

The Army and Politics in Indonesia

REVISED EDITION

Harold Crouch



*Politics and
International Relations
of Southeast Asia*

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THE ARMY AND POLITICS IN INDONESIA

REVISED EDITION

HAROLD CROUCH

Cornell University Press | ITHACA AND LONDON

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First published 1978 by Cornell University Press.
Cornell Paperbacks edition first published 1988.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Crouch, Harold A., 1940–
The army and politics in Indonesia.

Bibliography: p.
Includes index.

1. Indonesia—Politics and government—1950–1966. 2. Indonesia—Politics and government—1966– . 3. Indonesia—Armed Forces—Political activity. I. Title.

DS644.C76 1988 322'.5'09598 88-47777

ISBN 0-8014-2297-3

ISBN 0-8014-9506-7 (pbk.)

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Foreword

That broad area lying between China and India which since World War II has generally been known as Southeast Asia is one of the most heterogeneous in the world. Though it is generally referred to as a region, the principal basis for this designation is simply the geographic propinquity of its component states, and the fact that collectively they occupy the territory between China and the Indian subcontinent. The fundamental strata of the traditional cultures of nearly all the numerous peoples of Southeast Asia do set them apart from those of India and China. Beyond that, however, there are few common denominators among the states that currently make up the area.

The political systems presently governing the lives of Southeast Asia's 400 million inhabitants have been built on considerably different cultures; the religious component alone embraces Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. Except in the case of Thailand, the politics of all these countries have been conditioned by periods of colonial rule—ranging from little more than half a century to approximately four—each of which has had a distinctive character and political legacy. Even the nature of the Japanese wartime occupation, which covered the entire area, varied considerably among the several countries and had significantly different political consequences. And after Japan's defeat, the courses to independence followed by these states diverged widely. Only through revolutionary anticolonial wars were two of the most populous, Indonesia and Vietnam, able to assert their independence. Although the others followed routes that were peaceful, they were not all necessarily smooth, and the time involved varied by as much as a decade.

Moreover, subsequent to independence the political character of these states has continued to be significantly affected by a wide range of relationships with outside powers. In a few cases these

have been largely harmonious, attended by only relatively minor external efforts to influence the course of local political developments. However, most of these countries have been the object of interventions, covert and overt, by outside powers—particularly the United States—which have been calculated to shape their political life in accordance with external interests. Thus the range of contemporary political systems in Southeast Asia is strikingly varied, encompassing a spectrum quite as broad as the differing cultures and divergent historical conditionings that have so profoundly influenced their character.

This series, “Politics and International Relations of Southeast Asia,” stems from an earlier effort to treat the nature of government and politics in the states of Southeast Asia in a single volume. Since the second, revised edition of that book, *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*, was published in 1964, interest in these countries has grown, for understandable reasons especially in the United States. This wider public concern, together with a greater disposition of academics to draw on the political experience of these countries in their teaching, has suggested the need for a more substantial treatment of their politics and governments than could be subsumed within the covers of a single book. The series therefore aims to devote separate volumes to each of the larger Southeast Asian states.

Presumably one no longer needs to observe, as was the case in 1964, that the countries treated “are likely to be strange to many of our readers.” But even though the increased American interaction with most of the countries has clearly obviated that proposition, many readers are still likely to be unacquainted with their earlier histories and the extent to which their pasts have affected the development of their recent and contemporary political character. Thus all these volumes include substantial historical sections as well as descriptions of the salient features of the present social and economic setting. In order to provide as much similarity of treatment as is compatible with the range of cultures and political systems presented by these states, the authors follow a broadly similar pattern of organization and analysis of their political history, dynamics, and processes. This effort to achieve some basis of comparability may appear rather modest, but to have attempted any greater degree of uniformity would have militated against the

latitude and flexibility required to do justice to the differing characteristics of the political systems described. All the books are written by political scientists who have lived and carried out research in one or more of the countries for a considerable period and who have previously published scholarly studies on their internal politics.

Although each of these volumes includes a section on the foreign policy of the country concerned, the increased importance of Southeast Asia in international relations that transcend this area has suggested the need for the series to include a few books focused on the foreign relations of its major states. As is true elsewhere, the foreign policies of these countries are heavily influenced by their own domestic politics; hence all contributors to the volumes that are concerned primarily with international relations are also specialists on the internal politics of the country, or countries, about whose foreign policy they write.

In addition, the series includes some in-depth treatments of particular aspects of the politics of the major states of the area. In these cases the focus is on an element of central importance in the political life of the country concerned, the understanding of which helps illuminate its government and politics as a whole.

The present volume by Harold Crouch is one of these in-depth treatments. For more than a decade before Sukarno's fall from power the army had begun to play an increasingly significant part in the political life of Indonesia. But since 1966, when the Suharto regime took over, it has dominated the country's government almost completely. Indeed, the army has emerged as the major political institution, decisively overshadowing and controlling—if not in a functional sense subsuming—all others.

It is, therefore, appropriate that this series should include a separate monograph focused on the army's political role, this being additional to a more comprehensive study of Indonesian government and politics that is expected to appear later. Having been engaged over most of the past twenty years in research embracing the political role of the army in Indonesia, Harold Crouch is especially well qualified to write this book.

GEORGE MCT. KAHIN

Ithaca, New York

Preface

The origin of this book can be traced back to February 1968, when I took up an appointment as lecturer in political science on the University of Indonesia's Faculty of Social Sciences. After teaching for three years in Jakarta, I enrolled in March 1971 as a graduate student in the Department of Politics and the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University in Melbourne and in March 1975 submitted a thesis entitled "The Indonesian Army in Politics: 1960–1971." This book is both a contraction and an expansion of that thesis—some of the detail of the thesis having been removed, and the time period extended. The study has been long in preparation. The first material was collected in 1968, the first draft chapters were written in 1971, and the final additions to the manuscript were made in January 1977.

