, led to the rational development of what many have judged an imprudent policy.

As President Sukarno navigated his country through the new era of the Cold War, he often traveled down what to the U. S. government was confusing and uncharted avenues. His erratic course received little support from the U.S. administration, because

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<sup>1</sup> The events surrounding Indonesia, namely the dispute with the Dutch and this rebellion on the outer islands, constantly appeared in major newspapers like The New York Times and The Washington Post. Most coverage appeared in the latter pages of the paper, and supplied only cursory reports. The Times, for example, printed numerous stories in April 1958--not only on the rebellion, but also on the arms deal between the Soviet Union and the Indonesian governments (April 4, 7, 11, 29, and May 7, 1958). The Post, however, made the shootdown of the American pilot, Allen Pope, a significant story (28 May 1958). The Times provided front page coverage on April 21, 25, 29, and May 29. The stories included the rebel defeat on Sumatra, air raids by rebel forces, training of Indonesian pilots by "Red" Egyptians, and the capture of Allen Pope respectively.

it did not understand his policy of neutrality. Washington viewed his actions as supporting communism. This perplexity with Sukarno heightened after the Indonesian national elections in 1955 which affirmed the rise of the Communist party.<sup>2</sup>

As the Cold War shifted from Europe to the Third World, events in Asia took on a greater importance. The United States had watched the affairs in the Indonesian archipelago with concern since that country's independence in 1949.<sup>3</sup> The development of this infant democracy concerned the United States because in the bipolar world a loss for the Americans meant a victory for the Soviets. The U.S. administration wanted to reverse Sukarno's misguided course, so President Eisenhower looked to the CIA for help.

Initial operations by the CIA concentrated on intelligence-gathering and building rapport with contacts in the archipelago. The agency's case officers launched their operations through ad hoc means aimed at discrediting Sukarno, decreasing the influence of the Communist party of Indonesia (PKI--Partai Komunis Indonesia), and building democratic, pro-American forces. As Sukarno's position hardened and the influence of

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<sup>2</sup> Kahin, 50, 79-80. The Kahins emphasize the effect the 1955 election had on the Eisenhower administration. The CIA's involvement in Indonesia began as early as this election. It used a million dollars in their efforts to influence the outcome, but the Communists still posted a surprise and strong showing. See also, Evan Thomas, The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared--The Early Years of the CIA (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 158. He suggests that a majority of the funds were "wasted or stolen."

<sup>3</sup> Kahin, 31-33. Although the United States scrutinized Indonesian politics after their independence in 1949, their interest in this strategic Pacific island-chain started even before Sukarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta led the new government. From September to November 1948, the independence movement led by Sukarno received a challenge by a group of Soviet-backed Indonesians on the main island of Java. Known as the Madiun rebellion, Sukarno quickly extinguished the disorganized revolt, and executed some of the Communists top officials. When the events of 1957-1958 unraveled, Sukarno frequently reminded American officials, especially Ambassador John Allison, of these actions, hoping they would dissuade the Americans of his communist-leanings. For more on these affairs, see Robert J. McMahon, Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981).

communism increased, the Eisenhower administration recognized the need to promote a more vigorous policy. The administration's decisions in the fall of 1957 called for further participation by the CIA. The CIA found support in dissident, or "patriotic," movements on the islands of Sumatra and the Celebes, away from the central government on Java, that later developed into agency-led covert paramilitary operations. The dissidents were anti-Sukarno, which to the administration translated to anti-Communist. Supporting the dissidents would liberate Indonesia from communism.

### *The Beginning*

Many historians refer to a quote in John Burkholder Smith's memoirs, Portrait of a Cold Warrior, as marking the beginning of covert action in Indonesia. Smith, an ex-CIA case officer who specialized in covert operations, retired in 1973 after being passed over for promotion.<sup>4</sup> Smith recounts a statement made in November 1956 by the head of the CIA's Clandestine Service, Frank Wisner, to Al Ulmer, the CIA's new Far Eastern division chief. Wisner said, "I think it's time we held Sukarno's feet to the fire."<sup>5</sup> This comment supposedly put in motion a covert action against the communist elements in Indonesia. In fact, the policy in Indonesia did not hinge merely on this simplistic message, but instead evolved through an intricate process led by the Dulles brothers, with complete support by the president.

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Burkholder Smith, Portrait of a Cold Warrior (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 11. He recognizes that his telling all makes him appear as a mere "disgruntled employee."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 205; Kahin, 85.

As head of the covert operations arm of the CIA, Frank Wisner exuded the Cold War mentality. He thought it necessary for the United States to counter the Soviets' use of espionage, blackmail, bribery, sabotage, and propaganda. Appointed to his position during the Truman administration in the fall of 1948, Wisner embraced Eisenhower's stance against the expansion of communism in the Third World, and rallied behind the new administration's rhetoric advocating the roll-back of communism. It was early in his watch that the CIA purchased Civil Air Transport, an airline in the Far East, to bolster the agency's ability to influence world events, and he was ready to use this resource in Indonesia.<sup>6</sup>

Smith speculates that Wisner's statement originated in a conversation between, or with, the Dulles brothers. "No one wanted to put any orders in writing," Smith says. Wisner's "colorful phrase" indicated the brothers' desire to discover, or create, information that would "justify NSC's Special Group approval to diminish or even destroy Sukarno's power in Indonesia and his influence in world affairs."<sup>7</sup>

Wisner's comment gained credence early in 1957, when a group of Indonesian dissidents approached the American counsel in Medan. Instead of offering assistance,

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas, 10, 158; Ranelagh, 272, 277. Thomas discusses a comment made by Wisner, that questioned the CIA's ability to carry out any large-scale mission without compromising the administration's desire for secrecy. Thomas desires to portray the OPC chief as prudent and cautious, a complete reversal of his enthusiasm for previous operations. Thomas reveals at the end of this paragraph, Wisner's circumvention of the ambassador, John Allison, for fear he "might elicit an adverse reaction from the ambassador." Wisner believed in covert action, as Thomas shows by this quote. This presents the more consensus depiction of Wisner, as also shown in Burton Hersh, The Old Boys: The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 414-418.

<sup>7</sup> Smith 216-17; Kahin, 84-85. One poignant story demonstrates the measures the CIA was willing to take to topple Sukarno. Inspired by rumors that Sukarno, a known "ladies' man," frolicked with a blond flight attendant on his trip to the Soviet Union in 1956, the CIA created a "blue" movie. They hoped that it would discredit him in the eyes of the Indonesian populace. Although they hired Hollywood professionals to make the film, the CIA never distributed it.

however, the American official indicated that another agency of the United States handled such affairs.<sup>8</sup> By April, an Indonesian connected to the dissidents contacted the CIA case officer in Jakarta. The Indonesian informed him that a group of Sumatran colonels continued to defy the central government in Java--an imbroglio that had begun in December 1956.<sup>9</sup> An opportunity seemed to exist for the CIA's active approach towards world politics. Wanting to alter the situation in Indonesia, the agency sought contact with a group willing to confront the communist influence in the Asian nation.

The CIA learned early in its existence that administrations required them to be active at all times, everywhere, in this new era. In 1948, while the agency gloated over its success in the Italian elections--stifling the Communist party, and encouraging the democratic process--an assassination took place in Bogota, Columbia. Later revealed as a personal vendetta instead of another communist plot, the assassination led to mass-scale rioting that endangered the visiting U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall. The CIA failed to predict or comprehend the chaotic situation. Agency leaders realized that their organization needed to be knowledgeable and active in all troubled areas around the globe. The 1948 debacle set an important precedent for the CIA's future "omnipotence and omniscience" in world affairs.<sup>10</sup>

The operations in early 1957 represented this *modus operandi* adopted by the agency through the National Security Act of 1947, and developed over operational

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<sup>8</sup> Keyes Beech, Not Without the Americans: A Personal History (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), 266.

<sup>9</sup> Smith 225-26; Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 21, 1996. The CIA transferred Mr. Cartwright to Sulawesi in late April. His duties in Thailand immediately took the back burner to this upcoming operation. Smith states that the contact was an acquaintance of the army commander of Central Sumatra, Lt. Col. Achmad Hussein. Hussein issued the ultimatum to Sukarno in February 1958, demanding changes in the government, or else secession by the outer islands.

<sup>10</sup> Grose, 285-87.

experiences in the preceding decade.<sup>11</sup> Although the agency intensified its efforts in April, the operation had not yet received any formal backing by the administration through the National Security Council. The CIA controlled and developed this nascent operation during the first half of the year because it did not require a formal policy directive. Wisner's hint that the CIA needed to apply greater pressure on Sukarno's government, and the CIA's subsequent actions remained within the scope of its authority and expectations. The agency's initiatives did not undermine presidential authority, nor overstep the tasks assigned to the agency by the National Security Act.<sup>12</sup> Wisner's initiative did not need approval from above--the Act of 1947, along with the precedent in the Eisenhower administration, provided him with the authority to dabble in Indonesia. The role of the CIA, especially the field case officers, demanded action against communism. Preparation was the key to success. Growing concerns and questions surrounding Sukarno's intentions compelled the CIA to intensify its operations, which did not constitute anything out of the ordinary.

Smith's explanation of the oft-repeated quote also supports a popular interpretation of this affair that centers on the pragmatic and powerful personalities of the Dulles brothers. He implies that the brothers developed their own policy towards Indonesia, without presidential approval. If the operation did receive some type of

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<sup>11</sup> Many monographs note that the legislation creating the Central Intelligence Agency defined its role rather loosely. The fifth task assigned to the agency, it required that it "perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting national security as the NSC will from time to time direct...." In order to be prepared to carry-out such functions, the agency relied on the other four tasks that allowed them broad powers. See Karalekas, 12-16. The failure of 1948, and the successes in 1953 and 1954, led to growing involvement in world affairs.

<sup>12</sup> Granted, a major criticism surrounding the CIA involves the general wording of the National Security Act that designated the responsibilities to the agency--see the above note. As discussed in this work, the precedent established by the president and his DCI also supports the manner in which the CIA agents initiated the operation with the dissidents.

presidential endorsement, it was only a cursory consent that kept Eisenhower largely ignorant of the events in the archipelago.

With this interpretation, however misguided, Smith fuels a major debate concerning the formulation of policy, especially when discussing covert actions. Catering to a popular, and largely negative, view of the CIA, Smith suggests that although the administration established the overall policy, it was the agents in the field who ultimately influenced the decision-making process.<sup>13</sup> The policy advanced by the administration actually reflected the desires of the CIA through its biased analysis and reporting. Again, this portrays the agency as an out-of-control entity, whose objectives concentrated on its own conspiratorial designs. CIA case officers conspired in slanting their information as they deemed necessary to justify an intended policy. The end result was the administration's adherence to a poorly conceived, hastily examined, imprudent foreign policy in Indonesia.

Monographs emphasizing the controversial methods of the CIA, however, disregard the recent treatment of President Eisenhower by historians, and they do not sufficiently examine the development of the administration's policy. The administration, and specifically the president, questioned Sukarno's method of government and feared the growing influence of the Communist party. The political atmosphere and elections reflected the growth of communism. The loyal Dulles brothers, wishing to protect the president under the auspices of plausible deniability, placed the onus on the CIA officers

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<sup>13</sup> I am using Smith's interpretation as the example of this mode of thinking in presenting the role of the CIA. There are a number of other autobiographies and monographs discussing the CIA in this same way. See also, Hersh, 414-420; Kahin, 84-87; and Richard M. Bissell, Jr., with Jonathon E. Lewis and Frances T. Pudlo, Reflections of a Cold Warrior: From Yalta to the Bay of Pigs (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).



to provide rationale for the United States' involvement. Everyone received their cue, though, from a president willing to employ all means short of conventional forces to curtail the growing tide of communism. The tone of Eisenhower's presidency encouraged clandestine operations, and his subordinates carried through with such policies. It is more likely that Eisenhower directed his two top policymakers into ensuring that something was done in that region, rather than that the brothers forged their own policy. The Eisenhower administration, and certainly the United States in general, feared the domination of any democratic, capitalistic society by the Communists. A threat of communism provided sufficient reason to intervene, and the situation in Indonesia reflected such a threat.<sup>14</sup>

In a later interview with historian George McT. Kahin, Smith said he thought that Allen Dulles sent Al Ulmer to the Far East hoping he could "'strengthen the case' for a 'more vigorous policy' against Sukarno."<sup>15</sup> In his own assessment, contradicting what he wrote twenty years earlier, Smith supported the more realistic interpretation on how the administration determined its policy by revealing that it was developed on the executive level, not by CIA case officers. Eisenhower made the decision to prevent Communist domination in Indonesia, demanded more information supporting his desire to intervene, and needed a resource able to do something about the precarious situation. Once again, the CIA became his vehicle for accomplishing his goal.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Andrew, 199-256; Ambrose, 332-33, 377-78; Immerman ed., 8-9.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Kahin, 85. From their interview with Joseph Burkholder Smith on July 28, 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Kahin, 83-5. The actions of President Eisenhower are best understood when examining his remarks during the National Security Council meetings, as this monograph will attempt to do. Unfortunately, as many historians note, Eisenhower was clever in the recording the events of his presidency. Plus, many informal meetings on the golf course, White House putting green, and other places were not recorded. Grose, 477; Ambrose, 316.

The administration's distrust of Sukarno was not unfounded. The road to independence for Indonesia had been a rocky one. Sukarno's collusion with the Communists, as perceived by the Eisenhower administration, culminated in his plan to redefine democratic ideals. The enigmatic president of Indonesia announced his *konsepi*, or "guided democracy," in February 1957. This suspicious form of government confused and concerned the policymakers in Washington, because the only winner as they envisioned it was the Communists. The PKI continued to increase its support base, an important consideration ever since its surprise showing in the elections of 1955. The U.S. government remained wary about the loyalty of Sukarno to the free world. The formation of Sukarno's dubious "guided democracy," occurred soon after his visits to the Soviet Union and China in late 1956, which unsettled the administration even more.<sup>17</sup> Sukarno put the administration into a harrowing predicament because it viewed the changes in Indonesia as a challenge from international communism, and the denouement to the administration's inaction came with the summer's provincial elections in 1957.

### *Conception of a formal policy*

The provincial elections in July 1957 crystallized the Eisenhower administration's perception of Indonesia and Sukarno, eliminating any belief that Sukarno's problems were only a mirage. The influence of the PKI increased, most notably in Java, once again a signal to the administration that confirmed the slide of the Sukarno government

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<sup>17</sup> Kahin, 40, 81-82. Sukarno spoke of his admiration for the nationalist Communists, Tito and Ho Chi Minh.

farther to the left. The results from this election supported recent warnings to top level officials. In a dispatch to the State Department on July 10, 1957, observers noticed that the PKI's influence in Indonesia had "increased markedly" in the last few months.<sup>18</sup> The U. S. government viewed these results with apprehension, because the PKI took first place in the voting in Central Java, and second in West Java, East Java, and Greater Jakarta. The Communists were the only party to show increased support since the 1955 elections.<sup>19</sup>

U.S. policy toward Indonesia and the Sukarno government took shape in the fall of 1957. Two significant developments marked the administration's entry on what proved to be the futile path of covert support. The first was a report presented to the president and the National Security Council by an ad hoc committee assessing the situation in Indonesia. The second was a NSC meeting held at the end of the month of September, which discussed the report. Both episodes reveal the pressure and desire within the administration to prevent another loss to communism of an Asian country.

On August 1, the NSC received a briefing on Indonesia by CIA Director Allen Dulles. He presented this briefing in light of the startling developments in the elections, arguing that they provided substantial evidence that Sukarno's policies encouraged further participation by the Communists in the government, and revealed the need for an outside influence to turn the tide. The United States feared the Indonesian's inclusion of the PKI within its government because, as the administration viewed it, once communism

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<sup>18</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957, vol. XXII, Southeast Asia (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1989), 402n2. [Hereafter cited as FRUS, vol. 22].

<sup>19</sup> Kahin, 69. As noted earlier, the 1955 elections caused the administration to pay attention to the region. See also Kahin pages 40 and 255n29.

established a foothold, its objective became domination of the country. This latest courting of the Communists by Sukarno disturbed Washington, and the administration felt the urgency to do something.<sup>20</sup>

The meeting's atmosphere became charged. Dulles' briefing depicted a gloomy situation that troubled the members, who seriously considered the prospect of a communist island-chain in the center of the Asian sphere. NSC members once again weighed the importance of the islands to the region, emphasizing their military and economic significance. Admiral Arthur Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that such an outcome would give the Communists a warm-water port for submarine bases; and he pointed out the military value of the vast amount of oil reserves in the region. Robert Cutler, special assistant to the president for National Security Affairs, suggested that if Java fell to communism, the outer islands might still remain free--if only for a while. Cutler mentioned the possibility of supporting the separatist movement on the outer islands. Adding to this observation, Admiral Radford noted on the greater impact that this "psychological effect" might have on the area, versus any military consequences. The administration could not allow the partitioning of another country by the Communists. He focused on the duty of the United States to prevent such a chaotic situation.<sup>21</sup> The group concentrated on the strategic importance of the region, recognizing the ill-effects of a communist-controlled island, and its repercussions

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<sup>20</sup> FRUS, vol.22, 400-02; Kahin, 4, 8-16. The specifics of Director Dulles' speech remain classified. The discussion that followed, however, reveals the main topics of his still classified briefing. S. Everett Gleason, deputy executive secretary of the NSC, provided notes of all NSC meetings. The Eisenhower Library in Abilene, KS houses the notes.