Between 1968 and 1977, I was helped in many ways by many people. I had the double advantage of association with both the University of Indonesia and the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University. Apart from their hospitality and friendship, I am deeply grateful to my colleagues and students at the University of Indonesia for teaching me much about Indonesian politics. At Monash, I was able to study with others sharing my interests in a truly *gotong-royong* atmosphere of mutual aid and cooperation, and to my friends there I am also most indebted.

My largest debt, however, is to Herbert Feith, who arranged my job in Jakarta in 1968, discussed my work during several visits to Indonesia, supervised my research at Monash, and has continued to provide stimulating comments and criticism of my work. While he in no way bears responsibility for what is written in this book, his influence on its writing has been very great.

Apart from the three years spent in Indonesia from 1968 to 1971, I was able to visit Indonesia for four months from June to

October 1973 and made shorter visits in January 1975 and October–November 1976. During these visits I conducted many interviews and participated in many conversations with political activists and observers of various persuasions. It would be impossible to list them individually, but I am very grateful to all of them.

Several people have read and commented on one or more draft chapters. Apart from Herbert Feith, the others include J. A. C. Mackie, Ulf Sundhaussen, Ken Ward, Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, Roeslan Abdulgani, Cosmas Batubara, George McT. Kahin, and Daniel S. Lev. Whether in agreement or disagreement, their comments have been very valuable, and to them I express my thanks. In addition, others have given, lent, or otherwise made available material of one sort or another. Among them are Charles Coppel, Andrew Gunawan, Stuart Graham, George Miller, Frank Palmos, Buddy Prasadja, Dorodjatun Kuntjoro Jakti, Victor Matondang, Molly Bondan, Cornelis Zebua, and General A. H. Nasution. I am also grateful to the editors of several newspaper who permitted me to read through their files, including those of *Angkatan Bersenjata*, *Kompas*, *Nusantara*, *Harian Kami*, *Surabaya Post*, and *El Bahar*. Other newspapers were read in various libraries in Indonesia and Australia.

I also express thanks to the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Indonesia, which employed me during my first stay in Indonesia, and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), which sponsored my second visit. My second visit was financed by the Myer Foundation (Melbourne) and the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University. My fourth visit was financed by the National University of Malaysia, where I am now lecturing in the Department of Political Science. To all these institutions I express my gratitude.

I also wish to thank the editors of *Pacific Affairs*, *Indonesia*, *Dyason House Papers*, and the *Current Affairs Bulletin* (University of Sydney) for granting me permission to use material already published in their journals. The articles from which material has been drawn are "Another Look at the Indonesian 'Coup,'" *Indonesia*, no. 15 (April 1973); "The '15th January Affair' in Indonesia," *Dyason House Papers*, 1 (August 1974); "Generals and Business in Indonesia," *Pacific Affairs*, 48 (Winter 1975–1976), and a

shortened version of the *Pacific Affairs* article in *Current Affairs Bulletin*, 54 (June 1977).

Finally I must express my great appreciation of the assistance given by Ong Beng Thye of the History Department, University of Malaya, in preparing the manuscript.

HAROLD CROUCH

Kuala Lumpur

Note on Spelling

In 1972 the Indonesian and Malaysian governments implemented a common system of spelling. The main changes are that the old *dj* becomes *j*, *j* becomes *y*, and *tj* becomes *c* (pronounced *ch*). I have adopted the new spelling except for the names of individuals and the PKI newspaper, *Harian Rakjat*, which was banned in 1965. Use of the new spelling for personal names was made optional, and many individuals continue to use the old spelling. In the interests of consistency, I have retained the old spelling for all personal names. I have also used the Indonesian *u* although many individuals continue to spell their names with the Dutch-derived *oe*.

Abbreviations

Akabri	Akademi Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces Academy)
Apodeti	Associcao Popular Democratica Timorens (Popular Democratic Association of Timor)
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
Aspri	Asisten Pribadi (Personal Assistant)
Bakin	Badan Kordinasi Intelijens Negara (State Intelligence Coordinating Body)
Bapilu	Badan Pengendalian Pemilihan Umum (Body to Manage the General Elections)
Bappenas	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional (National Development Planning Board)
BE	Bonus Ekspot (Export Bonus)
Berdikari	Berdiri diatas kaki sendiri (Stand on your own feet)
BPI	Badan Pusat Intelijens (Central Intelligence Board)
BPK	Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan (Financial Inspection Board)
BPS	Badan Pendukung Sukarnoisma (Body to Support Sukarnoism)
BTI	Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Peasant Front)
Bulog	Badan Urusan Logistik Nasional (National Logistics Board)
BUUD	Badan Usaha Unit Desa (Village Unit Enterprise)
CGMI	Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Movement Center)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
Conefo	Conference of New Emerging Forces
CV	Commanditaire Vennootschap (limited company)
DPR-GR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Gotong Royong (Mutual Assistance People's Representative Council)
Dwikora	Dwi Komando Rakyat (People's Double Command)
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for Independent Timor)
G.30.S., G.30.S./PKI	Gerakan 30 September (Thirtieth of September Movement)

16 Abbreviations

Gerwani	Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Movement)
Gestapu	Gerakan September Tigapuluh (Thirtieth of September Movement)
Gestok	Gerakan Satu Oktober (First of October Movement)
GMNI	Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Student Movement)
Golkar	Golongan Karya (Functional Groups)
GSNI	Gerakan Siswa Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National High School Student Movement)
GUPPI	Gabungan Usaha-usaha Perbaikan Pendidikan Islam (Association to Improve Islamic Education)
Hankam	Departemen Pertahanan-Keamanan (Department of Defense and Security)
HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Islamic Student Association)
IGGI	Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Inkopad	Induk Koperasi Angkatan Darat (Army Central Cooperative Board)
IPKI	Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia (League of Upholders of Indonesian Freedom)
Ir.	Ingenieur (Engineer, a Dutch academic title)
KAMI	Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Action Front)
KAP-Gestapu	Kesatuan Aksi Pengganyangan Gestapu (Action Front to Crush the Thirtieth of September Movement)
KAPPI	Kesatuan Aksi Pelajar Pemuda Indonesia (Indonesian Student and Youth Action Front)
KASI	Kesatuan Aksi Sarjana Indonesia (Indonesian Graduates' Action Front)
Kko	Korps Komando (Commando Corps, marines)
Kodam	Komando Daerah Militer (Regional Military Command)
Kodim	Komando Distrik Militer (District Military Command)
Koga	Komando Siaga (Vigilance Command)
Kogam	Komando Ganyang Malaysia (Crush Malaysia Command)
Kokarmendagri	Korps Karyawan Departemen Dalam Negeri (Department of Internal Affairs Employees Corps)
Kolaga	Komando Mandala Siaga (Mandala Vigilance Command)
Komstradaga	Komando Strategis Darat Siaga (Vigilance Land Strategic Command)
Kopkamtib	Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban (Operations Command to Restore Order and Security)

Koramil	Komando Rayon Militer (Rayon Military Command)
Korem	Komando Resort Militer (Resort Military Command)
Kosgoro	Koperasi Serba Usaha Gotong Royong (Mutual Aid All Purpose Cooperative)
Kostrad	Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat (Army Strategic Reserve Command)
Koti	Komando Operasi Tertinggi (Supreme Operations Command)
Kotrar	Komando Tertinggi Retooling Alat Revolusi (Supreme Command for Retooling the Tools of the Revolution)
Kowilhan	Komando Wilayah Pertahanan (Regional Defense Command)
Mahmillub	Mahkamah Militer Luar Biasa (Special Military Court)
Malari	Malapetaka Januari (January Disaster)
Manipol	Manifesto Politik (Political Manifesto)
MKGR	Musyawarah Kekeluargaan Gotong Royong (Mutual Aid Family Conference)
MPRS	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara (Provisional People's Consultative Assembly)
Nasakom	nasionalis, agama, komunis (nationalist, religious, Communist)
Nefos	New Emerging Forces
Nekolim	neokolonialisma, kolonialisma, imperialisma (neocolonialism, colonialism, imperialism)
NU	Nahdatul Ulama (Muslim teachers' party)
Oldefos	Old Established Forces
Opsus	Operasi Khusus (Special Operations)
Paran	Panitiya Retooling Aparat Negara (Committee to Retool the State Apparatus)
Parmusi	Partai Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim party)
Partindo	Partai Indonesia (Indonesia party)
Pekuneg	Team Penertiban Keuangan Negara (Team to Regularize State Finances)
Pepelrada	Penguasa Pelaksanaan Dwikora Daerah (Regional Authority to Implement Dwikora)
Peperda	Penguasa Perang Daerah (Regional War Authority)
Peperpu	Penguasa Perang Pusat (Central War Authority)
Peperti	Penguasa Perang Tertinggi (Supreme War Authority)
Peta	Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the Fatherland)
Petir	Pembina Tenaga Inti Revolusi (Protectors of the Essence of the Revolution)
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist party)
PN	Perusahaan Negara (state corporation)
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National party)
PRRI	Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia)

18 Abbreviations

PSI	Partai Sosialis Indonesia (Indonesian Socialist party)
PT	Perusahaan Terbatas (limited company)
RPKAD	Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat (Army Para-commando Regiment)
Sekber-Golkar	Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya (Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups)
Seskoad	Sekolah Staf Komando Angkatan Darat (Army Staff and Command College)
SOBSI	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (Central Organization of Indonesian Workers)
SOKSI	Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Sosialis Indonesia (Central Organization of Indonesian Socialist Workers)
Spri	Staf Pribadi (Personal Staff)
TPK	Tim Pemberantasan Korupsi (Team to Eliminate Corruption)
UDT	Uniao Democratica Timorese (Timor Democratic Union)
USDEK	Undang-undang Dasar 45, Sosialisma a la Indonesia, Demokrasi Terpimpin, Ekonomi Terpimpin, Kepribadian Indonesia (1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, Indonesian Personality)

THE ARMY AND POLITICS
IN INDONESIA

Introduction

The year preceding 30 September 1965 was marked by a widespread feeling in Indonesia that the political system could not last as it was for very much longer. The economy appeared to be approaching collapse as inflation raged out of control, production in many fields declined, the neglected economic infrastructure deteriorated, foreign exchange reserves were depleted, and foreign aid became increasingly difficult to obtain. The machinery of government had ceased to carry out many of its functions as pervasive corruption permitted officials at the top to enrich themselves while impoverished lower-level employees barely survived. President Sukarno's endeavors to unite the nation behind his ideological slogans had restricted political and intellectual life but failed to prevent growing tension in the rural areas, where violent clashes between peasants and landholders were frequent. At the same time the president's campaign to "Crush Malaysia" showed no signs of bringing tangible results, and Indonesia became more and more isolated from most of the rest of the world. Overshadowing all else was the ominous polarization of political forces around the two outstanding rivals for the succession. The antagonism between the army leaders and the Communist party seemed unlikely to admit of any resolution short of the victory of one and the elimination of the other.

The disintegration of the Guided Democracy system in the cataclysm that followed the 1965 coup attempt left the army as the dominant political force. The experience of Guided Democracy left a widespread hope that the army-dominated government would establish a "New Order" that would at last open the way to prosperity and progress. Members of anti-Communist civilian groups who had felt disadvantaged under the old regime naturally looked to the army with high expectations. These were

shared by many Western observers who, perhaps influenced by the recent writings of political scientists about developing countries generally,¹ regarded the army as a likely agent of progress and modernization. Now that the army had acquired the power to overhaul the political system and the economy, there seemed to be few obstacles in the way of a complete break with the politics and policies of the past.