<sup>21</sup> See Ambrose, 360. Admiral Radford was a strong proponent of military action. In the Dienbienphu crisis of March-May 1954, he pleaded with the president to send conventional forces. This was his same attitude in the new crisis with Indonesia--intervention by the military.

on the entire Far East. They theorized that the loss of this country might induce a domino effect in the region. Vice President Richard M. Nixon suggested that the United States could use its influence by supporting the Indonesian military. The NSC should concentrate on mobilizing the military against the Communists.<sup>22</sup> Nixon trusted the Indonesian military because many of its best officers had been trained in the United States.

The president understood the importance of the region, realized the necessity to act quickly, and ultimately developed his initial policy, or at least a foreshadowing of it, in this meeting. Allen Dulles' briefing troubled him. Another battleground of the Cold War was developing in Asia, and Eisenhower needed to take a stance. When Cutler queried the president about possibly having the Department of Defense look into the consequences of Java's "falling" to Communism, Eisenhower declared it necessary also to incorporate the Department of State's views.<sup>23</sup>

Besides studying the effects of the election and the overall situation in the country, the president demanded that the ad hoc group "consider what we can do about it." He emphasized the desire to keep Indonesia "in the Free World," but also prescribed as the "next best course" the protection of the outer islands from the Communist-influenced central government situated in Java--reiterating Cutler's observation. He hinted at the necessity of keeping the free world influence in that region, even if a

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<sup>22</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 400-02. "Memorandum of Discussion at the 333d Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, August 1, 1957." Vice President Nixon voiced his opinion that Sukarno was probably right in regard to Indonesia's incapability to form a democratic government. The Communists were well organized, and could not be defeated in elections.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 400. The president wanted his best men on the analysis--and the men familiar with previous covert operations.

division of the islands resulted. The meeting concluded with complete agreement on the formation of what became NSC Action No. 1758:

*The National Security Council:*

Agreed that a group composed of the Departments of State (Chairman) and Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Central Intelligence Agency (and the International Cooperation Administration for economic aid matters), should prepare, not later than September 1, 1957, a report for Council consideration on:

- a. The implications for U.S. security of recent developments in Indonesia, especially Communist political gains in Java.
- b. Possible actions which the United States might take with respect to the situation in Indonesia pursuant to NSC 5518, including possible actions in the event of imminent or actual Communist control of Java.

*Note:* The above actions, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Chairmen, JCS, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Director, ICA, for appropriate implementation.<sup>24</sup>

A sense of disquiet permeated the meeting. After the ominous report by the CIA, Eisenhower set the tone by directing an immediate query into the situation. The information he received from the CIA was similar to that provided by the State Department. The president wanted the proposed study to be completed promptly; the situation might demand "fast action."<sup>25</sup>

The Ad Hoc Interdepartmental Committee on Indonesia, established by this NSC Action No. 1758, convened seven times. Although it missed the initial deadline by two days, the committee's report, circulated to various departments and individuals on

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 400-02. NSC 5518 was the "U.S. Policy On Indonesia" dated May 3, 1955--before the national elections of September 1955. It discussed the general considerations, established the U.S.'s objectives, and proposed courses of action. In sum, it recognized the importance of the country to the region, made it the objective to keep it among the free powers, and mentioned economic, military, and political actions that would assist this goal. The "Courses of Action" list nine areas (11-19). Number 12 and 14 are still classified. See FRUS, vol. 22, No. 95, 153-157.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 401.

September 6th, provided ample opportunity for NSC members to conduct a thorough review of it before the end-of-the-month meeting.<sup>26</sup>

The report reexamined the strategic importance of the archipelago to the vital interests of the United States. Outlined in two parts in the opening paragraph, the document addressed the "short run" and "long run" interests affected by possible political control of the entire island-chain by the Communists--although most of its discussion concerned the Communists' control of Java. The short term threat included the psychological and possible political repercussions among the non-Communist Asian countries "squeezed between" China and Communist Vietnam to the north, and Java in the south. The long-run peril was the overall military threat. The report predicted that communist control of the area would "sever" the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) between Southeast Asia, and Australia (and New Zealand), and "hinder" the airways and communication over the Pacific and Indian oceans.<sup>27</sup> Since the instability in Indonesia threatened the vital interests of the United States, the administration was obligated to act.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 436-40. The report included memorandum from two individuals. The first, dated September 3, was by Hugh S. Cumming, the director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, the committee's chairman (September 1 was the initial suspension date). The second memo, dated September 6, accompanied the circulation of the report. Signed by James S. Lay, Jr., the executive secretary of the NSC, it focused the reader's attention on two items of significance. He underlined a paragraph reminding the personnel that this report, besides being "Top Secret," was "very strictly limited on an absolute need-to-know basis." This demonstrates, once again, the close-hold policy the administration had on covert operations. The other item is a note for all to review Director Cumming's memo that discussed "reservations and differences" among the committee regarding paragraph 9. This paragraph remains classified. The paragraphs are numbered 1 through 10; however, it seems as if a misprint skipped the number 3. So really the report has nine paragraphs. The editor of this FRUS edition points out the error. Lay's memo is in the author's possession; Eisenhower Library; White House Office(WHO); Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA), NSC Series; NSC 5518--Policy on Indonesia.

<sup>27</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 436-40.

The committee provided three courses of action for the administration to review in the section of the document titled, "Summary Approaches by the United States to Present Indonesian Situation." The committee suggested:

- a. To continue the present programs in the hope that Communist gains per se will arouse and unify non- and anti-Communist counter forces sufficiently to reverse the trend of the growth of Communist power.
- b. To terminate our aid programs in the hope that such action will shock the non- and anti-Communists into action against the Communist forces.
- c. To continue the present pattern of our formal relationships with Indonesia, but so to adjust our programs and activities as to give greater emphasis to support of the anti-Communist forces in the outer islands while at the same time continuing attempts to produce effective action on the part of the non- and anti-Communist forces in Java.<sup>28</sup>

The committee recommended course "c" as holding "the greatest promise of achieving U.S. objectives." Affected by the president's angst, the committee chose the position that advocated the most action--continued inaction seemed dangerous. Although the United States desired the entire nation to remain free, the group focused on the president's remark that some free islands were better than none. The goal was to retain at least some outer islands in the free-world sphere.

Following the summaries of possible action, the committee discussed the "Bases for U.S. Planning." This fifth paragraph suggested that Sukarno was "increasingly identified" with the PKI, and reiterated that the Communists' greatest influence appeared to be in Java. The committee concluded that although most of the population saw themselves as at least non-Communist (versus anti-Communist), the strongest majority of this group inhabited the outer islands. A final basis for their recommendation involved

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 437-38.



the loyalties among the Indonesian Army. This would later become critical to U.S. policy. This report determined that the army on Java followed the political tide of the region. The influence of Communism among the ranks, especially in leadership positions, continued to increase. The committee's intelligence suggested that this occurred because "of the removal, in many cases calculated, of anti-Communist officers from positions of influence."<sup>29</sup>

The committee buttressed its conclusion with a recent intelligence assessment of Indonesia. The intelligence community presented the State Department with a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on August 27, which affected the decision-making of the ad hoc committee.<sup>30</sup> NIE 65-57 discussed "The Political Outlook for Indonesia," examining the problems surrounding the political situation in Indonesia and making predictions concerning possible developments in the upcoming year. The entire U.S. intelligence community participated and signed onto this report.<sup>31</sup> Although it is understandable that the CIA provided the predominant amount of the intelligence, because they relied on officers in the field, all intelligence organizations determined the format of the estimate and agreed with the results. The impact of this estimate must be

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 438. The paragraph discussing the loyalties of the Indonesian main army on Java does not appear in the president's copy--it is still classified.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 429-431. A footnote explaining this report says that the DCI submitted the findings along with a list of the general participants who prepared the report. It included the CIA and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Joint Staff.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 429n2. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the Intelligence Advisory Committee (IAC) and the assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) did not participate, claiming this matter was outside their jurisdiction. A year earlier, the intelligence community submitted NIE 65-56--an incredibly similar report, in scope, discussing the future developments in Indonesia. This report, of August 7, 1956, suggested that a "modern democratic state" would develop over the next few years. It predicted that if the current democratic Ali government changed, the successor government would not include participation by the PKI. It did, however, suggest that the Communist party still was a threat to the stability of Indonesia. See FRUS, vol. 22, 290-91.

understood: policymakers of the ad hoc committee had no reason to doubt the authenticity or reliability of this estimate. The ongoing affairs in Indonesia, specifically the elections, supported the intelligence community's assessment. Nothing in the report revealed biased analysis.

In his memoir, Smith continues to portray a cynical view of the process of policy formation. Accommodating the popular mystique at the time of his publication (1976), he suggests that the CIA purposely supplied Washington with exaggerated reports and information so that policymakers would approve massive intervention in Indonesia. This way the CIA operatives would keep their jobs!<sup>32</sup> His interpretation supports the belief that the agency acted as a "rogue elephant." He admits, however, that the elections, and Sukarno's confusing policies, provided the strongest measure of justification for the committee's recommendations. This information did not depend on CIA analysis, nor does he produce any significant evidence proving false reports by the agency.<sup>33</sup>

The NIE questioned Sukarno's motive for implementing his "guided democracy" policy, suggesting that it "clearly involves less democracy and more guidance."<sup>34</sup> Interpreted by the committee, this meant that the transformation of the country was leaning towards an authoritarian, Communist government. In providing specifics regarding the Communist party, the estimate discussed the 20.8 percent of the vote that it received in Java during the 1955 election. It mentioned the "large gains" that occurred

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<sup>32</sup> Smith, 240.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.. Although he recognizes the importance the election played in formulating policy, he fails to emphasize them properly. The elections signified to the administration the lack of control Sukarno had in his government. In most correspondences, it is the elections, along with Sukarno's enmeshment with Communists like Mao and Ho--evident in many of his speeches and policies--that concern the administration.

<sup>34</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 429.

in the recent local elections, the four Communists in the existing cabinet, and the 18 leftists in the 45-man National Council. Both of these organizations played a significant role in Sukarno's new concept of democracy. The government's increase of communist-leaning officials created strife among the Indonesian military ranks. The intelligence community concluded that the army, once seen as the instrument for possible unification of the islands, now mirrored the split in the government, its ranks dividing themselves regionally.<sup>35</sup> Vice President Nixon's prospect for using the military to prevent the influence of communism throughout the region now seemed futile. Local commanders supported, and sometimes led, their provincial movements.

The estimate predicted that Communist gains would increase in the next year. It speculated that this might not give them control of the government, although the possibility could not be ignored. In the worst-case scenario, the outer-islands and central government would become involved in a civil war, while the more organized Communists might gain control of the central government.<sup>36</sup>

The NIE reflected the gloomy situation that Dulles' CIA report depicted earlier in the month. The policymakers realized that the military concerns presented by the chairman of the JCS might in fact become reality. Patience was wearing thin in the administration, and the majority of the reports flooding the policymakers supported some method of formal intervention.

One individual assessed the situation in Indonesia somewhat differently. John M. Allison was a State Department veteran and the acting ambassador to Indonesia since

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 430.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

March 1957. The events of August infuriated him--especially since neither he, nor any members of his staff, formally participated in the evaluations on Indonesia. While cables and telegrams that Allison sent to the State Department acknowledged Sukarno's left-leaning politics, his primary concern was the effect that the United States' policies had on Indonesia.<sup>37</sup>

Allison first heard of the high level discussions through Walter Robertson, the assistant secretary for Far Eastern Affairs.<sup>38</sup> Besides the administration's failure to include the ambassador in on the debate, it also neglected to heed his advice concerning an upcoming conference organized by Sukarno that involved all the provinces. In a flurry of cables passing between the State Department and the embassy in Indonesia, Foster Dulles and Allison debated the proper role of the U.S. government in the affairs of Indonesia. Allison favored supporting the legitimacy of the ruling government, while Dulles focused on Sukarno's continued cooperation with the Communists. Ambassador Allison concluded that the administration was ready to take action in the islands.<sup>39</sup>

Assembling the ad hoc committee without requesting a representative from the embassy in Jakarta signaled the administration's impatience with Sukarno and the pressure to take immediate action. Ambassador Allison, however, did not give up without voicing his criticism of this strategy. On August 26, Allison sent the last of many communiqués addressed to the State Department, furnishing his opinions on events

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<sup>37</sup> John M. Allison, Ambassador from the Prairie, or Allison Wonderland (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 303-06, 329-33.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 402. Robertson explained the Councils' concern that inaction to date allowed the Communists to gain the edge, and that the administration planned to change its course. He sent this message the day after the NSC meeting on August 1. See FRUS, 1955-57, Vol. 22, 402.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 403, 404, 407, 409, 412, 414, 416, 421, 426( August 5th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 17th, 20th, 21st, two on the 26th, and the 27th. Compared with the single correspondence in September, this is quite significant).

and personalities in Indonesia prior to the committee's final draft of its proposal. He realized the importance of the committee on the president's future policy. His message discussed his meeting with President Sukarno that day, and offered his most up-to-date assessment of the situation. Allison begged the State Department, specifically Dulles, to change the attitude towards Sukarno. He insisted that Sukarno was not a communist, and attributed the president's recent inclusion of the PKI in the government as a necessity in Indonesian culture--"gotong-rojong." This concept maintained that no significant element of the community be excluded from participation in government. It was a matter of principle.<sup>40</sup>

Allison emphasized another issue in this cable, which he believed required the administration's complete attention: the West Irian problem. The disagreement between the United States and Indonesia incorporated the struggle between the Government of Indonesia and the Dutch. The Indonesians and Dutch were fighting over the control of that major island as the Dutch refused to relinquish this final colonial territory. The United States, though a proponent of self-rule for nations, refused to commit itself to the side of the Indonesians because the Dutch played a major part in the containment of the Soviet Union in Europe by their participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Allison insisted that it was the administration's neglect of this issue that compelled the Indonesians to support the Communists. In their quest for independence, the Indonesians continued to hit a wall in West Irian. Allison wanted Dulles to understand that although he agreed that the central government and the populace on Java were

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 422. For a comprehensive understanding of Indonesian culture in politics, see Daniel Lev's monograph. Barbara S. Harvey's account of the Permesta struggle is also helpful in understanding the situation.

slowly falling into the Communist ranks, the cause was American neutrality and failure to support West Irian independence. Sukarno himself believed, and persuaded Allison to believe, that if the American government provided a solution to that region, Communist influence and support would immediately diminish.<sup>41</sup> Although this monograph will not cover this issue in depth, it is necessary to understand the role it played, or should have played, in the resolution of Indonesia's growing infatuation with communism. Allison agreed with the administration's assessment that Sukarno was naive and foolish in his acceptance of the Communists. He advocated, however, that the United States support the Indonesian claims to West Irian, believing that such action would result in the Sukarno's rejection of communism.

In Dulles' reply to Allison's many cables, he steadfastly reasserted the threat communism posed to Indonesia. He rejected Allison's position that the State Department was missing an ample opportunity in assisting Indonesian politics by supporting Sukarno's conference in September. Instead, Dulles feared supporting such a conference would increase the influence of the PKI, and possibly allow the Communists and the army in Java to detain the dissident leaders participating in the conference.<sup>42</sup>

The administration's policy insisted that Sukarno's government reject communism first, then the administration would consider assisting the Indonesians in resolving the dispute with the Netherlands. Dulles, reflecting the president's view, rejected any accommodation with the Communists.

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<sup>41</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 422.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 436.

The final report prepared by the ad hoc committee stressed many of the observations presented in the NSC meeting on August 1. This suggests that Allen Dulles' briefing, the intelligence presented in NIE 65-57, and John Foster Dulles' rule within the State Department, strongly influenced the report.

The most influential determinant to the administration's course of foreign policy remained the paradigm of the Cold War. Policymakers could not avoid viewing the conundrum in Indonesia in any other way. Although the report included inputs from members of the State Department, these officials were the upper-echelon of that department, not the men in the field. High-level officials viewed the affair as another cold war conflict, whereas the men in the field viewed it as more of a problem of nationalism. In order to determine the most productive policy, a comprehensive understanding of the situation was necessary. It seems, however, that the intelligence-gathering and debate were rather one-sided, focusing on the intelligence community, and not the State Department. The committee, for example, never consulted the State Department's desk officer in Indonesia for information. Granted, he may have unknowingly provided some relevant information to help the committee assess the situation differently, but he never knew about the committee's work until years later.<sup>43</sup> The intelligence community provided information that supported the paradigm. Even if the policymakers allowed more participation by lower-ranking State officials, who

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<sup>43</sup> Kahin, 91. The desk officer, Francis Underhill, revealed that he also never knew about the covert operations, even though "every bar girl in Singapore and Manila knew more about these operations than the Indonesian desk officer." It is not uncommon for a group to dominate decision-making arenas. In this case, the CIA does receive the most attention. In Larry Berman's Lyndon Johnson's War: The Road to Stalemate in Vietnam (New York: Norton Publishing, 1989), it was the military intelligence community that dominated the decision-making process, and the CIA's more realistic assessment that was relatively ignored.

supported Allison's claim of nationalism as the root cause of this affair, the Cold War ethos would have produced the same results.