The "New Order," however, was not as new as had been anticipated. As this book will attempt to show, the army's rise to power was the culmination of a long process during which the army had acquired characteristics that conditioned its performance after 1965. The Indonesian army had acquired a political orientation and political interests at the time of the revolution against the Dutch. Later, after the introduction of martial law in 1957, the army and the other branches of the armed forces became deeply involved in politics, civil administration, and economic management with the result that the army became a key element in the government coalition under Guided Democracy. The military's experience in nonmilitary activities had two major consequences that affected its political behavior. First, its prolonged involvement in politics, administration, and business led to a politicization of the officer corps and the interpenetration of military and civilian factions that impaired the capacity of the military to act as a cohesive political force and hindered its drive to take complete power. Second, army officers had acquired extramilitary interests which they sought to further. As a political organization the army naturally sought to strengthen its own position at the expense of its rivals, while the expansion of the military's role into the economy gave army officers a personal stake in many business enterprises. As a consequence, military men became part of the political and economic elite with an interest in defending the existing social order which they felt was threatened by both the Communists and Sukarno's chaos-inducing policies.

The sudden elimination of the Indonesian Communist party (PKI) in the last months of 1965 and the drawn-out process that led to the dismissal of President Sukarno in 1967 left the army as the dominant political force. But the army had not gained control of the government by means of a Nasserite coup in which an

1. See, for example, Pauker 1959, Pye 1962, Janowitz 1964.

“outside” reforming elite overthrew a reactionary and incompetent establishment.² The army had already become part of the ruling elite under Guided Democracy. Its rise to a position of dominance did not follow the elimination of the old elite, but rather strengthened one section of it at the expense of other parts. The process was gradual because factionalism produced by politicization prevented the army leaders from taking decisive action.

Under the New Order army officers consolidated their political power and expanded their economic interests. Although many of the policies the new government implemented contrasted sharply with those of the old regime, they did not arise from the adoption of a new philosophy of social reform but because they were better suited in the new circumstances for the furtherance of interests that had been established for many years. Adopting economic development as its principal goal, the military-dominated regime pursued policies designed to expand the modern sector of the economy with the aid of foreign capital. As the economy grew rapidly the regime expected to attract support from urban white-collar and professional strata while avoiding political crises caused by food shortages and other reasons for extreme mass discontent. The chief beneficiaries of the New Order, however, were members of the higher echelons in the army and their bureaucratic and business associates, because foreign-financed economic expansion opened up vast new opportunities for business enterprises in which military officers had interests.

This book deals with the Indonesian army's role in politics during three periods. The first four chapters deal with the expansion of the army's involvement in politics and its position under Guided Democracy, including the activities of army officers in the events surrounding the abortive coup attempt of 1 October 1965. The next four chapters are devoted to the period of transition between October 1965 and March 1967, when the army under the leadership of General Suharto gradually eased President Sukarno out of power and finally dismissed him from office. The third phase is covered in chapters nine to twelve, in which the army-dominated New Order is examined. The conclusions of the study are summarized in the last chapter.

2. See Vatikiotis 1961.

1 | The Army as a Social-Political Force, 1945–1965

The Indonesian army has never restricted itself to an exclusively military role. During the “revolutionary” period from 1945 to 1949 the army was engaged in the struggle for independence in which politics and military action were inseparably intertwined. In the period immediately after the transfer of sovereignty at the end of 1949 the army formally accepted the principle of civilian supremacy, and its officers assumed a role on the edge of political life with sporadic but mainly unsuccessful forays into the center of the political arena. As the weaknesses of the parliamentary system became increasingly obvious, however, the conviction was strengthened among army officers that they bore the responsibility to intervene in order to “save” the nation. Although the army leaders were not directly responsible for the collapse of the parliamentary system in 1957, they were able to turn the situation to their advantage with the introduction of martial law, which enabled army officers to take on broad political, administrative, and economic functions.

In order to justify the army’s continued role in these functions after the initial crisis had passed, the army chief of staff, Major General Abdul Haris Nasution, formulated the concept of the “Middle Way,” according to which the army would neither seek to take over the government nor remain politically inactive. Instead the military claimed the right to continuous representation in the government, legislature, and administration.¹ At its first seminar, held in April 1965, the army produced a doctrine that declared that the armed forces had a dual role as both a “military force” and a “social-political force.” As a “social-political force” the

1. Sundhaussen 1971:398.

army's activities covered "the ideological, political, social, economic, cultural and religious fields."²

The Origin of the Army's Political Role

The army's perception of itself as a political force arose from the blurred distinction between its military and political functions during the revolutionary war against the Dutch. By its very nature the struggle for independence was political as well as military. The youths who took up arms against the Dutch were motivated less by the desire for a military career than by a patriotism that expressed itself in support for the republic proclaimed by the nationalist politicians. The character of the fighting further strengthened the military's concern for political matters. Lacking professional training and low in modern armaments, the Indonesian resistance took the form of guerrilla warfare in which there was no clear boundary between military and civilian life, and the active fighters were heavily dependent on the support of the local population. Because the guerrilla fighters, organized into politically aligned irregular units as well as regular army forces, were always concerned to rally popular enthusiasm around their cause, military leaders performed political functions as well. In many cases the roles of political and military leader became almost indistinguishable.

The absence of an apolitical military tradition made it easier for army officers to accept their role during the revolution. The republic's pressing need for the quick mobilization of a large fighting force had meant that there was no opportunity for the gradual growth of a "professional" army around the nucleus of young officers from the Dutch colonial army who had chosen the nationalist side. The small group of academy-trained officers in the new national army was heavily outnumbered by youths who had received military training in auxiliary military organizations (especially Defenders of the Fatherland [Peta]) set up by the Japanese during the occupation or who had taken up arms in local *laskar* or irregular units formed spontaneously throughout the country in the months after the proclamation of independence.³ In contrast with the Western ideal indoctrinated in the Dutch

2. Angkatan Darat 1965: Main book (Buku Induk), chap. 3.

3. See Pauker 1962:187-192, Anderson 1972a:chaps. 2, 11.

academies that the army should be politically neutral, the “non-professional” officers trained by the Japanese saw no particular merit in abjuring politics, while the youths who had joined *laskar* units often did so as members of one political organization or another. Thus, the officer corps included few officers whose backgrounds inclined them to be receptive to the concept of the army as an apolitical tool of the state and many who were ready to involve themselves in political affairs.

The circumstances under which military officers acquired their political orientation during the revolution gave them a sense of having their own political purposes that could differ from those of the civilian politicians in the government. The military nature of the struggle for independence had inevitably involved the army leadership in national politics, where their views often conflicted with those of the government. The government leaders, who had joined the nationalist movement during the 1920s and 1930s, were derived mainly from the urban, Dutch-educated elite, whereas the senior officers of the army were rarely more than thirty years old and usually came from the small towns of Java, where they had been steeped in traditional culture, obtained only secondary schooling, and learned little Dutch. The lack of rapport that derived in part from this generational and cultural gap was exacerbated by the not unnatural feeling of army officers in the field that they had at least as much right as civilian politicians in the government to decide how the struggle was to be pursued. After asserting themselves by electing their own commander in chief in 1945, the army leaders joined other political groups in expressing strong dissatisfaction with the government’s readiness to offer concessions to the Dutch in the interests of a negotiated settlement. The leaders of the government had perceived the struggle in its broader international setting and therefore tended to take a more detached view of diplomatic retreats; these were regarded as betrayals by guerrilla fighters, who were willing to risk their lives for nothing less than total victory. The alienation of army officers from the government reached its peak when the army fought on after the leaders of the government had allowed themselves to be captured by the Dutch in December 1948. The new round of negotiations that commenced in 1949 was regarded with great suspicion by many army officers, who nearly rejected

the cease-fire ordered by the government and felt cheated by the terms of the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949. Thus, by the end of the revolution, many army officers had become deeply distrustful of the civilian politicians who had led the government.

The Expansion of the Army's Political Role

Since its foundation the Indonesian army had thus regarded itself as a political as well as a military force, and for most of its history it did indeed play a major political role. During the first few years of full independence, the army saw itself in an essentially "guardian" role, but it later asserted its right to participate continuously in political life. The political orientation of the officer corps had made its members receptive to the idea of actively participating in the affairs of the state, but it also led to a weak hierarchical structure and to sharp rivalries between groups of officers which limited the army's effectiveness as a political force. Aware of the army's lack of internal cohesion, its leaders felt deterred from taking the initiative in order to expand their political role. The activities of politically oriented dissident groups within the army, however, contributed to a series of national crises that created the conditions that enabled the army leaders to take wider powers. Thus, the expansion of the army's political role took place gradually and almost inadvertently as the weaknesses of successive political systems provided opportunities that military leaders exploited.

Although the experiences of army officers during the revolution tended to produce common attitudes to some questions, the army was far from a politically cohesive force. Apart from the Japanese-trained recruits, who often had their own political sympathies, many of the guerrilla fighters had not joined the army as individuals but had been incorporated en bloc at one time or another as members of party-affiliated youth organizations that had set up their own *laskar* units. Therefore many units had extramilitary political loyalties and soldiers often had a stronger sense of commitment to their unit commander than to the army as a whole. It was not uncommon for conflicts between civilian political groups to be reflected within the army, leading to the involvement of military units on both sides during such crises as the "July Third Affair" in 1946 and the Communist-supported

“Madiun Affair” in 1948.⁴ Although the Madiun Affair and the conflict with Muslim *laskar* units supporting the Darul Islam movement enabled the army to rid itself of its ideological extremes, it continued to be divided into factions based on personal, regional, divisional, and political loyalties. Of some importance was the fact that all the young officers who had been thrust into the senior posts of the army were of about the same age and had more or less equal claims to the mantle of General Sudirman, the army’s commander throughout the revolution, who died in January 1950, the month after the transfer of sovereignty.

Despite its political orientation and the distrust of politicians that many officers had acquired during the revolution, the army accepted the subordinate role to which it was assigned under the new parliamentary Constitution of 1950. The army leadership had been taken over by a small group of “military technocrats,” most of whom had attended prewar Dutch academies and whose technical proficiency had given them preference over less well-trained officers. Some of these technocrats preferred to withdraw from a directly political role and to concentrate on molding the army into a cohesive and effective military force. Still very young (in 1950 the new army chief of staff, Colonel Nasution, was thirty-one and the armed forces chief of staff, Colonel T. B. Simatupang, thirty) and probably lacking confidence in their ability to tackle the complex problems of government, the military leaders were willing to leave the government in the hands of the older, better-educated, and more experienced politicians. Most important, circumstances left them very little choice. They were well aware that they were not representative of the officer corps as a whole and had no mandate to take political action on its behalf. The army was still more an alliance of local fighting units than an integrated force. Unit commanders often had little in common with the army leadership in Jakarta and could not be relied upon to support political initiatives taken in their name. In the absence of a common political program, the army had no alternative but to accept a subordinate, formally apolitical role. The acceptance of the principle of civilian supremacy by the army leaders, however, did not mean that the “nonprofessional” officers in com-

4. For the political crises during the revolution, see Kahin 1952.

mand of troops in the regions had ceased to feel that the army's contribution during the revolution entitled them to a continuing political role now that independence had been won.

The army's apolitical stance did not last long. The army soon found itself drawn back into the political arena not primarily as a result of the political ambitions of officers or the shortsighted machinations of politicians, but because the complex of circumstances contributing to the fluidity of the power structure did not allow the army to isolate itself from politics. Successive governments took the form of uneasy coalitions that were under constant parliamentary attack, while the group controlling the army headquarters was unable to assert its authority over rival factions in the regions. In such a situation it was only to be expected that the rivalry between factions in the army would become enmeshed with the struggle between government and opposition in parliament as each group sought allies.