With the blunt assessment offered by NIE 65-57, the reports from the State Department's Far Eastern officials, emphasizing Foster Dulles' concerns in the region and ignoring Allison's assessments, the committee set forth its final recommendations. It proposed that the president institute a duplicitous policy. The most important aspect of their recommendation involved covertly supporting the infant rebellions in the outer regions--"particularly in Sumatra and Sulawesi (Celebes)." This objective would "provide a rallying point if the Communists should take over Java." Although emphasizing the exploitation of the anti-Communists in the outer islands, the report also supported the continued backing of any non- or anti-Communist movements on Java. Besides this first course of action, the report also stated that the official relationship with the central government remain as is. This two-fold policy formed the committee's recommendation.<sup>44</sup> The administration was not ready to abandon the central government completely, but remained anxious enough to institute a more active role in reversing Indonesia's proclivity to communism.

The committee distributed the report to the appropriate individuals and agencies. Allison received a summary of this report, along with the assessment rendered by NIE 65-57.<sup>45</sup> His response inspired a last-minute dispatch to the secretary of state.

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<sup>44</sup> FRUS, vol. 22., 438-40. Paragraphs 6-10 list the recommendations of the committee. Subparagraphs develop the opening paragraph, so the recommendations take a few pages. Paragraphs 6b and 9 remain classified. The recommendation, however, merely breaks-down and develops the two primary courses of action.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 442. Allison received telegrams number 530 and 553 on September 7 and 10 respectively. These two cables summarized NIE 65-57 and the ad hoc committee's final report. Neither telegram appears in FRUS. Allison's reply, however, reveals that the summaries included all pertinent information.



Although Allison agreed with many of the assessments in NIE 65-57 and recommendations in the committee's report, he believed everyone was ignoring the underlying issue. Mimicking Sukarno's opinion from their earlier meeting, Allison insisted that many of the PKI supporters were merely nationalists who desired independence for West Irian. He thought that if the United States gained Sukarno's trust, then the people's trust would follow. Even Allison, though, recognized Sukarno's ignorance concerning the economic situation in the islands. Allison recognized this as Sukarno's major shortcoming.<sup>46</sup> To Secretary Dulles this proved that Sukarno failed to comprehend the disagreements and the threat to his country. It also signified his lack of understanding Communist intentions.

In the weeks preceding the NSC meeting, memoranda between policymakers flowed like water. The secretary of state received a majority of these messages, all advocating different approaches towards the conundrum facing Indonesia. Most discussed the recommendations forwarded by the ad hoc committee, and added personal insights on whether the committee's suggestions proved sound or not. One message, for example, came from Walter Robertson. After summarizing his interpretation of the committee's recommendation, with which he agreed, he presented his reasoning as to why the administration should not adopt an active policy, at least not immediately. He cited the recent conference organized by Sukarno and attended by the dissident

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 424, 443. In his meeting with President Sukarno on August 25, Allison noted that the president placed an emphasis on nationalism, and virtually ignored the issue of economic disparity among the islands.

provinces.<sup>47</sup> Robertson believed the situation, and Sukarno, deserved time to see if these initiatives amounted to anything.

Robertson's request, as well as other arguments advocating a wait-and-see policy, received critical assessment in one influential message from the chairman of the ad hoc committee, Hugh S. Cumming, Jr.. A favorite of the secretary, Cumming requested that Dulles ignore all advice from officials who did not want any type of action taken at this time. Now the secretary of state's special assistant for Intelligence, Cumming's opinion carried considerable weight in the decision-making process. Cumming's previous assignment was as the ambassador to Indonesia from October 1953 until March 1957. Allison replaced him early in the month of March. Cumming's recommendation in September of 1957 received the attention it did because of the stance he held earlier in the year.

In late February 1957, in his last weeks as the ambassador, Cumming had sent a cable to Washington discussing Sukarno's recent implementation of "guided democracy." Allison's selection as the new ambassador had motivated the preparation of this message. In it, he had recognized Sukarno's inclusion of the PKI as protection against their causing problems from the outside. Cumming respected the ploy of the president, who "thus far exhibited courage and imagination" in developing policy. He had stated that Sukarno was not pro-Communist, but instead believed he could control

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<sup>47</sup> Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State, September 19, 1957, *ibid.*, 445-48.

the PKI if included in his government. As his successor, Allison provided this same interpretation of Sukarno's actions with the Communists.<sup>48</sup>

Cumming's guidance to the Eisenhower administration at the end of February had requested that it provide Sukarno with room to maneuver, which required patience. He had advocated non-intervention, and suggested that the administration observe Sukarno's actions in the upcoming months. He had recommended that the United States continue to discuss with Sukarno the dangers of courting communist elements. Cumming had asserted that the administration must refrain from any comments likening Sukarno to a dictator because this would fuel extremists who warned of foreign intervention into their affairs. In short, his message had been to give Sukarno the benefit of the doubt.<sup>49</sup>

By the autumn, however, Cumming's position had changed dramatically. Recognizing that the situation was "steadily deteriorating," he criticized those individuals who wished to avoid action.<sup>50</sup> Washington's patience over the last six months had provided Sukarno ample opportunity to exercise influence over the Communists, and he had failed to do so. Recognizing that the supporters of delaying the decision cited the recent conference held by Sukarno as support for a policy of non-intervention, Cumming asserted that it was a ploy, a "face-saving compromise" peculiar to Indonesian politics. He offered the preliminary reports that provided analysis of the conference, which

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<sup>48</sup> Telegram From the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State, February 23, 1957, *ibid.*, 351-53.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 352.

<sup>50</sup> Memorandum From the Secretary of State's Special Assistant for Intelligence (Cumming) to the Secretary of State, September 20, 1957, *ibid.*, 448-49. He directed this message specifically at the "FE," Walter Robertson, who requested that the administration delay any final decision on policy towards Indonesia. Cumming's memo, however, carried enough clout as to override any policymaker wishing to postpone any decision.

concluded that the participants failed to reach any major solutions--a factor Cumming attributed to the dissident elements who were unwilling to succumb to policies advantageous for Sukarno and the Communists. He concluded his urgent memo by saying the United States needed to support the numerically and morally superior anti-Communist elements now.<sup>51</sup> The Dulles brothers received the justification for their aggressive attitude towards Sukarno. In six months the situation failed to produce the necessary changes in their eyes to delay further intervention. Instead, the Communists continued their expansion, and the situation wandered farther away from U.S. desires.

Reviewing his copy of the ad hoc committee's report before the NSC meeting, the president revealed his concern at the likely result of Communist-controlled military forces on Java. Such a predicament threatened all non-Communist nations in the region. Eisenhower's military experience led to his comparing the importance of Indonesia to a similar situation of the Philippines in the 1930s. Eisenhower's understanding of that region had begun under the tutelage of General Douglas MacArthur. His duty now compelled him to ensure that Indonesia would not suffer a similar fate as the Philippines, that is, as a country conquered in war by an authoritarian regime.<sup>52</sup> Although historians emphasize the enthusiasm and control John Foster Dulles exhibited throughout this affair, the president certainly influenced Dulles' attitude.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 449.

<sup>52</sup> Memorandum for the NSC, "Special Report on Indonesia," September 6, 1957; WHO; OSANSA; NSC Series; Policy Papers Series. The copy in the Eisenhower Library belonged to "The President"--handwritten at the top of the page, over the "Top Secret" stamp, on the cover page that was Lay's memo. The president underlined the countries possibly affected by unfriendly military forces on the island of Java: Malaya, Singapore, British Borneo, the Philippines, New Guinea, and Australia.

<sup>53</sup> Prados, 135; Grose, 449.

The NSC meeting on September 23, 1957, reviewed the findings of the Interdepartmental Committee. This pivotal meeting did not offer a forum for a critical debate over the ad hoc committee's report, but represented a sounding board for the Dulles brothers. Much of the meeting remains classified, but the notes taken by S. Everett Gleason, the deputy executive secretary of the NSC, provide enough insight to conclude that the president, as well as all committee members, clearly understood the actions taken so far in the archipelago by the CIA, and recognized the need to increase the pressure in the region.

Robert Cutler opened by briefing the Council in "great detail" on the discussion and recommendations on the Special Report developed by the ad hoc committee. After finishing his presentation, he asked for DCI Dulles to update the Council on recent intelligence reports from Indonesia.<sup>54</sup> Dulles discussed the recently concluded Munas conference, where Sukarno met with the leaders of the provinces. He said, taking his cue from Hugh Cumming's earlier memo to the secretary of state, that although the leaders reached an agreement, it provided "no real or substantial progress toward a settlement of the outstanding issues." He compared the conference to a sedative, because "it reduced the pain, but it effected no cure."<sup>55</sup>

The DCI further stated that the conference did not settle the military dispute nor the economic differences, and instead delayed discussion for a later date. The only agreement reached in that respect was that Indonesian Vice President Mohammad Hatta,

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<sup>54</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 450. In the notes, Gleason gives a parenthetical reference that a copy of Cutler's briefing accompanies the meeting's notes. This brief, however, is missing--as noted by the editors of FRUS.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 450.

after he returned from a visit to China, would lead a subcommittee addressing those issues. This caught the president's attention. He inquired about the nature of Hatta's trip to Communist China. Instead of seizing this opportunity to sow more seeds of discord, the DCI answered with an objective assessment. He advised the president that nearly all Asian leaders visited China during their incumbency. Secretary Dulles then observed that the intelligence community recognized Hatta as a staunch anti-communist, and that this trip did not alarm them.<sup>56</sup>

The secretary of state followed the comments of his brother, providing his appraisal of the Interdepartmental Committee's recommendations. Dulles favored the report, suggesting that the "recommendations constituted no radical departure from our present policies and actions vis-à-vis Indonesia." He focused his comments on the upcoming resolutions submitted at the United Nations concerning the West Irian issue. As to the U.S. vote, he believed it depended on the developing situation within the Indonesian government. He wanted flexibility in casting that vote. It depended on the actions of Sukarno's government whether the United States would continue its neutral stance on the issue. The secretary of state's brother warned that supporting the Dutch would isolate the United States from the Indonesian Nationalists as completely as the Indonesian Communists. The secretary still remained ignorant of the importance this issue held in the eyes of the Indonesians.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 450-51.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 451-52; Kahin, 96-97.

The participants agreed to the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee, and adopted them after adding an amendment that remains classified.<sup>58</sup> The report constituted NSC Action No. 1788. The president and the Council agreed that the situation in Indonesia required covert support from the United States. A major issue in this meeting and in the report by the ad hoc committee involved the Treasury Department. In order to carry out the recommendations of the committee, funds were required to support the dissidents, and also back the anti-Communist elements within the central government. Item "e" of this NSC Action No. 1788, cited the need of the National Advisory Council to assess handling of a paragraph in the Annex A of the Special Report. This section of the report concerned the "Economic and Technical Assistance Programs," or the bureaucratic handling of finances to Indonesia.<sup>59</sup> The president supported economic incentives not only to the central government to change its course, but also to the dissident forces that were actively seeking that change of course.

### *Conclusion*

The events in 1957 drastically changed the involvement of the United States in the affairs of Indonesia. Although the objective remained the same--persuading Sukarno

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<sup>58</sup> The amendment probably concerned conventional military involvement. When the acting secretary of defense provided that department's opinion of the report, he discussed an earlier proposal, presumably presented at the Ad Hoc Committee's meetings. When the president heard the proposal, he retorted that "the proposal contained elements that could not appropriately be placed in an NSC policy." *FRUS*, vol. 22, 452; Kahin 97.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 437, 453.

and the people of Indonesia to reject the influences of communism--the initiative switched from the CIA to the president and the National Security Council. The president supported the actions of the CIA, and now provided them with authorization to continue their work. More importantly, the resulting NSC action allocated significant funds to assist the duplicitous program.

Popular accounts place the amount of money earmarked for use in Indonesia at \$10 million. Frank Wisner, according to one report, laid the voucher designating that amount on the DCI's desk, who "signed the chit with a little flourish."<sup>60</sup> The rebels received monetary support for weapons and supplies almost immediately. In early October, Colonel Simbolon, the rebel commander in the town of Medan, in North Sumatra, accepted \$50,000 to supply his 300-400 troops.<sup>61</sup>

The Eisenhower administration identified Sukarno as a Communist and viewed his actions as being Soviet-backed or Communist-influenced. As Richard Immerman suggests in his monograph on the CIA's involvement in Guatemala in 1954, the "cold war ethos" produced a liberal interpretation as to what constituted a Communist. He credits the McCarthy-era hysteria with establishing such a limited and inaccurate view of the world--especially in regard to nationalistic or neutral leaders. This cold war ethos led to such simplified reasoning as was put forward by the ambassador to Guatemala, Richard Patterson, Jr. His idea, labeled the "duck test," seemed a common practice in

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<sup>60</sup> Prados, 134. In Evan Thomas' account, he also cites a history on Dulles that suggests the Special Group approved the withdrawal of \$843,000 from the CIA reserve on November 23, 1957. Additional withdrawals were made later. See Thomas, 377n12.

<sup>61</sup> Kahin, 120.



the analysis of Third World actors, and is worth mentioning in its entirety. In his speech to a Rotary Club in March 1950, Patterson had said:

Many times it is impossible to prove legally that a certain individual is a communist; but for cases of this sort I recommend a practical method of detection--the "duck test." The duck test works this way: suppose you see a bird walking around a farm yard. This bird wears no label that says "duck." But the bird certainly looks like a duck. Also, he goes to the pond and you notice that he swims like a duck. The he opens his beak and quacks like a duck. Well, by this time you have probably reached the conclusion that the bird is a duck, whether he's wearing a label or not.<sup>62</sup>

As biased and poorly formed as this assessment sounds, it follows the same inaccurate analysis used by Sukarno and his policymakers. Nationalism guided Sukarno's view of the world. He failed to comprehend how deep-rooted the pressures of the bipolar world were in the American view of the world. So the Indonesians developed their own syllogism to represent the United States: colonialism is capitalism; colonialism is bad; therefore capitalism is bad.<sup>63</sup> Misperceptions guided both governments down the path of risky policies.

The CIA's case officers continued bolstering the military commanders in the dissenting regions. Their established relationships with these concerned military officers were now going to pay off. The rebellious colonels supported the shift in the other direction, satisfying the U.S. government. The policy established by the NSC provided direction for four months. As the United States became more involved, the claim of plausible deniability diminished. The president had to take the gamble.

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<sup>62</sup> Immerman, 102. Also, Ambrose and Immerman, 222.

<sup>63</sup> Smith, 209.

### CHAPTER III

#### FROM COVERT TO PARAMILITARY OPERATIONS: 1957-1958

President Eisenhower's policy of September 1957 authorized greater covert assistance to the dissidents in Indonesia while the United States pursued normal relations with the central government. The president employed this duplicitous course in an effort to counter the communist threat on the islands. By the end of November, however, he encountered obstacles that questioned the viability of a dualistic policy. Two familiar dilemmas challenged the administration in the close of 1957: the increasing influence of communism, and the heightened intensity of the West Irian dispute. Together these developments widened the gap between the United States and the government of Indonesia. By the beginning of the new year, the Eisenhower administration believed that the best means to counter communism and change Sukarno's leftist policies were through covert support of the dissident provinces that challenged the regime.

During February 1958, however, the United States realized that its current efforts to undermine the communists in Indonesia were inadequate. The rebels had created a separate provisional government, and without greater U.S. support the dissidents likely would be unable to sustain its existence against Sukarno's left-leaning regime. The increasing assistance provided by Washington in late February blurred the line between covert and overt actions as the CIA began participating in paramilitary operations. This

expanding role by the United States consisted of the creation of a paramilitary air force that included the use of CIA contract pilots. The pilots' initial missions were airdropping supplies to the rebels, but would later involve actual combat. The Eisenhower administration was applying a gradual escalation of power to the growing threat of communism in Indonesia.

### *End of 1957*

Growing evidence of the influence of communism in Indonesia provided justification for President Eisenhower to expand CIA activities. On November 7, a regional election in Yogyakarta gave the PKI 30 percent of the vote, showing an increase of 17 percent over the 1955 national elections.<sup>1</sup> Allen Dulles focused on this development during a November 22 NSC meeting, noting that the Communists were now the "strongest party" on the island, and that they "were becoming increasingly bold." By December, his statement was proved correct when the Communists created discord over the West Irian issue. The actions of Sukarno and the Communists in early December received considerable attention during the NSC meetings of December 5 and 12. Director Dulles briefed the Council on the aggressive takeover of Dutch enterprises by the Communist labor organizations. These seizures sometimes occurred without the government's direction, although the government welcomed the party's initiative. The government, however, did support an anti-Dutch campaign that flourished on Java that expelled some 46,000 Dutch inhabitants of Indonesia. Added to this, the DCI informed

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<sup>1</sup> Kahin, 107. The percentage of the vote for the PKI in the 1955 election was 19.8.

the president that the Soviet Union offered to provide "ships, technicians, etc.," as replacements for Dutch losses. The activities in late 1957 disturbed the president and the Council.<sup>2</sup> The growth of the Communist party and the confiscation of Dutch property justified an expansion of covert support.

The West Irian dilemma continued to challenge the American position of neutrality between Indonesia and the Netherlands. On October 2, the State Department's Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs presented a memorandum defending the U.S. policy of neutrality. Anticipating the upcoming vote in the United Nations General Assembly on a resolution regarding the dispute, the bureau concluded that supporting either nation would result in negative consequences<sup>3</sup>. To back the Indonesians would isolate the Netherlands, and threaten the unity in Europe--specifically within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. To side with the Netherlands, on the other hand, would push the Indonesians farther into the Communist camp by substantiating its claims of U.S. sympathy with colonialism.<sup>4</sup> Abstaining from the upcoming vote in the General Assembly, on the other hand, might avert these negative consequences. As a result, the Eisenhower administration remained neutral on this issue throughout the ensuing period of rebellion among the Indonesian islands.