The first major political crisis involving the army was the "Seventeenth of October Affair" of 1952.⁵ With the support of successive governments between 1950 and 1952, the technocratic military leadership had been aiming to create a smaller, more disciplined, and "professional" force. Their plans for rationalization and demobilization were resisted by many of the less well-trained former Peta officers, who felt that their status would be downgraded in comparison with the "Westernized" officers of Jakarta and Bandung. When opposition politicians took up the cause of dissident former Peta officers as part of a general attack on the government, the army dissidents naturally welcomed parliamentary support in their struggle against the army leadership. But what the parliamentary opposition regarded as the legitimate exercise of civilian authority over the armed forces, the army leadership regarded as unwarranted and intolerable "interference" in the army's internal affairs. Already unimpressed by the performance of the parliamentary system, a group of army officers in Jakarta organized a large civilian demonstration in front of the Presidential Palace on 17 October 1952 while a delegation of senior officers was meeting President

5. For an account of the Seventeenth of October Affair emphasizing civilian "interference" in army matters, see Sundhaussen 1971:205-236. For an account stressing army factionalism, see McVey 1971b:143-152. See also Feith 1962:246-273.

Sukarno to request that he dissolve the parliament. The Seventeenth of October Affair was not so much an attempt by the army leaders to overthrow the government as an expression of their resentment, as military technocrats, at civilian attempts to obstruct them from carrying out what they regarded as necessary policies. They cannot have been unaware, however, that the dissolution of the parliament at their behest would have placed them in a very strong position from which to make further political moves. In any case, Sukarno not only refused to dissolve the parliament but encouraged the former Peta dissidents, who organized a series of coups against several regional commanders aligned with the central army leadership. At the end of the year the army chief of staff, Colonel Nasution, who had been powerless to intervene on his supporters' behalf, was himself dismissed along with his closest colleagues from the technocratic faction. The Seventeenth of October Affair had shown that as long as the army was divided into more or less evenly balanced factions, officers would make the most of political opportunities provided by the unrestrained competition between civilian political groups to further their own factions' interests even if they were not yet envisaging a much wider political role as a long-term goal.

During the following years the conception of the army as an apolitical tool of the state quickly gave way to the older idea that the army was the guardian of the national interest with the responsibility to intervene in political affairs whenever the weaknesses of civilian government made it necessary. Dissatisfaction with the parliamentary system was becoming widespread within as well as outside the military. Since independence a series of coalition governments had failed to hold power long enough to implement their programs and establish moral authority. Reflecting the cultural, regional, and ideological diversity of the nation, the many political parties represented in the parliament were unable to work out long-term alignments among themselves; as a result governments rose and fell as rival groups maneuvered for short-term advantage. Increasingly the parties came to be seen as patronage machines chiefly concerned with furthering the interests of their own supporters without regard for the "good of the nation." As the legitimacy of the parliamentary system was thrown into doubt, the search for an alternative accelerated.

Disillusionment with the government and the parliamentary system was strong among army officers of both major factions involved in the dispute of 1952. Although the conflicts surrounding the Seventeenth of October Affair had embittered the relations between rival groups of officers, the growing sense of disaffection gradually helped to bridge the gap. The Ali Sastroamidjojo government, which had come to power in July 1953, had managed to stay in office longer than any of its predecessors, partly through its flexibility in distributing benefits to its supporters, but many army officers felt that it neglected the military in the allocation of funds. Further, the defense minister had caused much resentment with his attempts to play off army factions against each other. Army officers accused the government of weakness, incompetence, corruption, and, not least, disregard of military interests. Disaffection spread, and army officers became more conscious of their common interests as members of a currently ineffective but potentially powerful political force. Early in 1955 a formal reconciliation of factions took place, and senior officers of all groups pledged to uphold unity in a ceremony at the grave of the late commander in chief, General Sudirman.

This new awareness of common purposes reached its peak when the coalition government led by the Indonesian National party (PNI) appointed Colonel Bambang Utojo, a PNI-sympathizing but relatively junior officer, as the army's new chief of staff in June 1955. Despite a number of unresolved differences, officers of both major factions joined to reject the appointment, with the result that a humiliated government soon fell from office. The fall of the Ali government produced an atmosphere of self-confidence in the army, and officers became convinced that they could have far more political influence in the future. Reports circulated that several senior officers had gone so far as to discuss the possibility of a coup against the government.⁶ In fact, the brittle quality of the army's new-found unity virtually precluded the possibility of a successful coup, but many officers had clearly become very receptive to the view that the parliamentary system should be abandoned and replaced by a system permitting the army to play a more active political role. The army was less sharply divided than

6. See Pauker 1962:211. On the basis of interviews, however, Sundhaussen suggests that no such discussions took place (1971:268).

before, but the balance between its factions made consensus on the nomination of a new chief of staff difficult. Eventually it was agreed to recall Nasution, despite his central role in the controversies of 1952, and in the years after 1955 Nasution led the army into its vastly expanded political role.

Despite the disfavor into which the parliamentary system had fallen in army circles, the collapse of the last parliamentary government and the introduction of martial law in early 1957 were not the results of a deliberate move by the army leadership to overthrow the system. The system collapsed because of its inability to cope with regional military commanders who challenged the authority of both the government and the army leadership. Paradoxically, the continued factionalism within the army both prevented the army leadership from moving against the civilian government and created the conditions leading to the substantial enhancement of the army's political role. As in 1952, intra-army rivalry once again became entangled in broader national politics, but this time the conflict brought the nation to the point of civil war.