The West Irian issue was the focus of a meeting between President Sukarno and Ambassador Allison on November 25--four days before the General Assembly vote. In

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<sup>2</sup> 347th and 348th Meeting of the NCS, December 5 and December 12, 1957; Kahin, 111-12. When the president inquired about the violence against the Dutch, Allen Dulles informed him that most violent activities occurred on Java, because the Communists had inflamed the West Irian dispute. The DCI hinted that the PKI used the incident to promote its influence. The number of Communists on the outer island, Dulles also noted, was "fewer in number."

<sup>3</sup> Kahin, 109-110. Allison, 311.

<sup>4</sup> Recommendations and Supporting Analysis by FE, October 2, 1957, FRUS, vol. 22, 460.

his telegram to the State Department, Allison said that he had pleaded with President Sukarno to provide strong leadership during this volatile time so as to avoid violence over the Indonesian-Dutch dispute. Sukarno had replied that since the resolution coming to a vote was "a mild one," the Indonesian populace would not understand America's abstention. The Indonesians would demand immediate action against the Dutch from the government, since the West did not recognize the desires of Indonesia. The president had concluded the meeting by saying, "Only America can really help--don't throw away the ball to the Russians."<sup>5</sup> Sukarno, obviously, was using the specter of communism as an enticement to gain U.S. backing for Indonesia's claim to West Irian. John Foster Dulles had responded in August--and now again in November--that the West Irian issue was not a bargaining chip. The State Department, with President Eisenhower's support, demanded that the Indonesian government show progress in stemming the PKI's influence, before making any concessions. In essence, the United States wanted Communist participation within the central government terminated.<sup>6</sup>

A final contentious issue between Indonesia and the United States centered on a request for arms from the Indonesian Army chief of staff, General Abdul Nasution. The Indonesian military depended on the United States for its equipment. Despite persistent requests throughout the last months of 1957, the United States refused to provide additional materiel.<sup>7</sup> The administration reasoned that granting additional equipment would undermine its covert support for the dissident regions. This concern, combined with the administration's fear that the Indonesians would use this equipment in a conflict

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 514. Allison quotes the president's final comment.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 418, 420-21; Kahin 110.

<sup>7</sup> Kahin, 108.

with the Dutch, strengthened Washington's decision to delay any shipment of arms. In late December, Nasution's patience ran out, and he went began looking elsewhere for support, securing an arms agreement with the East Bloc.<sup>8</sup> Instead of the Americans supplying the Indonesian military with its equipment, it was now the communist bloc countries filling that role.

The administration took this risk because of the division within the Indonesian army, which the CIA had assessed in its National Intelligence Estimate the previous August. The report had stated that provincial military commanders led the movements on the outer islands, specifically in Sumatra and the Celebes. Military commanders showed allegiances to their region--not the army.<sup>9</sup> The administration therefore had concluded that Nasution and military leaders on Java sided with the Communists.

During the fall, however, Allison and the American military attachés to the Indonesian army had argued otherwise, recommending that the United States accommodate the request for arms. Proponents of sending military assistance to Nasution's army, however, were in the minority. Washington ignored their protests.<sup>10</sup> At the close of November, Secretary Dulles cabled Allison, informing him of the administration's final decision to withhold assistance "pending further developments political situation Indonesia [sic]." <sup>11</sup> Nasution's decision to seek aid from the Eastern

<sup>8</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 515-16; Kahin, 108.

<sup>9</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 430, 461. The CIA NIE 65-57, and the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs recognized this regional division among the military.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 475-80, 521-22. For understanding the Indonesian military structure and independence, see Harvey, 8-10, and Kahin, 51-66.

<sup>11</sup> Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Indonesia, November 25, 1957. FRUS, vol. 22, 515-16. The editors of the FRUS volume note that a meeting on November 21 between Under Secretary of State Christian Herter, Mansfield Sprague, Allen Dulles, and "other State, Defense, and CIA representatives," reached this conclusion. The resolution did not pass. On November 29, the vote showed forty countries favored the negotiations, twenty-five opposed, and eleven abstained. See Kahin,

Bloc simply reaffirmed the CIA's earlier conclusion that Nasution and the army on Java were communist, and provided more evidence to the administration of the expanding influence of communism throughout Java.

Ambassador Allison believed that nationalist sentiments dominated the Sukarno government, and therefore, it was neutral in the cold war. Since he did not follow as extreme a position against Sukarno as the rest of the administration, Allison became an outsider.<sup>12</sup> The administration, some accounts suggest, purposely withheld information from Allison regarding covert actions. The ambassador supposedly did not know of the assistance given to the dissidents.<sup>13</sup>

In any event, by late November Allison knew that his government was providing such assistance, but not its extent. On the 27th, he wired Walter Robertson, assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern Affairs, and registered his concern about the decision not to provide arms for the Indonesian military. In this memo, the ambassador revealed his knowledge of the administration's policy of duplicity towards Indonesia. The administration's decision to delay military shipments to Nasution had confirmed Allison's suspicions. "We must decide to go definitely one way or the other," Allison asserted. Although he thought the administration should fully support the Sukarno regime, he emphasized that "the middle course will fail." This staunch advocate of the legitimate government in Indonesia, however, then opened the door for Foster Dulles by suggesting, "I also believe there is at least greater than a fifty-fifty chance that the

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110-11. Allison states that at the United Nations, the "private conversations" among the delegates included a message that the United States "would not be offended if the resolution should be defeated." See Allison, 335.

<sup>12</sup> Allison, 318-19, 340-41.

<sup>13</sup> Kahin, 116-17.

opposite course would work if well thought out and definitely decided upon.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, he gave favorable recognition to the administration’s covert support to the dissenting provinces.

Foster Dulles championed the dissenting colonels’ dissatisfaction with the Sukarno government. The affair in Indonesia became his crusade. In a telephone conversation with his brother on November 29, the secretary could not conceal his enthusiasm for intensifying the effort against Sukarno after receiving Allison’s message. He updated Allen on Allison’s changing perspective, suggesting that the ambassador’s cable on policy “was a long business, extremely significant and involved a complete reversal.” Secretary Dulles wanted to take advantage of this opportunity of having Allison’s lukewarm support, suggesting to the DCI that, “We should do something.” The DCI showed his concern for the two-track policy, remarking that it hindered creating a strategy. The secretary, hinting at the recent developments in Indonesia over West Irian, deemed that this situation afforded an opportunity to act while “we have substantial assets with which to deal.” The assets were indigenous dissidents, which Dulles believed would reduce by half within the next six months. The secretary of state searched for an excuse to abandon support for the government and overtly back the

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<sup>14</sup> Message From the Ambassador in Indonesia (Allison) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson), November 27, 1957, FRUS, vol. 22, 517-18. Much of the message remains classified--Secretary Dulles references its length in a telephone conversation with his brother. Telephone Call to Mr. Allen W. Dulles, November 29, 1957, John Foster Dulles Papers (JFDP), Telephone Call Series [All cited telephone conversations come from the JFDP at the Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.] Many of the secretary of state’s telephone calls are recorded. If one of his secretaries or assistants was not available, he would record them himself.



dissidents. Allison's cable provided the secretary the incentive, and the West Irian dispute the rationale.<sup>15</sup>

Although the president had authorized the intensification of covert operations in September 1957, the CIA had been slow in developing a plan of action. As the Kahins suggest, "[The fall] was a period during which the United States sought to build up its 'assets' in Indonesia and increase [rebel] strength so that, either through their acting alone or ultimately in conjunction with a more activist American policy, greater leverage would be available against Jakarta."<sup>16</sup> The case officers had established close relationships with the dissidents over the past six months (April through September 1957), and financial assistance had reached the outer islands in October. It took until the close of November, however, for the CIA to form its strategy. Allen Dulles sent Al Ulmer a concept of operations, and Operation HAIK was underway.<sup>17</sup>

The initial result of implementing Operation HAIK was the sudden increase of support for the dissidents in December. The colonels' poorly supplied troops began receiving vast amounts of equipment. The CIA enlisted the help of the U.S. Navy to

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<sup>15</sup> Telephone Call to Mr. Allen W. Dulles, November 29, 1957; Kahin, 121-22; Allison, 337. In the Kahins' monograph, the most significant part of this conversation is omitted--Foster Dulles' interpretation of Allison's cable. The opening lines of the recorded conversation clearly provide the Dulles brothers with more support for increasing covert operations. By assets the secretary of state could be referring to the dissident colonels and their supporters, the financial arrangement, or the support of many within the administration--or a combination of all factors. The crisis over West Irian, and the resulting seizures of Dutch property by the Communists, persuaded Foster Dulles to call his brother and Christian Herter, under secretary of state, on December 8. Both calls regarded using this infringement as the pretense to use conventional military force--as supported by most military officials and sanctioned in Paragraph 9 of the Ad Hoc Special Report presented at the NSC meeting on September 23. See Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, December 8, 1957 (10:10 a.m.) and Telephone Call to Governor Herter, December 8, 1957 (10:16 a.m.)

<sup>16</sup> Kahin, 106.

<sup>17</sup> Telephone Call to Mr. Allen W. Dulles, November 29, 1957. Allen Dulles told his brother that specific recommendations were forthcoming in "a day or two." As stated earlier, \$10 million is the popular figure for the cost of the operation. Al Ulmer stated that the figure was \$7 million. See Grose, 452, 599.

transport these arms. One method involved positioning submarines off the coast of the dissenting provinces, then unloading the arms in small boats piloted by the Indonesians. This "over the beach" method of delivery complemented the use of commercial freighters to unload equipment at major dissident cities like Padang.<sup>18</sup> The CIA also began recruiting an initial corps of pilots for possible missions involving aerial supply to the rebels. Although the majority were employed by Civil Air Transport, the operation came to include a conglomeration of nations and a variety of aircraft.<sup>19</sup>

Operation HAIK would provide the president and his administration with a way to create a non-Communist sphere in Indonesia. Sukarno's insistence about including the PKI in his government tried the patience of the president and secretary of state. In the fall, the administration found another vehicle that might possibly meet its objective--the dissenting provinces. The dissident colonels espoused pro-American ideology and gained the confidence of the CIA and the administration. The increasing influence of the Communist party, most evident in regional election results and growing labor organizations, compelled the administration to place more faith in the dissidents. The chaos that erupted after the United Nations vote over the West Irian issue, specifically the pretext for the government and the Communists to seize Dutch property, made this course the most attractive to President Eisenhower. Finally, General Nasution's agreement with the East Bloc, procuring much needed equipment for the Indonesian military, proved to the policymakers that Communists dominated the island of Java. The

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<sup>18</sup> Smith, 242; Kahin, 120-21.

<sup>19</sup> David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, The Invisible Government (New York: Random House, 1964), 138; Kahin, 121; Private papers of Professor William Leary, University of Georgia. Some of the participating nations included Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore, Great Britain, and Australia.

administration, though still presenting a facade of congenial relations with the Government of Indonesia, now looked to the outer islands to pressure Sukarno into reforming his government.

On January 4, 1958, the administration showed its support of the dissidents' cause when it announced the replacement of John M. Allison with Howard P. Jones, then the deputy assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern Affairs, effective in March 1958. This represented the diminishing of the "middle ground."<sup>20</sup> Allison still desired to influence Sukarno through working directly with the Indonesians' legitimate government, as he did not recognize President Sukarno as "beyond redemption."<sup>21</sup> The administration, however, viewed this as a naive and ill-founded approach, opting to continue its efforts through covert operations with the dissenting factions.

### *The rebellion*

During the latter months of 1957, the dissident provinces concentrated on organizing power, training recruits, and securing equipment. Their main objective was to pressure the Sukarno government into introducing radical changes in the economic and political atmosphere, but they recognized that they needed to operate from a

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<sup>20</sup> Kahin, 119.

<sup>21</sup> FRUS, vol. 22, 517; Allison, 321. The Kahins charge that the administration "consciously excluded" ambassador Allison from knowledge of covert operations (See Kahin 91-98, 119). Although he most likely remained ignorant to the strategy and extent of the operation, it is highly unlikely he did not realize such developments were occurring. In his message to Walter Robertson on November 27 (FRUS, vol. 22, 517), Allison understands the duplicitous policy. Also, the ambassador kept company with the Jakarta-based CIA Station Chief (See Allison, 307-308). It is likely Allison knew the broad aspects of the administration's policy.

position of strength.<sup>22</sup> The increased support from the Eisenhower administration in the final month of the year boosted the rebels' confidence. As early as mid-December, the CIA believed the dissidents wanted to escalate the affair by declaring their independence from the Jakarta government.<sup>23</sup>

The tension increased in January 1958 after Sukarno left Indonesia on an extended trip abroad. He needed this time away, he said, to recuperate from his recent ill-health resulting from the pressures of governing and an attempt on his life. He also planned to drum up support for Indonesia's claim to West Irian.<sup>24</sup> The CIA believed that besides gathering support for the West Irian dilemma, Sukarno's trip also was a way to "permit certain changes to be made in the Government of Indonesia without loss of face for Sukarno himself."<sup>25</sup> Allen Dulles informed the NSC that the Indonesians were planning further confiscation of Dutch holdings, with no arrangement for financial compensation. He added that the economic situation among the islands continued to deteriorate, causing the island of Borneo to follow the example of Sumatra and the Celebes in publicly dissenting from the central government.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Kahin, 99. The Kahins reference John Foster Dulles' message to Allison on August 24, when he suggested that the anti-Communists elements on the outer islands should "develop further strength before attempting direct negotiations with Sukarno." This referred to Dulles' objection that the dissidents attend the upcoming Munas Conference in September. See FRUS, vol. 22, 421.

<sup>23</sup> 348th Meeting of the NSC, December 12, 1957. DCI Dulles briefed the president that Sumatra was about to rebel from the central government.

<sup>24</sup> Kahin, 127. On November 30, 1957, a group of Moslem extremists tossed numerous hand-grenades at President Sukarno, who was visiting a school with two of his children. The attack killed eleven people, and injured thirty--mostly schoolchildren. Known as the "Cikini affair," named after a section of Jakarta, it deeply disturbed the president, and represented the vast unrest within the country. See Kahin, 112-15; Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, vol. XVII, Indonesia (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1994), 6-9. [Hereafter cited as FRUS, vol. 17].

<sup>25</sup> 350th Meeting of the NSC, January 6, 1958.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* In his monthly press conference, President Eisenhower stated that it was such a "confused situation" in Indonesia, that "he was not sure that today there would be an Indonesia." Dwight David Eisenhower (DDE) Papers, DDE Diary Notes Series, Staff Notes 1958.

On January 31, Allen Dulles sent a CIA analysis to a number of top officials, including President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles. Labeled "Top Secret, Eyes Only," the document was entitled "Probable Developments in Indonesia." Restating the prediction from December on the dissidents' willingness to seek independence, the analysis stated that the Padang group of rebel leaders planned to issue their ultimatum to Sukarno's government "on or about 5 February." The 14-page report went on to detail the conditions in the island-nation, emphasizing the necessity of U.S. support for the rebels. It suggested that this ultimatum was not necessarily designed to induce civil war in Indonesia, but to show Sukarno the gravity of the situation. Director Dulles predicted that despite the ultimatum, room remained to negotiate. A break with Java would occur only if Sukarno ignored the demands of the rebels and made no concessions. The report also considered a "Civil War Situation." It estimated that the outer islands held some important advantages, including the unity of the provincial army leaders and the superiority of equipment. The dissenting colonels likely could rally the support of all, if not most of, the military units on the outer islands. Furthermore, the outer islands had the advantage of superior equipment if hostilities began before the central government received any substantial shipments from the Soviet Union or East Bloc.<sup>27</sup> This CIA analysis came one day after a NSC meeting in which General Charles

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<sup>27</sup> FRUS, vol 17, 19-24. According to Robert McMahon, the editor of the volume, the agency distributed the memo to the following officials: Eisenhower; John Foster Dulles; Cutler; Robertson; Admiral Stump; Major General Robert A. Schow, assistant chief of staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; Rear Admiral Laurence H. Frost, USN, assistant chief of Naval Operations, Naval Intelligence; Brigadier General Richard Collins, USA, deputy director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; and Major General Millard Lewis, assistant chief of staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force. The copy in the Eisenhower Library belonged to the special assistant to the president for National Security Affairs, Robert Cutler. He received this copy from agency member J.S. Earman, who stapled a note to it that read, "Mr. Dulles has asked me to forward to you the attached memorandum containing this Agency's views on the situation

P. Cabell, the deputy DCI, discussed the recent agreement between Indonesia and Czechoslovakia for the purchase of 17 MiG fighters, and ongoing negotiations with the Soviets for more arms.<sup>28</sup> In summary, the CIA concluded that the primary motivation of the colonels rested on negotiations and concession, but that if fighting did indeed break out, the outer island forces could overcome the armies of the central government on those islands.<sup>29</sup> The State Department, Defense Department, and CIA, agreed on the appropriate responses to the various contingencies that could develop in Indonesia.

Alluding to the CIA's report, Secretary Dulles voiced his concern to his brother on the possibility of the central government stalling during negotiations while it amassed forces and equipment. Secretary Dulles wondered what "tactic" the dissidents planned to implement if this occurred. He asked his brother, "Have we anything more in mind?"<sup>30</sup> The Director replied the next day that a group consisting of representatives from the CIA, State Department, and Defense Department would discuss "some forward planning" on the evolving situation.<sup>31</sup> Since December 1957, the CIA had continued to predict the possibility that the rebels would issue an ultimatum to the central government; however, by February it still had not occurred. The CIA continued to react

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in Indonesia." White House Office (WHO), Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (OSANSA), Records, 1952-1961 NSC Series.