After the interlude in 1955, factional conflict in the army had revived in response to Nasution's moves to strengthen the authority of the army headquarters over the relatively autonomous regional commanders—some of whom had supported Nasution in 1952—by transferring well-entrenched regional commanders to new positions. Like the rationalization plans of 1952, Nasution's policies were opposed by senior officers who, feeling their positions threatened, sought political support from outside the army. The dissident officers' antagonism toward Nasution was aggravated by his willingness to cooperate with the second Ali Sastroamidjojo government, which had taken office in early 1956 after the general elections of the previous year. Although the second Ali government was more broadly based than the first, many officers, especially among the non-Javanese, considered it no better than the earlier government they had successfully undermined in the middle of 1955. At the same time, regional commanders outside Java shared the growing resentment in the Outer Islands against the central government, which was regarded as dominated by Javanese intent on "exploiting" the natural wealth of the export-producing areas.

When Nasution began to transfer regional commanders and other senior officers, his rivals, including some disappointed former allies, were ready to move into action. After a coup attempt planned by the dismissed deputy chief of staff, Colonel Zulkifli Lubis, had failed to get off the ground in the latter part of 1956,⁷ several regional and local commanders in Sumatra and Sulawesi took control of local governments and succeeded in rallying considerable popular support behind their defiance of the central government. The crisis continued until 1958, when a meeting of military dissidents together with several leading politicians from the Muslim Masyumi and one from the Socialist party set up the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) based in West Sumatra. When defiance turned to unambiguous rebellion the government felt compelled to act decisively. Led by Nasution's first deputy, Colonel Achmad Yani, central government forces quickly occupied rebel-held towns in Sumatra, and shortly afterward rebel strongholds fell in Sulawesi. Most of the rebel forces were soundly defeated within a few months, but guerrilla activities continued until 1961.

The events of 1956–1958 had far-reaching consequences both for the Indonesian political system and the role of the army in it. The emergency conditions had opened the way to a sudden expansion of the army's role not only in politics but also in the broader fields of general administration and economic management after the introduction of martial law in 1957. By proving its indispensability in the crisis caused by the rebellion, the army leadership had underpinned its claim to a more permanent role in the government. Further, the involvement in the rebellion of Nasution's most prominent opponents had left him in unchallenged control of the army and made it more united and more capable of promoting its political interests than ever before. Convinced that its participation in the government was necessary, and less inhibited by the old internal fissures, the army took advantage of the disrepute of the parliamentary system to press for a new government structure in which the army's place would be central. Together with President Sukarno the army led the way to the

7. See the contrasting emphases on interest and ideology in the explanations of events leading to the "Lubis affair" by McVey 1971b:157–170, Feith 1962:500–507, and Sundhaussen 1971:290–310.

reintroduction of the presidential 1945 Constitution, which provided the institutional framework for Guided Democracy.⁸

Under Guided Democracy politics revolved around the army and the president as the two pillars of the system, with the PKI rapidly emerging as the army's only rival for the ultimate succession. The army's political role came initially from its martial law powers, but soon officers were given substantial representation in the formal institutions of government, such as in cabinet and parliament, and were appointed as provincial governors and other regional officials. The army continued to exercise its emergency powers under martial law until 1963, and again after the reintroduction of a modified form of martial law in 1964. Army officers also played a major role in the newly created National Front,⁹ especially in the regions, and their activities in the economy expanded as a result of their powers under martial law and their position in former Dutch enterprises placed under state control after 1957. Thus by 1965 the army was well entrenched. Indeed it had become so much a part of the power structure of Guided Democracy that many officers were reluctant to support political initiatives by army leaders for fear of upsetting their own highly satisfactory arrangements. Although the army always stood firm when its own interests were directly challenged and was steady in its resolve to check the advance of its outstanding rival, the PKI, it was reluctant to act against the PKI's protector, President Sukarno. The army leaders feared that precipitate action on their part might be exploited to their disadvantage by Sukarno, whose prestige remained high in many sections of the armed forces, including the army itself. Not only was the army's power checked by the growth of the navy, air force, and police, but it was dissipated by essentially personal rivalries between army officers. In any case most senior officers felt confident that the army's superior military might would guarantee victory for them in the end, so that drastic action against the PKI in the short run was unnecessary.

8. See Lev 1966:chap. 5.

9. The National Front was set up in 1960 to mobilize all political parties and other organizations, including the armed forces, behind the government's policies. It replaced the army-sponsored National Front for the Liberation of West Irian, which had been based on the army-led military-civilian "cooperation bodies" set up after the introduction of martial law. See Lev 1966:65–67.

During the two decades since 1945 the army had acquired political ambitions and a strong distrust of civilian politicians, but its internal disunity had prevented it from taking decisive action to consolidate its power. The expansion of the army's political role had not been a planned process in which its leaders took deliberate steps to fulfill their political ambitions. Rather it took the form of a series of responses to particular crises arising, in the main, from the actions of dissident officers. Although the circumstances that were favorable for the expansion of their power were not essentially of their own making, the army leaders had always been ready to exploit unexpected opportunities to the full.¹⁰

By the end of the Guided Democracy period many officers had become experienced and adroit politicians. Unlike army officers in countries where the military has taken power suddenly in a coup against a civilian government, Indonesian officers had undergone a lengthy period of preparation, during which they learned the skills of negotiating, bargaining, and compromising. Their experience of nonmilitary activities before 1965 had shaped a political style more suited to the advancement of officers' interests within the existing structure than to the creation of an entirely new political order. Scattered through the regional administration, central bureaucracy, nationalized business corporations, parliament, and cabinet, army officers had become adept at intra-bureaucratic maneuvering and political intrigue to achieve short-run objectives. Alongside obligations to their military superiors, officers formed extramilitary loyalties as they identified with the civilian institutions in which they were placed and allied themselves with civilians sharing their immediate interests. Integrated into the Guided Democracy regime, army officers had been beneficiaries under it. Thus, when they strengthened their grip on the government after 1965, they did not suddenly become the

10. For a contrasting interpretation, see Sundhaussen 1971. Sundhaussen concludes that "the army involved itself in politics, and finally usurped power, because civilian elites had failed to set up workable political systems" (p. 706). "In the last analysis it must be said that civilians bear a considerable amount of responsibility for the army's assuming power in Indonesia. . . . In most clashes between civilians and the army, officers reacted rather than acted, responded to challenges rather than themselves initiated challenges" (pp. 714-715). This view, however, overstates the passive quality of the army's political activities and tends to overlook the involvement of sections of the military in most of the crises which nonmilitary governments were unable to handle.

bearers of new values and ideals but were more inclined to concern themselves with the consolidation of their power and the advancement of their existing interests.