<sup>28</sup> *FRUS*, vol. 17, 20n2. This comes from the records of NSC meetings by Gleason. Although the editor of this volume, Robert McMahon, was allowed to print the notes from this meeting, it remains classified in the Eisenhower Library records. This meeting is not in the volume as an "Editorial Note" as are the other meetings. It could be that this footnote evaded the classification people. Some members of the administration addressed General Cabell by his middle name, "Pearre."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-24; Kahin, 134.

<sup>30</sup> Telephone Conversation with Allen Dulles, February 4, 1957.

<sup>31</sup> Telephone Call from Allen Dulles, February 5, 1957. The recorder was "pdb" (Phyllis Bernau, Personal Assistant to the Special Consultant to the President). She wrote that the conversation seemed "cryptic," but that the brother's discussed including in the meeting visiting dignitary, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. They wanted the support of the British, and planned to ask the president for his okay on allowing Macmillan to attend the meeting. No record of this meeting was found.

to the rebels' action. During a NSC meeting on February 6, Allen Dulles briefed the Council members on Indonesia, saying, "If there was to be a climax in Indonesia, we were on the point of reaching it; but one has to be very skeptical about the Indonesians and about any climax."<sup>32</sup> The rebel leaders pressed ahead in their desires to confront the Sukarno government directly while the CIA lagged behind until the initiative of the rebel leaders brought the situation to a climax.

On February 10, the rebel leaders presented the central government with their ultimatum, entitled "Struggle Charter: To Save the State." It charged Sukarno and the Communists with leading Indonesia toward destruction. This charter included a five-day limit for a response from the central government. When the central government took no action, rebel leader Ahmad Husein declared over the radio on February 15 the establishment of the Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI)--the Revolutionary Government of Indonesia.. Lt. Col. Sumual, who had formed the Permesta struggle in March 1957 on the island of Sulawesi, also referred to as the Celebes, immediately announced his allegiance to the PRRI.<sup>33</sup>

The role of U.S. involvement through the CIA was critical in these events. Without U.S. aid, the rebels would have lacked substantial equipment with which to

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<sup>32</sup> 354th Meeting of the NSC, February 6, 1958.

<sup>33</sup> Kahin, 136-42; Harvey, 87-88. The February 10 ultimatum presented five demands: "1) that within five days the Djuanda Cabinet resign; 2) that Hatta and Hamengku Buwono (the Sultan of Jogjakarta) be appointed formateurs of a new cabinet; 3) that Hatta and Hamengku Buwono accept this charge; 4) that Parliament permit Hatta and Hamengku Buwono to form a national business cabinet with a mandate to work until the next general elections; and 5) that Soekarno [alternate spelling] resume a 'constitutional position' and give full opportunity and his assistance to the new national business cabinet." See Lev, 38-39. Once again the rebels surprised the CIA. In the NSC meeting, Allen Dulles briefed that although the rebels had a provisional government ready to implement, instead of taking the "step" to actual rebellion, negotiations were more likely. See notes, 355th Meeting of the NSC, February 13, 1958.

challenge the Sukarno government. Some accounts argue that U.S. pressure and support prompted the dissidents to place their uncompromising demands on the central government.<sup>34</sup> The issuing of the ultimatum by the rebels, however, without the CIA's complete awareness to its timing, tends to discredit the contention that the U.S. agency controlled events. Although it did not surprise the CIA when the ultimatum appeared, the administration was not entirely prepared for the belligerent stance the rebels took. In a briefing to the NSC, Allen Dulles remarked that the rebels delivered the ultimatum too early. While the CIA believed that the dissident colonels had overestimated their military capabilities, the DCI expressed confidence that "they [still] have a reasonable chance of winning [the struggle]."<sup>35</sup> A slightly more balanced interpretation asserts that it was the activities of a few rebel colonels--Sumitro Djojohadikusumo, Joop F. Warouw, H.N. Ventje Sumual, and Maludin Simbolon--that accelerated the rebels' uncompromising plan of action.<sup>36</sup>

On February 11, the day after the initial ultimatum, John Foster Dulles told a press conference that the United States "would like to see in Indonesia a government which is constitutional and which reflects the real interest and desires of the people of

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<sup>34</sup> Harvey, 87.

<sup>35</sup> 356th Meeting of the NSC, February 27, 1958.

<sup>36</sup> Kahin, 136. The dissidents pressed foreign governments into supporting their cause. One reason given for issuing the ultimatum at this time involves the events in December. The central government had seized a Dutch inter-island shipping and sea transport company in their aggressive move in December. The company, KPM, kept its ships out of Indonesian waters. The rebel leaders believed that losing its shipping capability would make it even more difficult for the central government to exert its authority. See Lev, 35. In the NSC meeting of February 6, Dulles relayed information regarding a meeting, in Tokyo, between a representative of the dissidents and President Sukarno. Sukarno, an emotional man, wept during the discussion, apparently distraught over the situation. After the representative left, however, Sukarno sent a message to Jakarta that no change in policy was to be made. See notes, 354th Meeting of the NSC, February 6, 1958, DDE Papers (ACW File), NSC Series, Eisenhower Library; or, FRUS, vol. 17, 26-27.



Indonesia." He equated the "guided democracy" style of government to a "Communist-type or a Communist-dominated government" that the people did not really endorse, a comment that drew heavy protests from the Indonesians. The public understood this remark as constituting support for the rebel ultimatum--it was the first public statement by the administration that revealed who it supported. President Eisenhower clearly agreed with Dulles' approach, however, even though the comment created such commotion because two weeks later Dulles repeated a similar idea at hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Had President Eisenhower not agreed with Dulles' initial attack, this comment would not have been repeated.<sup>37</sup>

As neither side was willing to negotiate, the situation in Indonesia advanced rapidly towards a civil war. Concerned about the U.S. position now that the conflict had erupted, Robert H. Johnson, a member of the National Security Council Staff, drafted a memo to Robert Cutler, the president's special assistant for National Security Affairs, asking that the upcoming NSC meeting address the U.S. plan of action, including a briefing on what was likely to occur in the region. The impetus for the memo was Johnson's fear that, "We are running out of Presidentially approved policy."<sup>38</sup> The response to Johnson's concern came three days later.

At the 356th meeting of the NSC on February 27, Allen Dulles began by providing a briefing on the critical developments in Indonesia. Although the Indonesian

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<sup>37</sup> Kahin, 141-42. During the campaign for the 1952 election, Eisenhower berated Dulles for suggesting that their administration would "use every means" possible in rolling back communism, during a campaign speech. Candidate Eisenhower asked him to change the phrase to say "every *peaceful* means." This shows the president's attention to detail, even in political rhetoric. See Ambrose and Immermann, 236.

<sup>38</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 46-7. The memo's subject was "Are We Running out of Policy to Deal with the Indonesian Situation?"

Air Force had carried out two raids on Sumatra, he concluded that no noticeable mobilization of the Indonesian army had occurred. Java was not yet ready for an all-out attack on the rebel islands. The CIA believed that Sukarno was unsure of the allegiance of his army. When Dulles suggested that the "greatest problem confronting [the administration]" concerned the level of assistance the United States should provide to the rebel leaders, President Eisenhower asserted that "we would have to go in [overtly/conventionally]" if a Communist takeover seemed imminent. His point was that everything that could be done without relying on conventional forces should be done first. Secretary Dulles followed this statement by suggesting that "our chances for successful intervention were better today, with the assistance of an indigenous government on Sumatra [and the Celebes], than they would be later on, when we might have to intervene without such cover." He said it was time for the United States to take "some very substantial risks."<sup>39</sup> The president nodded his approval. The president's statement, and Secretary Dulles' comment, came after a prediction by Director Dulles that if the dissident movement failed at this time, then Indonesia would certainly fall to the Communists.<sup>40</sup>

"Virtue," remarked journalist Keyes Beech, "was on the rebel side." The members of the revolution, he has pointed out, included some fine citizens of Indonesia, and great military leaders--compared to the "squalid lot in Jakarta."<sup>41</sup> Their virtue to the

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<sup>39</sup> 356th Meeting of the NSC, February 27, 1958.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Beech, 266. They included Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, a one-time president of the republic, cabinet minister, and governor of the Bank of Indonesia; Dr. Sumitro Djojoadikusomo, a leading economist and professor at the University of Indonesia; Mohammed Natsir, former prime minister and leader of Masjumi party; Colonel Maludin Simbolon and Lt. Col. Ventje Sumual were the two main military commanders.

administration, though, was that the dissidents matched Washington's desire to stem the advance of communism in Indonesia. By the end of February 1958, then, the dissidents received the staunch backing of the United States, exhibited by actions of the CIA. The CIA now was ready to escalate the operations, as decided by the administration, by using its paramilitary Air Force.

### *Conclusion*

On February 21, aircraft from the Indonesian Air Force, the Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (AURI), carried out raids around the rebel city of Painan, on the west coast of central Sumatra near Padang.<sup>42</sup> The next day the air force bombed Padang and Bukittinggi. These bombings were meant as a show of force to the rebels. They indicated that the creation of an independent government would not be tolerated, and the government was not going to negotiate.<sup>43</sup> The confrontation now had turned deadly, with the government's employment of what the rebels feared most--the air force.<sup>44</sup> The rebel leaders required assistance, and they expected the CIA to provide it.

Following the NSC meeting on February 27, the secretary of state called his brother to discuss the problem of assisting the rebels. During the brief conversation, they decided to increase the intensity of covert support because, "They agreed it is the

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<sup>42</sup> JFDP, Telephone Call Series, February 21, 1958; Kahin, 146. A note left for the Secretary of State informed him that his brother called to tell him of this raid. Allen Dulles left the message telling of conflicting reports concerning the strikes' casualties. It is interesting that the secretary of state received details of tactical nature. This is similar to President Lyndon Johnson's obsession with the battle of Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War. Phyllis Bernau took down the message for the secretary of state.

<sup>43</sup> Kahin, 146.

<sup>44</sup> 354th Meeting of the NSC, February 6, 1958.

last chance." The dissident forces afforded the United States with the best means to influence the affairs of the islands. The United States had to counter communism. The secretary told Allen Dulles that, in order for the dissidents to triumph, the United States must be willing to "take some risk of showing our hand." The DCI said, "We are ready to give them a bird as soon as they can eat it." This obviously was a reference to provide the rebels with aircraft to build an air force. The CIA's paramilitary involvement with the Indonesian rebels was underway.<sup>45</sup>

While the brothers discussed providing combat aircraft to the rebels, Civil Air Transport initiated its involvement in the conflict. On the evening of February 26, a CAT C-46 dropped military equipment to rebels on the Pekanbaru airfield in central Sumatra. The equipment consisted of .50-caliber machine guns, bazookas, 75 mm. recoilless rifles, a variety of small arms, and ammunition. Another C-46 made a drop at an airfield near the city of Padang. The CIA had crossed the line from organizer and observer to participant. As the conflict between the rebels and Indonesian government increased, so did the involvement of the CIA's Air Force, Civil Air Transport.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, February 27, 1958 (4:20 p.m.); Kahin, 238. This conversation, recorded by Phyllis Bernau, is the most cryptic of any recorded conversation. The brothers revealed a little reticence in escalating the conflict by providing aircraft to the dissidents, but they recognized that doing so was the best course of action.

<sup>46</sup> Kahin, 152; Personal papers of Professor Leary. The Kahins' information comes from an interview in 1971 with an Indonesian military commander who was in charge of operations against central Sumatra. Lieutenant General Djatikusumo stated that the planes originated from Taiwan--CAT's home base. The conversation between the Dulles brothers occurred on the afternoon of February 27, when Allen Dulles said, "They are going ahead." Allen Dulles told the secretary that he would give the green light to the expanded operation, which now included building a combat air force. See Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, February 27, 1958 (4:20 p.m.).

## CHAPTER IV

### OPERATIONS: March-May, 1958

The Eisenhower administration realized by late February 1958 that the dissident islands could not overcome the Sukarno regime with the current level of U.S. assistance. If the administration did not escalate the conflict, it meant abandoning the new rebel government, thus handing victory to President Sukarno and the Communists. Washington decided that the CIA needed to expand its participation beyond delivering military small arms and providing organizational advice.<sup>1</sup>

A NSC meeting on February 27, and a conversation between the Dulles brothers that followed the meeting, finalized the decision to increase the role of the CIA in the conflict.<sup>2</sup> The broadened responsibility of the agency included the use of Civil Air Transport cargo aircraft to airdrop vital military equipment directly to rebel troops, increasing their tactical advantage. More importantly, Washington also charged the agency with creating of a rebel air force. In March, the CIA recruited foreign pilots to man combat aircraft "sold" to the rebels, but later it realized that the most experienced pilots flew for CAT.<sup>3</sup> The use of these American pilots substantially enhanced the

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<sup>1</sup> Prados, 141-42.

<sup>2</sup> 356th Meeting of the NSC, February 27, 1958, and Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, February 27, 1958 (4:20 p.m.) as discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Kahin, 158.

combat capabilities of the rebel forces; however, the direct participation of American pilots in this high-risk situation placed the administration in a precarious position. An incident involving one of these missions might uncover Washington's covert role in the rebellion.

In a conversation with his brother, Allen Dulles fortuitously predicted the outcome of these heightened actions when he said, "You reach a point where it is extremely difficult to do much more without showing your hand."<sup>4</sup> The president and his advisers decided that taking the risk of showing its "hand" was necessary to prevent communist expansion in Indonesia. But as Ray Cline, a former CIA director, suggests,

The weak point in covert paramilitary action is that a single misfortune that reveals CIA's connection makes it necessary for the United States either to abandon the cause completely or convert to a policy of overt military intervention. Because such paramilitary operations are generally kept secret for political reasons, when CIA's cover is blown the usual U.S. response is to withdraw, leaving behind the friendly elements who had entrusted their lives to the U.S. enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

This predicament confronted President Eisenhower in May 1958. The downing and subsequent capture of an American CIA contract pilot exposed the U.S. role in the Indonesian rebellion. Faced with a choice on which formula would keep the Communists out of Indonesia, President Eisenhower decided against overt support for the rebels, and put faith in the central government to reform its ways. The desire to hide the extent of its involvement in covert operations influenced the administration's decision.

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<sup>4</sup> Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, February 27, 1958.

<sup>5</sup> Ray S. Cline, Secrets, Spies, and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1976), 182.

*Escalation*

The administration feared that the Indonesian military would rapidly defeat the rebel forces, thus allowing Sukarno and the Communists to increase their power over the islands. The CIA believed that the dissidents issued their ultimatum too early, and that the rebel leaders failed to evaluate their military assets properly. Allen Dulles spoke frankly to the NSC members on February 27 when he remarked that the administration now needed to assume greater risks. President Eisenhower, reasoning that elimination of the dissidents meant a communist Indonesia, agreed that the CIA should step up its involvement in the conflict.<sup>6</sup>

The president confirmed his decision to provide air support for the Indonesian rebels during a NSC meeting on March 6. Council members received a briefing on developments in the region by Allen Dulles, who said that any hope for a political solution seemed bleak. President Sukarno had met with the moderate ex-Vice President Mohammed Hatta, and the conversation did not produce any hints at reconciliation with the dissidents or reform for the government. The hope of the Eisenhower administration--and the dissidents--of forcing Sukarno into making changes in his government did not seem likely. Instead, everyone waited for Sukarno's public statement on the developments, which he delayed from March 3 to March 8. The intelligence community thought that this delay provided him with the opportunity to organize his troops for an immediate invasion of the rebel islands. After Allen Dulles

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<sup>6</sup> 356th Meeting of the NSC, February 27, 1958.

explained a possible invasion scenario, the president remarked that "if the clash really occurred and the Sumatrans had a few good aircraft, they should be able to throw back the Djakarta invaders."<sup>7</sup> The Dulles brothers took this comment as a signal to provide the dissidents with the much needed airpower.

The president's propensity to use airpower shows that the objective and pattern of Operation HAIK continued to follow the strategy of a previous covert action, Operation PBSUCCESS--the CIA code name for the stratagem to overthrow Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954.<sup>8</sup> The recognition of airpower's success in that operation formed the impetus for the Indonesian affair in 1958. In Guatemala, psychological operations against the left-leaning Arbenz led to his abdication and subsequent replacement by the pro-American, CIA-backed, Colonel Carlos Enrique Castillo Armas. In the early stages of the Guatemalan coup, the CIA's Voice of Liberation radio broadcasts had intimidated Arbenz, and convinced the Guatemalans that a large force in exile would overthrow the government.<sup>9</sup> The Indonesian dissidents commenced their coup in 1958 with similar radio broadcasts from Sumatra, but government planes destroyed the transmitters early in the rebellion.<sup>10</sup>

Operation PBSUCCESS had ultimately depended on combat aircraft to create the illusion that the liberating force was much more powerful than Arbenz's government forces. This action of shock and surprise in 1954 would form the modus operandi for future covert missions, including Indonesia and the more notorious operation against

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<sup>7</sup> 357th Meeting of the NSC, March 6, 1958.

<sup>8</sup> For an account of PBSUCCESS, see Immerman, The CIA in Guatemala.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>10</sup> Prados, 140. The bombing raids of February 21 also targeted these radio installations.



Fidel Castro.<sup>11</sup> In the Guatemalan operation, Tracy Barnes, a high-ranking CIA officer, and his "PP" staff (psychological operations) had recognized airpower as the means of shocking Arbenz out of power.<sup>12</sup> The employment of a rebel air force in Guatemala, however, had encountered a problem early in the operation that necessitated a meeting on June 22, 1954, between the president, secretary of state, Allen Dulles, and Henry F. Holland, the assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs. The Arbenz government's anti-aircraft had shot down one rebel plane, and critically damaged a second, forcing the injured pilot to land in Mexico.<sup>13</sup> The rebels had approached the CIA, urgently requesting replacements. President Eisenhower had noted the conference in his memoirs:

‘What do you think Castillo’s chances would be,’ I asked Allen Dulles, ‘without the aircraft?’

His answer was unequivocal: ‘About zero.’

‘Suppose we supply the aircraft. What would the chances be then?’

Again the CIA chief did not hesitate: ‘About 20 per cent.’

The president remarked that he “knew from experience the important psychological impact of even a small amount of air support...[and that] our proper course of action--indeed my duty--was clear to me. We would replace the airplanes.”

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas, 158; Andrew, 250-51; Grose, 452.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, 113, 158. Tracy Barnes’ experiences in World War II and Guatemala provided the strategy for the operation in Indonesia. A World War II OSS commando, Barnes and another comrade convinced a force of German troops to surrender in the French town of Brittany. They succeeded through the use of ingenious psychological methods. The confused Germans thought the various explosions and sporadic firing came from a superior force--a scene directly from a movie! In the final scene of Steve McQueen’s movie “The Sand Pebbles,” his character finds himself in a compound surrounded by Chinese nationals. Attempting to make his position more formidable, he shouts out the names of his absent comrades, followed by burst of gunfire, hoping the enveloping enemy might abandon their attack!

<sup>13</sup> Immerman, 166. American pilots comprised the manpower of the exile’s Air Force. Four years later, the Indonesian rebels relied on CIA contract pilots to man their aircraft.

Allen Dulles' honest evaluation of the predicament had swayed the president's decision. He had told Dulles that if he said, "The chances would be 90 per cent, I would have had a much more difficult decision."<sup>14</sup> The decision had warranted earnest thought, but the president had remained consistent in applying his Cold War policy--countering communism anywhere without relying on overt military action. Even if Dulles said that providing more aircraft might have meant a "90 per cent" chance of a successful operation, the staunch president likely would have replaced the aircraft.

The concluding statement in this meeting provides a most poignant illustration of President Eisenhower's method of operations. After the President's quip that referred to the effectiveness of airpower, Dulles said, "Mr. President, when I saw Henry [Holland] walking into your office with three large law books under his arm, I knew he had lost his case already."<sup>15</sup> The president's determination to employ covert operations, even when legally questionable, demonstrated his conviction against communism and reliance on the CIA to carry-out his policy. Allen Dulles understood the president's policy. The administration's top officials also recognized the importance that he placed on covert operations. The policymakers received, and held, their positions in the administration because the president knew they understood his conviction.

The president's actions in the Guatemalan operation set the precedent for Indonesia. The policymakers and the CIA realized the president's insistence to do

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<sup>14</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953-56 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 425-26; Immerman, 168. The president would have been wary if his DCI gave such an optimistic assessment of 90 percent, whereas he put more trust in Dulles when he suggested there was only a 20 percent chance of success. The president, however, liked any chance, rather than none.

<sup>15</sup> Eisenhower, 426.

everything possible to halt the influence of communism in Indonesia, and this included using air assets. Airpower already had proven essential in the rebellion as it had developed in 1957-58. Besides the covert aircraft used to drop supplies, the operation relied on U.S. military assets. Because of the limited risk and specialized requirements of some of the missions, the military contributed its enhanced capabilities to the operation. The primary assistance came from U.S. Navy and Air Force aircraft that furnished valuable intelligence information. The Indonesian predicament was important enough to employ a high-valued asset like the U-2 spyplane for information on the archipelago. In September 1957, General Cabell called the secretary of state requesting the go-ahead for one such overflight, after receiving the initial approval from the president. The president approved all U-2 operations, but he delegated the final approval of the missions over the archipelago to the man overseeing the intricacies of the operation, Secretary Dulles.<sup>16</sup> Deputy DCI General Pearre Cabell directed the U-2's program manager, Richard Bissell, to organize and plan the missions over the archipelago. The emphasis on Indonesia took Bissell off his usual job of coordinating the strategic reconnaissance programs so that this tactical intelligence was available for the CIA officers and the dissidents.<sup>17</sup> A mission by the U-2 later revealed the construction of a bomber-size runway on Natuna Besar, an island north of Sumatra, to accommodate the central government's purchase of Soviet bombers.<sup>18</sup> Eisenhower placed a high-priority in receiving the proper intelligence, and that is why he authorized these overflights.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Telephone Call From General Cabell(CIA), September 7, 1957. See also, Grose, 453. The commander-in-chief had to approve any use of military assets.

<sup>17</sup> Prados, 135.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew, 199-202.

Recognizing the need for an effective combat air force, President Eisenhower authorized the escalation of Operation HAIK in March, which included the delivery of combat aircraft, but restricted the use of American pilots to protect U.S. anonymity.<sup>20</sup> The challenge for the CIA involved how to supply the rebels with an effective Air Force, while simultaneously maintaining U.S. assistance at a covert level. It accomplished this by depending on foreign pilots other than Americans. More importantly, the CIA needed to establish the air base in an area safe from government attack, yet strategically located to provide effective missions. Between the two rebel islands of Sumatra and the Celebes, it was the Sumatran rebels who urgently required airpower, but the Indonesian army's effective and rapid attack on the rebel forces prevented the CIA from establishing an air force for them. On March 12, General Nasution launched his first attack on the rebel positions on Sumatra, catching the dissident commander, Lt. Col. Ahmad Husein, by surprise. The operation was a coordinated attack using marine amphibious units along with army paratroopers.<sup>21</sup>

At a NSC meeting on March 13, Allen Dulles expressed the uncertain and delicate position of the rebels on Sumatra, as the government attack came "with unexpected rapidity." Dulles asserted that Djakarta's control of the air was a critical factor, cunningly noting that the Indonesian government's Air Force was the military branch with the greatest number of Communists. President Eisenhower realized that

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<sup>20</sup> Personal papers of Professor Leary. The Air Force loaned some B-26's to the CIA/CAT. These aircraft came from Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

<sup>21</sup> Kahin, 152. The rebels landed ashore between the rebel-controlled cities of Padang and Painan, on the west coast of Sumatra. Nasution also airlifted marines and paratroopers to central Sumatra, near the city of Pekanbaru.

without air cover the rebel forces would suffer a quick defeat.<sup>22</sup> The decisive attacks on the rebel forces in March led to cancellation of plans to position aircraft on that island.<sup>23</sup> This decision received more justification the following week, when the DCI stated at the NSC meeting that the situation on Sumatra was "hard to evaluate. Our intelligence sources describe the events as something like a chess game. It was in any event a strange kind of war." He did state that some fighting had occurred, and noted that "strafing from the air" accounted for the majority of rebel casualties. Taking this opportunity to update the president on the critical situation, the CIA director said, "The great need for the dissidents was for aircraft, which they totally lacked." He also informed the Council that the Soviets recently delivered ten small naval ships to Jakarta. In addition to this equipment, the central government expected to receive MiG-15 and -17 fighters, along with IL-28 light bombers, whose pilots were being trained in Egypt and Czechoslovakia, from Prague in early April. The situation in the northern Celebes, unlike Sumatra, DCI Dulles continued, was solid under Colonel Sumual.<sup>24</sup> Instead of creating an air force on the island of Sumatra, the CIA focused on the Celebes for establishing the rebel air operation.

The creation of a rebel air force was not solely a U.S. initiative. Great Britain and Australia equaled Washington's interest in the affairs of Indonesia, because they too shared the fear of the growing influence of communism. When Washington secretly

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<sup>22</sup> 357th Meeting of the NSC, March 6, 1958.

<sup>23</sup> Kahin, 164. Col. Husein, however, continued to prepare the Padang airfield for accommodating the arrival of two B-26 medium bombers from Col. Sumual's air base in Menado, projected for mid-April. The dubious military disposition of the Sumatran rebels throughout the months of March and April prevented such reinforcement.

<sup>24</sup> 359th Meeting of the NSC, March 20, 1958. The significant portions of this meeting come from FRUS, vol. 17, 81. In the FRUS rendition of this document, many sections that remain classified in the original document at the Eisenhower Library are printed.

discussed the concept of a rebel air force with its allies, the British and Australians showed support for the operation. Foster Dulles participated in a Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) conference in mid-March, and it was during this period that plans solidified for organizing the rebel air force. Secretary Dulles wired President Eisenhower at the close of the conference on March 13, informing him of the “highly confidential talk with [British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, J. Selwyn] Lloyd and [Australian Minister of External Affairs, Richard G.] Casey about the situation in Indonesia.”<sup>25</sup> Casey had informed the Australian prime minister, Robert Gordon Menzies, that Lloyd and the British prime minister, Harold Macmillan, had agreed that the British and the West should support the dissidents, even if “at the worst [the dissidents should only] be able to make a draw of it.” Casey told his prime minister that the dissidents had received substantial support from friendly nations, but still required more aircraft. It was Dulles who informed Lloyd and Casey that the two possibilities were to provide the rebels with their own aircraft, or for the Western nations to carry out bombing missions themselves. In the end, the allies provided the rebels with the necessary aircraft, but contracted foreign personnel.<sup>26</sup> Knowledge of the rebel air operations was not confined to CIA members, but even top officials from allied nations understood the situation.

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<sup>25</sup> Telegram from Manila [Dulles] to Secretary of State, Dulte 8, March 13, 1958, “Priority--Eyes Only Acting Secretary [Herter] for President from Secretary.” (DDE Papers, Ann Whitman File, Dulles-Herter Series, Eisenhower Library.) This document alone reveals the sharing of information and policy among the heads-of-state (specifically the United States, Great Britain, and Australia) and their top foreign policymakers.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Kahin, 156.

Whereas the attacks against the rebels in Sumatra prevented the creation of a rebel air force on that island, the relative isolation of the rebels on the Celebes allowed the buildup to begin in March. The CIA acquired combat aircraft and contracted maintenance support from CAT--the organization that also provided most of the airlift to rebels on both islands. The initial shipment of two P-51s and a Martin B-26 Marauder arrived at rebel-controlled Menado in mid-March. In its desire to limit U.S. involvement, the CIA recruited two Filipino pilots to man the fighters, and brought in a CIA-trained Polish crew for the B-26. The rebel air attacks from the old World War II air base, however, ran into difficulties from the beginning. The Polish crew's first mission met with a terrible fate when it crashed on takeoff. Rumors were that the pilot "was highly nervous and was profusely sweating in the cockpit...prior to starting his engines for takeoff."<sup>27</sup>

Operations at Menado escalated with the establishment of the rebel air force, with the deeper involvement of the United States providing the impetus. The president's desire to maintain plausible deniability slowly evaporated, as John Prados suggests, because now the situation dictated that the CIA use competent pilots, and it looked to CAT to provide them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Prados, 140; Personal papers of Professor Leary.

<sup>28</sup> Prados, 139.

*Menado, Sulawesi*

When the events in Indonesia began receiving Washington's attention in early 1957, much of the focus was on activities on the northern island of Sulawesi. The local military commander of the northern region, Lt. Col. H.N. Ventje Sumual, had established martial law and become the "military administrator."<sup>29</sup> After the initial contact with the Indonesian rebels in Sumatra, the CIA recognized the need to send a case officer to assist Sumual. Although these operations lacked the formal presidential authority for intervention, which would come in September 1957, the CIA charter allowed for such contacts. Many in the agency, and even within the State Department, recognized the need for action in the archipelago, but some were not enthusiastic. To appease those who lacked commitment, the State Department imposed the restriction that the agency could allow only one team on each of the two rebellious islands--Sumatra and Sulawesi (the Celebes). A team consisted of an agency case officer and a radio operator. This policy of limiting "white faces" bothered Desmond FitzGerald, the new head of the CIA's Psychological and Paramilitary Warfare Staff, because he believed this "penny-packet commitment" showed a lack of resolve and would ultimately lead to failure.<sup>30</sup>

The sole case officer sent to the Celebes was Cecil M. Cartwright, who embodied some standard characteristics of the cold warrior. He grew up as an orphan on a farm in Ohio, spending his youth in a children's home. The farm life taught him that the "name of the game was to work hard." Raised and educated by Quakers, he received the

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<sup>29</sup> Kahin, 665.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas, 159-60; Prados, 134-135.



discipline that prepared him for a military career, and he accepted an appointment to the Naval Academy in 1950. As he hitchhiked to the institution, Cartwright met a gentleman connected to the CIA, who discussed with him the heating-up of the cold war and the agency's need for able young warriors. Within the year, Cartwright found himself listening to General Douglas MacArthur's address to Congress on April 19, 1951, and reflecting on this chance meeting with the agency man. Disillusioned that the military would not provide him with the opportunity to make a difference, the young midshipman looked to the CIA to use his talents.<sup>31</sup>

Assigned to work with Colonel Sumual, Cartwright now had the chance in March 1958 to counter communism. Not pressured by attacks from the central government, the dissidents at Menado received the support of the CIA, and the backing of the Eisenhower administration, to build an air force. The rebel Air Force, or the Angkatan Udara Revolusione (AUREV), commanded by Air Vice Commodore Muharto, relied on the CIA for all relevant assets--the planes, pilots, and parts.

The loss of the Polish crew on the initial mission of AUREV, however, revealed the need for experienced pilots. The B-26 "Widowmaker," the primary attack aircraft used by the AUREV in this operation, received the reputation as a "killer" early in its employment during World War II. The aircraft had a small wing, necessitating a higher takeoff and landing speed. Crews not familiar with this requirement often met the fate characterized by the nickname.<sup>32</sup> AUREV did not have the materiel to rely on inexperienced pilots, so the move was on to acquire CAT pilots, the best pilots to fly the

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 21, 1996.

<sup>32</sup> Jeffrey L. Ethell, *Wings of War: Fighting WWII in the Air* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1994), 52. The B-26's wing was smaller compared to aircraft of similar size in that era.

combat missions. This requirement needed direction from the administration, because the use of Americans in high-risk combat missions risked the secrecy of the operation.

The CIA's objective of maintaining U.S. anonymity in the Indonesian affair dictated restricted use of U.S. military aircraft for combat missions. The more pressing demand involved limiting the inclusion of any Americans in the operation, so that the Indonesian central government could not effectively tie the U.S. to the efforts of the dissidents. Even before the establishment of the rebel air force at Menado, the Indonesian government suspected that the dissident government received backing from foreign nations. The first official outcry came on March 15, when Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio confronted Ambassador Howard Jones about the airdropping of equipment to the rebels.<sup>33</sup> The foreign minister explained that the government army had captured arms from an airdrop at Pekanbaru airfield, on the island of Sumatra. Lincoln White, the White House press secretary, had provided Jones with a timely response, because at a press briefing on March 14, the details of which Jones received by telegram that morning, White had countered the claims by the Indonesian press that the United States had supplied the rebels with military equipment. White had responded to the allegations by asserting, "There is no evidence of U.S. complicity in this matter....American arms are pretty generally scattered around the world, and there is just no indication of source--who bought these, how they got them, etc."<sup>34</sup> Jones used this approach to mollify the foreign minister.

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<sup>33</sup> The foreign minister referred to the drop in late February and the one on March 12. Also, some Indonesians have only one name--especially those from Java--as Foreign Minister Subandrio. See Kahin, 231.

<sup>34</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 70n2.

The Indonesian government frequently charged the United States with backing the rebellion with arms and personnel, but Sukarno and his subordinates could not produce any proof of direct American involvement. As long as no direct connection was made, the administration could continue the operation without fear of retaliation from the international community, specifically the Soviet Union. On March 21, Lieutenant Colonel Sukendro, the Indonesian chief of Army Intelligence, publicly displayed military equipment apparently seized from the two airdrops on February 26 and March 12. Even when the Indonesian army showed these captured arms to foreign journalists, neither the Indonesian government, nor the journalists issued major protests, because no evidence existed to tie the arms directly to a certain nation. Some journalists later remarked that they "did not write about [the capture of foreign arms]...[because] it was a kind of patriotism that kept us from doing so." It was no secret to the Indonesian central government, however, that the CIA backed the rebels.<sup>35</sup>

The administration's policy to support the rebels covertly encountered another close-call on March 28. During an aerial reconnaissance mission by the U.S. Navy, Indonesian antiaircraft fire hit the unmarked plane, putting a gaping hole in the wing as it circled the islands.<sup>36</sup> The incident created panic in Washington. A downed American aircraft in Indonesian territory would provide Sukarno with proof that the United States was actively backing the rebels. Such an occurrence would halt the plans in progress to escalate the operation to use American pilots in the AUREV. The secretary of state received word of the event through a United Press report on Friday morning, March 28,

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<sup>35</sup> Kahin 158.