The Army's Extramilitary Interests

The Indonesian army was, in a sense, a "people's army." Its officer corps had not been a carefully selected elite intended to protect the status quo but had arisen spontaneously during the revolution. Although the revolutionary period inclined the army toward political activity, it failed to provide officers with a clear ideological conception of their own interests and objectives. Unlike the revolutionary army in China, for example, which had grown over a period of two decades under the leadership of a single political party committed to a clearly defined ideology, the Indonesian army emerged from its revolutionary experience with little more than a strongly felt but vaguely articulated creed of nationalism. The urgency of the circumstances in which the army had been mobilized had not permitted attention to ideological indoctrination, and, in any case, the diversity of the units incorporated into the new army made adoption of a uniform political outlook impossible. Although officers later believed themselves obliged to ensure that the rather amorphous "ideals of the 1945 revolution" continued to be upheld, they lacked a convincing vision of the future and a program to attain it. Despite its origins as a people's army during a revolution the army never created a revolutionary ideology to guide its postrevolutionary political activities.

The army's political outlook reflected the cultural roots of its officers, among whom orthodox *santri* Muslims were underrepresented while, especially at the higher levels, Javanese of *priyayi* outlook were heavily overrepresented.¹¹ The preponderance of Javanese officers, which occurred originally because most of the fighting during the revolution took place in Java, became even more pronounced when many non-Javanese lost their positions

11. In Java the term *santri* is applied to those who fully identify themselves with Islam and conscientiously carry out their religious obligations. Non-*santris*, who are nominally Muslim but more influenced by pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, are known as *abangan*, while the upper stratum of this group is known as *priyayi*. These social groupings are usually referred to as *akran* (streams). See Geertz 1960.

because of their involvement in the 1958 rebellion. By the 1960s it was estimated that some 60 to 80 percent of army officers were Javanese.¹² The overrepresentation of the Javanese meant that not only the non-Javanese but also strong Muslims were under-represented. Whereas Outer Islanders are generally identified with Islam, a majority of the ethnic Javanese, while still nominally Muslim, are not so much secular in outlook as they are attracted to the mystical practices and beliefs found in the variants of what is known as "Javanese religion." Further, even among the ethnic Javanese, strictly Muslim youths tended to leave the army after the revolution, possibly because many army activities during the 1950s were directed toward the suppression of Muslim-backed rebellions.¹³ Although the *priyayi* Javanese character of much of the officer corps did not prevent non-Javanese Muslims, such as General Nasution, from rising to important positions, the army has always, and especially since 1958, aligned itself with the secular forces in society in obstructing Muslim political ambitions. There was never any possibility that the army would adopt an Islamic political ideology.

The political and social perspectives of the officer corps were also conditioned by their social backgrounds. Although some officers, especially in West Java, were from the lower aristocracy and a few had attended university-type institutions established by the Dutch in Jakarta and Bandung, the social origins of the majority were less elevated. In East and Central Java, most of the officers were local youths who had joined Peta during the Japanese period. Usually they were the sons of local officials, school-teachers, and traders, and most had spent at least a few years at secondary school, which gave them claims to elite status in the small towns where they lived. During the revolution some *laskar* units had been commanded by less-educated officers from the lower classes, but very few held responsible positions after the fighting ceased. Thus the officer corps was recruited largely from the upper strata of the small towns of Java. Most had little sense of identity with the mass of the people in the villages and were uninterested in turning the revolution against the Dutch into a

12. Sundhaussen 1971:63. About 45 percent of the population is ethnically Javanese.

13. McVey 1971b:138-139.

true social revolution. While they recognized that they occupied a less-privileged position than the civilian elite in power in Jakarta, they were usually more interested in the possibilities that a military career offered for social mobility than in its potential for carrying out social transformation.

As members of an organization dependent on the government for its funds, army officers naturally had an interest in gaining substantial allocations for defense in the government's budget, and the failure of the government to provide what officers considered to be adequate funds lay behind much of the rising disaffection in the army during the mid-1950s. Not only did the army feel deprived of new equipment, weapons, and other facilities, but both ordinary soldiers and officers found themselves unable to live in a style to which they felt entitled. Some military commanders, especially in the Outer Islands, felt compelled to resort to unorthodox sources of supply in order to maintain the functioning of their units and the loyalty of their troops. In the export-producing regions, such as North Sumatra and North Sulawesi, the military could raise funds quite easily by sponsoring semiofficial smuggling, while in other areas regional commanders made irregular arrangements with local businesses, usually ones owned by Chinese. These economic activities of military men, although arising originally out of necessity, opened up opportunities for individuals to benefit personally, with the result that some army officers wanted to continue the emergency arrangements.¹⁴

The limited involvement of the military in economic affairs suddenly expanded after the introduction of martial law in 1957. Martial law put military men in positions of considerable power, especially in the Outer Islands, where countervailing civilian forces were relatively weak. Although regional commanders did not always exercise their emergency powers to the full, they often took a direct interest in the administration of such economic matters as tax collection, the issuing of licenses, and the granting of other facilities.¹⁵ Not until the end of 1957, however, when nationalist demonstrators took over Dutch enterprises following an adverse vote on West Irian in the United Nations, did vast new economic opportunities present themselves. Acting against the

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 152–153.

15. Lev 1966:60.