<sup>36</sup> Harvey, 107.

and he immediately called his brother. Secretary Dulles suggested that no official statement be released "until we had had a chance to concert our views." Although Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, confirmed the story with Allen Dulles, Foster Dulles wanted more information.<sup>37</sup> He called Admiral Burke immediately after he got off the phone with his brother. The admiral confirmed that the Navy photo reconnaissance mission was hit by Indonesian fire, but that the aircraft commander provided the initial false report that the plane had experienced a gasoline explosion on a routine flight. The secretary believed "the other side" was aware of the hit, and feared it would discredit the Navy pilot's story.<sup>38</sup>

Foster Dulles called Admiral Burke again that morning and inquired whether or not the United States should issue a statement on the incident. Burke believed it would be a good idea to provide the public affairs people with something, although he was not sure exactly what they should release. Convinced that the Indonesians would know that they shot down the plane, Foster Dulles said, "If we deny it, they will know we have a guilty conscience." They decided to have the aircraft commander say that he thought it was an engine explosion, but when he checked the situation out on the ground, he realized that someone shot the plane.<sup>39</sup>

Fortunately for the crewmembers and the administration, the plane made its emergency landing at an airfield near Davao in the southern Philippines. No longer concerned that the damaged aircraft crash-landed in Indonesia, the Navy released a new

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<sup>37</sup> Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. Allen W. Dulles, March 28, 1958 (11:00 a.m.); JFDP, White House Memorandum Series, Intelligence Subseries.

<sup>38</sup> Telephone Call [with] Admiral Burke, March 28, 1958 (11:16 a.m.).

<sup>39</sup> Telephone Call to Admiral Arleigh Burke, March 28, 1958 (11:24 a.m.).

cover story that U.S. naval ship fire accidentally struck the aircraft while dragging a "sleeve" during target practice. Foster Dulles received this information from his brother upon returning a phone call, when Allen said, "We can relax re the plane. There was a friendly reception [in the Philippines]. Our boys." The Indonesians had not realized what they had done.<sup>40</sup> The administration could continue to deny its involvement in the rebellion.

While the administration ducked numerous allegations concerning U.S. involvement, and debated the practicality and risks of using American contract pilots to staff the AUREV, the CIA went ahead with organizing this escalation, anticipating the administration's approval. The CIA, specifically Cecil Cartwright, relied on the assistance of CAT's chief pilot, Robert Rousselot, to organize a stronger air force. Known by case officers as a man who "always delivered," the ex-Marine pilot controlled the hiring of pilots for the covert operation and the planning of the missions.<sup>41</sup>

Like Cartwright, Rousselot grew up in an environment that demanded "discipline and determination," especially on his father's Missouri farm. He left a premedical program to fly for the Marines in World War II, but determining that postwar Marine aviation had developed into a "sloppy" organization, he looked elsewhere for adventure. In 1946, he caught the attention of Claire Chennault, the co-founder of CAT, and had advanced to chief pilot by 1948.<sup>42</sup> With a decade of experience in covert operations, Rousselot now prepared the AUREV for air interdiction, harassment, and close air support missions with American pilots determined to induce major changes in the

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<sup>40</sup> Telephone Call from Allen Dulles, March 28, 1958 (5:12 p.m.).

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, October 24, 1996 (telephone); Personal papers of Professor Leary.

<sup>42</sup> Leary, 1, 134-35.

Sukarno government.<sup>43</sup> The CIA and CAT members continued to organize the operation, and awaited further instructions from the top.

After weeks of discouraging reports on the progress of the rebels, especially on Sumatra, the administration understood the necessity to increase the strength of the dissident forces. With the AUREV essentially ineffective without adequate pilots, the policymakers moved forward to authorize participation by American personnel. The secretary of state recalled his brother from a vacation in Florida, because "sharp differences of opinion" existed among administration officials and "serious decisions re the archipelago" required attention. Secretary Dulles delayed the meeting until Monday, April 7, so that his brother could attend.<sup>44</sup>

The meeting set the groundwork for endorsing the use of CAT pilots in combat missions. Policymakers evaluated the current situation and reviewed the courses of action available, including withdrawal of support, political negotiations with Sukarno, and even overt military intervention. It was one of the longest deliberations over Indonesian policy, and included an array of officials. The only tangible decision concerned the requirement of another meeting, set for Saturday, April 12, at the secretary of state's house.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Personal papers of Professor Leary.

<sup>44</sup> Telephone Call to Allen Dulles in Palm Beach, April 2, 1958 (10:41 a.m.).

<sup>45</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 92. The participants included Secretary Dulles; Allen Dulles; General Cabell; Al Ulmer; Walter Robertson; Hugh Cumming; Christian Herter; Gordon Meins, the director of the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs; John N. Irwin, II, assistant secretary of defense for International Security Affairs; J. Graham Parsons, deputy assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern Affairs; Loftus Becker, legal advisor for the Department of State; and British Ambassador Caccia. It started at 2:35 p.m. and Robertson did not arrive until 5:41 p.m. No record of this meeting's discussion exists. However, conversations and telegrams between officials reveal the differing opinions on the situation at that time, and give a logical idea of the group's discussion. See, FRUS, vol. 17, 90-94, 117-19; C.A. Herter Papers, DDE Library, Chronological File Series, "Memorandum to the Secretary," April 1, 1958; and, Telephone Call to Mr. Herter (JFD Papers), April 8, 1958 (5:00 p.m.).

On April 12, the Dulles brothers, along with other administration officials, decided to support the use of American pilots in AUREV.<sup>46</sup> After the meeting, Allen Dulles directed a message to participants in Operation HAIK initiating the go-ahead with the air strikes. The first AUREV strike occurred on April 13, when two "obviously foreign aircraft" bombed the Mandai airport at Makassar.<sup>47</sup> The policymakers believed they had acted in the best interest of the president.

On April 15, the president expressed his view on the developing situation in Indonesia, specifically the decision to use American pilots. Early in the afternoon, Secretary Dulles received a call from Allen Dulles, who discussed his concern over an earlier phone conversation with General Goodpaster, the president's staff secretary. Goodpaster had said that the president showed a "deep interest particularly re use of American personnel" in the Indonesian operation. Allen Dulles informed the secretary that Goodpaster knew about the upcoming meeting with the president later in that afternoon. Allen Dulles recognized that "he [was] on the spot." He told his brother that he felt the situation was "getting beyond his charter."<sup>48</sup> The meeting with the president that afternoon confirmed the administration's decision from earlier in the week to allow the CIA to use American pilots. The president agreed that U.S. nationals should be

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In this last correspondence, the secretary informs Herter that "[General] Cabell was going too far on some of his ideas expressed yesterday....Herter said he thought it a good idea." Secretary Dulles, apparently, was not the extremist in this affair, as many monographs assert.

<sup>46</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 99. No record of this meeting exists, although Dulles' Appointment Book show it occurred on Saturday at 4 p.m. The participants included the secretary, Allen Dulles, Admiral Burke, John Irwin (See previous note), Walter Robertson, and Hugh Cumming. See, Telephone Call from Mr. Robertson, April 12, 1958. It seems logical to assume this was an outcome of the meeting, since bombings began the next day.

<sup>47</sup> Harvey, 108; Kahin, 172.

<sup>48</sup> Telephone Call from Allen Dulles, April 15, 1958 (2:40 p.m.).

allowed to assist the Indonesian "patriots," even in combat missions, as long as they could not be connected to the U.S. Government.<sup>49</sup>

Operation HAIK continued at a fast pace now that AUREV had equipped itself with more pilots, and more aircraft. On April 16, two B-26s attacked Balikpapan, on Kalimantan island, destroying a government Catalina aircraft. An interdiction raid on April 21 prevented the government forces from landing on the beaches at Jailolo and Morotai. This was followed-up by attacks on April 27, 28, and 29. A B-26 sunk a British tanker on the April 28 mission, catching the attention of the Dulles brothers. Ambon Harbor was the target on April 27 and 29, with the aircraft sinking an Indonesian corvette and a Greek freighter.<sup>50</sup>

In response to the numerous attacks, the Indonesian government again raised protests concerning foreign involvement. Prime Minister Djuanda issued a statement that Ambassador Jones sent to Washington. Djuanda said,

The conclusion could be drawn that the pilots being employed by the rebels are foreigners and the reports which we have received from Menado indicate that these pilots are Americans and Taiwanese. Apart from that, it should also be inferred that the gasoline used has been illegally imported from abroad.<sup>51</sup>

President Eisenhower replied to the accusation during a press conference on April 30. He and Secretary Dulles discussed his response just before the press conference.<sup>52</sup> The president asserted to the press that "every rebellion that I have ever

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<sup>49</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 109-10. See also, "Memorandum of Conversation with the President," JFD Papers, White House Memorandum Series, April 15, 1958. The meeting occurred at 3:30 p.m. The Eisenhower Library document remains substantially classified, whereas the FRUS document is almost completely declassified.

<sup>50</sup> Kahin, 172; Harvey, 108; Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, April 28, 1958 (9:05 a.m.).

<sup>51</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 131n1.

<sup>52</sup> Telephone Call to the President, April 30, 1958 (10:24 a.m.).



heard of has its soldiers of fortune.”<sup>53</sup> The president felt confident that this explanation would work because his subordinates had guaranteed the covert status of the CAT personnel used by the CIA to accomplish the missions.

The president received a favorable response from the press, who challenged the Indonesian reports and not the American president.<sup>54</sup> The administration’s policy of non-involvement seemed successful, and the recent rebel operations also were positive. The pessimistic outlook delivered in the first few weeks in April gave way to an optimistic report at a NSC meeting on May 1.<sup>55</sup> The DCI briefed the members on the recent successes of the rebel forces on Sulawesi, including the air raids at Makassar and Ambon Harbor, and the amphibious assault on Moretai on Helmahera island. Dulles discussed the air raids as being carried out “on a shoestring basis,” and attributed the efforts to the dissidents, cloaking the contribution of the American sponsored pilots to members of the Council.<sup>56</sup> This optimistic outlook continued in a NSC meeting on May 8. It was the rebel air force that contributed to the successful offensive operations, providing significant close air support to the ground troops assaulting Morotai, Jailolo, Ambon, and Kupang--all islands in eastern Indonesia.<sup>57</sup> The DCI emphasized that although officials in Java continued to protest foreign involvement in the air war, “the government seems to have no definite intelligence or information to back up this charge.” More importantly, now working from a position of strength with the success of the AUREV, secret talks began between Indonesian military officers and American

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<sup>53</sup> Prados, 143.

<sup>54</sup> Kahin, 175.

<sup>55</sup> See 362nd and 363rd Meeting of the NSC, April 14 and 24, 1958, respectively.

<sup>56</sup> 364th Meeting of the NSC, May 1, 1958.

<sup>57</sup> Kahin, 173.

military attaches in Jakarta. These lower level discussions were with anti-Communist officers within the army. The hope was to convince these officers to persuade General Nasution to act against the central government first, since the general insisted he was not a communist, instead of the fighting the dissidents.<sup>58</sup> A political solution to the situation was being sought. The decision to support an escalation of rebel airpower seemed justified.

The bright outlook shown in the most recent NSC meetings, however, began to fade the next week as the government concentrated attacks on the rebels of the Celebes. On May 13, the small government air force, Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (AURI), now freed up from the fighting in Sumatra because of the government's military success on that island, raided Menado and Tondano, signaling the beginning of the downfall of the rebel forces. The bombing by the government P-51s destroyed a rebel PBV-5 that was used for reconnaissance and search-and-rescue, and damaged a P-51. Three B-25s bombed the runway, leaving behind a mass of craters for the rebels to fix. This attack surprised the personnel at Menado, but they knew the location of the bandits' home base.<sup>59</sup> Though initially discouraged, the members of AUREV continued the fight.

On May 18, however, President Eisenhower's desire to continue the involvement under the auspices of covert support came abruptly to an end. At 5:30 p.m. Secretary Dulles, Allen Dulles, General Cabell, and another CIA officer met to discuss Indonesia, concentrating on the recent report of a downed American pilot.<sup>60</sup> During a bombing run,

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<sup>58</sup> 365th Meeting of the NSC, May 8, 1958; Kahin, 176-79.

<sup>59</sup> Kahin 173-74; Harvey, 108; Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 26, 1996; Personal papers of Professor Leary.

<sup>60</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, JFD Papers, JFD Chronological Series, May 18, 1958 (5:30 p.m.).

an aircraft had received significant ground fire and had become a casualty of the conflict. The pilot, Allen Lawrence Pope, and his radio operator, former Indonesian Air Force Sergeant Jan Harry Rantung, had bailed out of the crippled aircraft.<sup>61</sup> Pope had drifted with the wind into a coconut grove, where his parachute had become caught up in the trees. The fall from that height broke his hip, and soldiers quickly captured him.<sup>62</sup> The "soldier of fortune" excuse lost credibility when it was discovered that Pope carried paperwork connecting him to the rebels, CAT, and most critically, the U. S. government.

### *Allen Lawrence Pope*

In July 1962, four years after his capture, Allen Pope received word from Sukarno finally granting him the desperately sought-after release. Sukarno said, "By the grace of the President you are pardoned. But I do so silently. I want no propaganda about it. Now go. Lose yourself in the U.S.A. secretly. Don't show yourself publicly. Don't give out news stories. Don't issue statements. Just go home, hide yourself, get lost, and we'll forget the whole thing."<sup>63</sup> Whether a result of honoring Sukarno's request, or out of guilt for failing the CIA--and what he probably views as failing the country, by not remaining anonymous in this operation--Pope remains silent, and the

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<sup>61</sup> New York Times, 29 May 1958, p. 7. This is one of the only sources that mentions Pope's lone crewmember.

<sup>62</sup> Howard Palfrey Jones, Indonesia: The Possible Dream (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), 129.

<sup>63</sup> Cindy Adams, Sukarno: An Autobiography As Told to Cindy Adams (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), 271; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1978), 455, 571-73; Kahin, 182.

complete account of his story remains untold.<sup>64</sup> Even those closest to Pope, continuing the friendship that originated during the stresses of the Cold War, respect his enduring silence, and leave the story shrouded in mystery.<sup>65</sup>

When antiaircraft fire brought down Pope's aircraft, the covert action adopted by the administration lost credibility. The capture of Pope exposed the U.S. intervention. The controversy that it created, though, focused on the incriminating paperwork carried by Pope. He was not supposed to have anything on him that could discredit the president's defense that these operatives were "soldiers of fortune." Why did he fail to sanitize himself of any evidence that might tie him to the U.S. government?

Some historians offer an ulterior motive in Pope's failure to comply with CAT's strict standard operating procedure. They contend that Pope's desire to survive, an instinct common to all humans, led to ignoring the procedure. This desire overrode his concept of duty. The pilots recognized that, if captured, the government forces would execute them as spies. Author L. Fletcher Prouty accuses the CAT crewmembers of establishing a silent policy that endorsed stashing incriminating material in the aircraft. This material unveiled the operatives as U.S. agents. Once in flight, the crewmembers transferred this information to their person, in anticipation of becoming a prisoner. The captors would recognize the "rogue mercenaries" as U.S. operatives. The pilots realized

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<sup>64</sup> Many historians have failed in their attempt to get Pope's story. This author attempted numerous phone calls and letters, none of which were returned. The best undocumented account of his story is in the journalistic monograph by Wise and Ross, 136-146.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 21, 1996. Mr. Cartwright keeps in touch with members he worked with--especially those contacts in Thailand. When asked about Pope, he said they communicated infrequently. When they do talk, however, they ignore this event.

their worth would increase in the eyes of a foreign adversary, especially for bribing American officials.<sup>66</sup>

This explanation, however, fails to take into account the rugged personalities of the individuals volunteering for these missions--members of Civil Air Transport. The members of the CIA during this era, especially CAT, did not consist of the faint-hearted.<sup>67</sup> Many were ex-military men who desired even more excitement and adventure, and exuded a patriotic fever. These warriors manifested a "spirit" that mirrored a "Hemingway insouciance in the face of danger, a determination to get the job done no matter what the odds."<sup>68</sup> Survival was not on the top of the volunteer's priorities. Pope, for example, flew 55 night combat missions in the Korean conflict as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force--earning the Distinguished Flying Cross.<sup>69</sup> Unable to tame his adventurous ways after the war, he participated in earlier CAT operations, including the aerial resupply of the French enclave of Dienbienphu from March 13 to May 7, 1954. He flew 57 missions over the besieged encampment, dodging the incessant barrage of fire from the Vietnamese communists.<sup>70</sup> Instead of survival instinct, Pope's

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<sup>66</sup> L. Fletcher Prouty, Col., USAF(Ret.) The Secret Team: The CIA and Its Allies in Control of the United States and the World (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973), 325-326. This interpretation receives credence and citations in many monographs on the incident; specifically, the most recent and thorough account by the Kahins.

<sup>67</sup> Ray S. Cline, and ex-CIA officer, recalls the bravery of CAT pilots and crews, saying they "were true soldiers of fortune and accepted enormous risks on long, clandestine missions over hostile territory," 179. See also William M. Leary, Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and CIA Covert Operations in Asia (N.p.: The University of Alabama Press, 1982) for detailed descriptions of personnel involved in the organization of Civil Air Transport.

<sup>68</sup> Leary, 53, 135.

<sup>69</sup> Wise and Thomas, 137. The DFC is the Air Force's eighth-highest medal--the fourth-highest combat medal. It is awarded "for an act in aerial flight which displays distinctive heroism involving operations that are not routine." Although night operations form the crux of the U.S. Air Force today, and seem a common-place to modern aviators, the risk-level during that era was extremely high. The vast improvement in instrumentation due to technological advances account for this. Wise and Ross also discuss Pope's attempt at Bronco-busting in Texas before the war.

<sup>70</sup> Leary, 217.

predicament can be best attributed to the cockiness inherent in these brazen cold warriors. The error revealed that he "didn't think it would happen to him."<sup>71</sup> He believed he was invulnerable to being shot down.

Allen Pope carried numerous articles that connected him to the U.S. government. The strong suspicions held by Sukarno and his associates, that the United States government firmly backed the rebels and supplied them not only with material but also personnel, gained concrete evidence. The court documents describing the possessions of the American pilot that state he carried a military identification card allowing him access to the base exchange at Clark Air Field in the Philippines; military identification papers; a recent copy of orders from an American base, and a "diary containing detailed accounts of recent bombing missions."<sup>72</sup> Carrying the incriminating evidence, however, was not for Pope uncommon. This was not another instance of a conspiracy. The majority of pilots, if not all, carry this type of information with them on every mundane flight. Usually the airmen hold this paperwork together, in a bag, large pocket of a flight suit, or a wallet, and carry it "on their person"--like most people haul their purses and wallets. Among this group of papers is usually a log book for recording flight information. Recording flight information, actual flying time being the most important entry, is a ritual in the flying world--it proves the pilot's level of experience. This formal or informal logbook, or "diary," is kept on hand because recording multiple flight legs (takeoffs and

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 21, 1996.

<sup>72</sup> Kahin, 179. The Kahins used a number of secondary sources citing the materials on Pope when captured--read by this author. Their most effective document, however, is the English-translated transcript of the trial: "Judgement of the Court in the Case of Allan[sic] Lawrence Pope"(Official English translation of Document No.43/P.T./Pid./1959)(Jakarta, mimeo, 14 May 1960), 8-15, in the possession of the authors. Some accounts suggest he carried an Officer's Club Card issued by Clark Air Force Base. See Harvey, 108.

landings) soon become confusing if not immediately recorded. Other documents, such as orders and identification cards, are necessary if at a place other than home-base--especially if at a military installation.<sup>73</sup>

### *Denouement*

Although the capture of Pope provided the impetus to withdraw support for the rebels, disagreement over the policy surfaced even before the decision was made to enlist the support of American pilots to fly combat missions. Besides the lingering disagreement with U.S. policy by former Indonesian ambassador John Allison, the current ambassador, Howard Jones, revealed uneasiness over U.S. policy. He too believed Sukarno was a political pragmatist, misunderstood by the Eisenhower administration.<sup>74</sup> His superior, Walter Robertson, backed the ambassador, and no longer supported the rebel's cause.<sup>75</sup> On April 23, even the secretary of state revealed disillusionment over the prospects of the dissidents, suggesting to his brother that the administration reverse its policy and start backing the government. This reaction came in response to Allen Dulles' observation that "there is no fight in [the dissidents]."<sup>76</sup> Allen

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<sup>73</sup> In the U.S. Air Force's world of military transport, nearly every crewmember carries a "MAC purse." This oversized wallet, named after the old Military Airlift Command, holds flight logs, shot records, identification cards, passports, etc. Some individuals carry professional-looking log books, while others merely record the information on homemade stationery. The "purse" usually is a leather, or other material, but some crewmembers just use a plastic baggy. However, nearly every crewmember carries this information, no matter what the mission. The log books do take on the form of a diary, because it usually includes the missions, participants, and any information of significance--like was it a successful or fun flight; good landing; poor weather; etc.

<sup>74</sup> *FRUS*, vol. 17, 74-79, 92-94.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 90n1-91.

<sup>76</sup> Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, April 23, 1958 (12:49 p.m.). Allen Dulles did suggest, however, that "there is a possibility in the North [the Celebes]."

Dulles presented this sentiment at the following morning's NSC meeting. He told the president that the Sumatran rebels were on the edge of collapse, and that "it was impossible to judge what the capabilities of the dissidents for guerilla operations might prove to be." On the other hand, Dulles discussed the tenacity displayed by the Sulawesi rebels, but the DCI still "doubted if they could hold out long." President Eisenhower left the meeting realizing that if the Communists began to dominate Sumatra, then overt action would be necessary.<sup>77</sup> The capture of Pope, though, ceased all questions concerning the continued support for the rebels, negotiating with Sukarno, or initiating an overt policy. The administration needed to save face.

President Sukarno's handling of the situation allowed the administration to halt Operation HAIK without public admission of the covert action. The Indonesian government did not parade Pope in front of cameras and press, hoping to humiliate the Eisenhower administration. Instead, the capture remained a secret until May 27, when an uninformed military officer, Lt. Col. Herman Pieters, released the information to the Indonesian press.<sup>78</sup>

The United States placated the Sukarno government by providing it with considerable compensation aimed at redressing its involvement in the rebellion. The Indonesian Prime Minister requested, and received, a public condemnation of any "foreign adventurers" who continued to fly bombing missions against the Indonesian government. Foster Dulles made such an announcement at a press conference on May 20. When asked to comment on Indonesia, the secretary of state remarked,

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<sup>77</sup> 363d Meeting of the NSC, April 24, 1958. See also FRUS, vol. 17, 121-22.

<sup>78</sup> Kahin, 180.



I would say this that the United States believes that the situation in Indonesia can be and should be dealt with as an Indonesian problem. The U.S. itself is a nation which has suffered civil war, and we have sympathy and regret when another country undergoes the losses in life and economic dislocations that are incidental to civil war. But we do believe that the situation can be and should be dealt with as an Indonesian matter by the Indonesians without intrusion from without, and we hope that there will be quickly restored peace and stability in the Indonesian Republic.

On May 22, the Eisenhower administration and the Indonesian government signed a contract whereby the United States would provide Indonesia with 35,000 tons of rice, totaling approximately \$5.5 million.<sup>79</sup> The American administration also offered \$7 million worth of military equipment, which Djuanda rejected on the basis that it was "an attempt to interfere in internal affairs." Instead, the Indonesians accepted a smaller supply of arms for its police force.<sup>80</sup>

Most importantly, upon receiving word that an airman had been captured and connected to the U.S. government, the Dulles brothers decided to shut the operation down. Al Ulmer, the CIA's Far East division chief, cabled to the case officers on the islands, "This is the most difficult message I have ever sent. It is sent only under impelling necessity and in what we all view here as the highest national interest." The official message to stand down came from Director Dulles.<sup>81</sup> Earlier, the secretary of state called Ulmer to the office and stated, "Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. Can your people cut your losses and get out fast?"<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 190-91.

<sup>80</sup> Jones, 149; Kahin, 182. After the National Intelligence Estimate in August 1958, that discussed the necessity to equip Indonesia with more military hardware, the Sukarno regime accepted \$7 million of military aid, See Kahin, 193.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Grose, 453-54; Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 21, 1996.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Grose, 453. From CIA, DCI-2, vol.3, 112-13.

Cecil Cartwright reacted with shock to the message from "the top" informing him and his radio operator to cease operations and leave the island. He argued back that they could still complete the mission. He offered the division chief alternatives and suggestions outlining possible actions to remedy the situation, and emotionally appealed to Ulmer with reasons why the operation needed to continue. Cartwright's faith in the colonels had not faltered--especially in Sumual. The rebellious Indonesians displayed good morale and Cartwright thought they had devised a good plan. Their situation mirrored the covert action in Guatemala.<sup>83</sup> The key to victory centered on control of the sky, specifically the role of airpower to produce the greatest amount of shock on the ground troops. The rebels knew the attacking aircraft's main base--those aircraft that strafed the compound at Menado on May 13--and destroying them would change the balance of the conflict. The Government of Indonesia fronted a small air force "at that time," and to Cartwright, the relatively simple task of eliminating the opposition's air force controlled the destiny of the rebellion. He wanted more time.<sup>84</sup>

The administration, though, had already made its final decision to abandon the rebellion. The messenger, Al Ulmer, recognized the finality of the order, and did not relay Cartwright's concerns and suggestions up the chain-of-command. Ulmer did not provide a reason for the operation's closure. He just ordered Cartwright to get his "ass out of there!" The message included Dulles' stoic-sounding acknowledgment of the fine

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<sup>83</sup> Immerman, 168. Refer to the discussion earlier in this work on the Guatemalan covert operation. On June 22, 1954, planners of this clandestine activity experienced a set-back when two of their aircraft succumbed to hostile anti-aircraft fire. Allen Dulles approached Eisenhower for more airpower assets.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 21, 1996.

work and bravery of the case officers and CAT, along with a request: "Tell Colonel Warouw that we must disengage."<sup>85</sup>

Cartwright broke down and cried when he received the order to disengage.<sup>86</sup> His reaction toward the new orders revealed the effort put into this operation. First, as the case officer, he had established a bond with operatives in the foreign land. Although "there to do a job," he became somewhat attached to the rebels, and certainly supported their stance against the Communists and an authoritarian government. He had formed relationships with some of the military commanders, especially Sumual, and had come to realize that the rebel leaders showed a sincerity of purpose to fix the economic situation among the islands. Cartwright also wept because he felt he "just plain failed...[he] didn't get the job done." The "self-starter" from Ohio viewed the changed policy as a direct reflection on his ability. As he reflected in an interview, "I let them down."<sup>87</sup>

Allen Dulles sent the message "to disengage" on the evening of May 18, and he received a reply the next evening that the CIA officers "received, understand, and will act accordingly," to the order.<sup>88</sup> On May 21, "the boys" had left Menado and the Philippines, and were on their way home.<sup>89</sup>

President Eisenhower failed at his attempt to counter communism in Indonesia through covert methods. The duplicitous policy of the Eisenhower administration that

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.; Smith, 247.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Robert Rousselot, by William Leary, August 10, 1987. Personal papers of Professor Leary.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 26, 1996.

<sup>88</sup> Telephone Call from Allen Dulles, May 19, 1958 (6:48 p.m.).

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, October 24, 1996 (telephone); Personal papers of Professor Leary; Telephone Call from Governor Herter, May 21, 1958 (6:03 p.m.).

ultimately established the justification for Operation HAIK now became the single effort to find favor with President Sukarno so that communism would be defeated.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

President Eisenhower feared the expansion of communism in the Third World, and he recognized the military and economic significance of keeping Indonesia among the nations of the "Free World." When the Sukarno regime allowed the Communist party to participate in its government, and General Nasution began seeking military equipment from the Eastern bloc, President Eisenhower perceived the need for substantial action to prevent the loss to communism of another Asian country.

Although the president believed that he needed to retain Indonesia, or at least certain regions of the country, within the non-Communist and pro-American sphere, he did not want to commit overt support for the dissidents because such measures might have led to conflict with the Soviet Union, which also had shown involvement in the country's affairs. On numerous occasions President Eisenhower had discussed the requirement to lend such overt support to the dissidents, but only if it was an absolute condition that the country was under Communist control.<sup>1</sup> The risks involved with covert assistance, however, seemed minimal. The president considered the earlier CIA operations in Iran and Guatemala to be successes, and expected similar results from

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the NSC Meetings on February 27, March 13, and April 24; See also, "Memorandum of Conversation with President Eisenhower," April 15, 1958, JFD Papers, White House Memorandum Series, Eisenhower Library.

Operation HAIK. When the operation met with difficulties in May 1958, the president refused to offer overt assistance because opportunities remained to counter the Communists--he placed faith, once again, in the Indonesian army and non-Communist policymakers still involved in Sukarno's government. President Eisenhower did not want to wage war with the Soviets.<sup>2</sup>

President Eisenhower still desired to halt the Soviet Union's expansion into the Third World. This goal to contain the Soviet Union, coupled with the even greater demand to limit U.S. military spending, left the CIA's covert operations as an essential tactic. The use of covert operations was a necessary part of Eisenhower's "New Look" strategy of containment because it challenged the growing tide of communism, and did so efficiently.<sup>3</sup>

Although the president emphasized and expected the operation to separate the U.S. government from any covert activities, the level of risk he took reveals his apparent lack of concern over being caught. Some monographs claim that the president must have been upset upon hearing the news that an operative, Pope, had materials on him that implicated the U.S. government.<sup>4</sup> The president, though, was a student of Carl von Clausewitz, and recognized the CIA as another means to influence Indonesian politics.<sup>5</sup> When the Pope incident exposed the operation, the president did not fear retribution from the international community, but only wished to continue influencing the situation

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<sup>2</sup> Kahin, 183; Ambrose, 547-48.

<sup>3</sup> Gaddis, 157-59.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew, 250-51.

<sup>5</sup> Ambrose, 40, 145.

in Indonesia, which the administration now planned to do through the army and anti-Communist elements in Sukarno's regime.<sup>6</sup>

The relatively easy transition for the United States from covert aggression back to sole dealings with the Sukarno government as legitimate, make some question the necessity of the covert action in the first place. Some argue that it was the pressure of the covert operation that induced Sukarno to become more moderate.<sup>7</sup> Others claim that the operation not only was a failure, but also was unnecessary.<sup>8</sup>

Stephen Ambrose suggests that Eisenhower learned his greatest lesson concerning intelligence and information after the disastrous defeat at Kasserine Pass in March 1942. On that occasion, Eisenhower concluded that "no one source of information, no matter how sensational, is ever by itself sufficient."<sup>9</sup> The president, however, purposely ignored two groups that might have swayed his estimation of what the CIA could accomplish in Indonesia, groups that could have helped him to understand the limitations of the CIA in fighting the cold war.

In March 1955, the president had sanctioned the 5412 Group. The flurry of CIA activities in the early-1950s had increased the interest of congressional committees, so President Eisenhower created his own review board to analyze the functions of the CIA before Congress established its own control over the agency. The group obtained its name from the NSC action that created it, and Allen Dulles headed the group, which also consisted of the National Security Advisor, and "second-ranking officers from State and

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<sup>6</sup> Kahin, 183.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Cecil Cartwright, August 22 and October 24, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Kahin, 3; Prados, 144; Andrew, 251.

<sup>9</sup> Ambrose and Immerman, 61.

Defense departments.”<sup>10</sup> The 5412 committee, which supposedly exhibited control over Eisenhower’s CIA apparatus, provided no leadership, but instead reacted to the demands of the administration and the agency. The president still controlled the covert operation realm.<sup>11</sup> The actions of the CIA during the Indonesian operation never received critical review by this committee.

The second group designed to review the actions of the CIA was the President’s Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities (PBCFIA). President Eisenhower had established this group of “unimpeachably respectable private citizens” in January 1956, to provide another avenue for criticism concerning the activities of the CIA, but this time from non-partisan, retired government officials.<sup>12</sup> Again, the president neglected to place the actions of the CIA in 1957-1958 up for review. He desired to change the situation in the archipelago, and put his faith in the CIA without significant assessment from the outside.

Such an example occurred in January 1958. An ad hoc working group, composed of representatives of the CIA, State, and Defense Departments, formulated reactions to a list of possible contingencies that might occur in Indonesia. Submitted to Christian Herter, the acting secretary of state, the group recommended to President Eisenhower that the report not be shown to the NSC Planning Board.<sup>13</sup> The president

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<sup>10</sup> Grose, 444.

<sup>11</sup> Prados, 127; Andrews, 212.

<sup>12</sup> Schlesinger, 455; Ambrose and Immerman, 242

<sup>13</sup> FRUS, vol. 17, 16-19. Howard Jones, the newly appointed ambassador to Indonesia (not effective until March 1958) chaired the group that prepared the “Contingency Paper on Indonesia,” dated January 29, 1958. Walter Robertson submitted the recommendations to Herter, suggesting that the group did not reach a conclusion regarding the inclusion of the NSC Planning Board on this subject. Robertson, however, stated, “In view of the sensitivity of the subject,” the fewer eyes on the report, the better.



agreed, and did not inform the 5412 Group nor the PBCFIA of the current activities of the CIA.

As historian Arthur Schlesinger suggests, the failed Indonesian excursion would have provided a better model for the Bay of Pigs than Guatemala.<sup>14</sup> The desire of the president to keep the operation secret also prevented proper analysis by capable outsiders. The inquiry into the Operation HAIK, commissioned by the president in the fall of 1958, however, did enlist the assistance of the PBCFIA, which concluded:

The Indonesian operation was at no time considered formally by the Operations Coordinating Board's Special Group as contemplated by the provisions of NSC 5412. It came before that group only in catch as catch can fashion and as action progressed. On different occasions it was considered by the President, by the National Security Council, and by assorted ad hoc groups for various purposes. There was no proper estimate of aims nor proper planning on the part of anyone, and in its active phases the operation was directed, not by the DCI, but personally by the Secretary of State, who, ten thousand miles away from the scene of operation, undertook to make practically all decisions down to and including even tactical military decisions.<sup>15</sup>

Operation HAIK was not a rogue action contrived by an out-of-control entity within the agency, but was a poorly planned operation that received its design from an eager president who felt he could change the layout of the communist and free world spheres of influence by unleashing his covert army. The president believed he could effectively fight the cold war in the covert realm on the cheap.

Unfortunately, the president ignored the advice given to his administration by the PBCFIA in December 1958, only instituting minor changes to the arrangement of Allen

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<sup>14</sup> Schlesinger, 457.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Hersh, 419-20. Hersh retrieved these remarks from a copy provided to President John F. Kennedy. J.P. Coyne, and aide to the president, supplied Kennedy with the results of the inquiry on May 12, 1961--after the ill-fated Bay of Pigs operation. See Hersh, 510n42. See also, Schlesinger, 457.

Dulles' loosely established way of planning covert operations. Instead of random meetings of the 5412 Group, the president implemented weekly gatherings that began in January 1959.<sup>16</sup> President Eisenhower reasoned that the situation in Indonesia represented an anomaly, however, so he still had great interest in the activities of the CIA. He still believed in covert operations, and nothing existed in Washington to question the president's reliance on the agency to carry-out the cold war.<sup>17</sup> The final test came in early 1961, when the CIA provided support to dissidents, this time in the western hemisphere.

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<sup>16</sup> Prados, 147.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 148.

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