

Attempt To Break Up Indonesia: British Policy of 40 Years

by Michael O. Billington

This article, essential to understanding the causes of the ongoing potential breakup of the Indonesian nation—an outcome which would have wide-reaching evil consequences for Asia if not prevented—is excerpted from a forthcoming report by the author, “The British Takeover of American Foreign Policy After JFK: Asia, 1963-65.”

In an earlier report, I demonstrated the importance of Indonesia, Vietnam, and China in the mid-1950s effort to circumvent London’s Cold War division of the world into warring blocs.¹ In particular, I showed how Indonesia’s Sukarno and China’s Zhou Enlai, at the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, set in motion the “Spirit of Bandung,” an alliance of Third World nations committed to bringing together East and West, North and South, toward the development of the formerly colonized nations.

Three tragic and world-shaping developments which struck Asia in 1965-66—the plunge of the United States into full-scale war in Vietnam, the coup and subsequent mass slaughter in Indonesia, and China’s “Cultural Revolution”—were all part of a brutal British assault on this “Spirit of Bandung,” and on what remained of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s anti-colonial legacy in U.S. policy toward Asia.

The attempt by John F. Kennedy during his brief Presidency, to revive Roosevelt’s anti-colonial policy, was the immediate target of the British deployments of 1965-66 and their terrible outcome. These developments were part of a downward, global “cultural paradigm shift,” following the assassination of President Kennedy and the successful cover-

up of that assassination.

In the Spring of 1965, the United States began ten years of neo-colonial warfare against Vietnam, including the introduction of ground troops, and the most extensive aerial bombardment in world history to that point, over both North and South Vietnam, and soon spreading to Laos and Cambodia.

A few months later, in Indonesia, following the still-obscure kidnapping and murder of six leading generals by a rebel group of senior Army officers, gangs of Indonesian youth, armed by the military, joined the Army in slaughtering several hundred thousand supporters of Indonesia’s founding father, President Sukarno, targeting especially those who were also aligned with one or the other of the numerous popular organizations that had been set up by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

The third tragic development began in the Spring of 1966, when the youth of China were mobilized into Red Guard units to attack every vestige of authority in the social structure of the country, including the leadership of the Communist Party (CCP) itself, thus launching the ten-year bloody nightmare known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

These disasters were entirely avoidable, but they were the *intended* result of British geopolitical policy, aimed at ending once and for all the impact of the anti-colonial, *American System* policies which had been promoted by Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States and around the world. President Kennedy, for his part, during his brief tenure in the White House, had increasingly come to terms in his own mind with the dangerous, and evil, Cold War mentality promoted by the British and by much of the American establishment—including most of his own advisers.

The assassination of Kennedy at the hands of British intel-

1. “Britain’s Cold War Against FDR’s Grand Design: The East Asian Theater, 1943-63,” *EIR*, Oct. 15, 1999.



Indonesian President Sukarno with U.S. President John F. Kennedy, in Washington, April 1961. While the Anglo-American establishment denounced Sukarno as a communist, Kennedy called him “the George Washington of Indonesia”; both Sukarno and Kennedy were eliminated from the political scene by the British oligarchy.

ligence² must be seen in this context, and in conjunction with the simultaneous efforts to assassinate French President Charles de Gaulle (by the same British intelligence networks that killed Kennedy), and political operations to remove Kennedy’s other collaborators in Europe: German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. Macmillan, undermined by the Profumo scandal, made way for the man preferred by the City of London, Harold Wilson, who prided himself as an “East of the Suez” man, dedicated to maintaining Britain’s imperial role in Asia and Africa. The ongoing and unavoidable de-colonization process, initiated by Macmillan’s “Winds of Change” policy, was to be “the pursuit of Empire by other, informal means,” as reported even by London’s official historians.³ Crucial to this process was London’s taming of the American giant, the subversion of America’s optimism and commitment to the idea of progress, and the use of America’s economic and military strength to enforce British geopolitical, neo-colonial strategic interests around the world.

The destruction of this historical American impulse required the elimination not only of the leaders of the Bandung Conference, but also of President Kennedy and his European allies, as well as several other American statesmen, now long-forgotten or slandered in the history books written almost universally by their enemies. These American patriots, such

2. “Why the British Kill American Presidents,” *New Federalist* pamphlet, December 1994.

3. John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat from Empire in the Postwar World* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988).

as Ambassador to Indonesia Howard Jones, despite their shortcomings, had committed themselves to FDR’s ideal of ending European colonialism and developing the Third World with American System methods.

The resulting Asian disasters of the 1960s were totally unnecessary. Likewise, the disasters unfolding today in Asia and elsewhere—in particular, the destabilization and threatened economic and political disintegration of Indonesia—can be reversed. But this requires that the citizens of the Western nations act decisively to replace the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) bankrupt financial institutions and the financial oligarchy governing American and British Commonwealth affairs.

The same foreign and domestic interests responsible for the holocaust in 1965-66 are again mobilized to destabilize the emerging political unity of ASEAN-Plus-3 (the alliance of the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations with China, Japan, and South Korea) against the speculation and looting passed off as “globalization.” This Asian-wide defense of national sovereignty and development, against the onslaught of neo-colonial financial controls and destabilization, is more than “local” self-defense, but, as Lyndon LaRouche has insisted,⁴ it could, in league with Russia, India, and other Eurasian nations, serve as a seed-crystal for the required formation of a new world economic order, based on the original intent of the Roosevelt-inspired Bretton Woods system. This defines the urgency of this historical report.

4. Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., “An Asian Monetary Fund,” *EIR*, May 26, 2000.

Indonesia's 1965 Holocaust

Howard Palfrey Jones, U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia from 1958 to 1965, was a man shaped by the Cold War strategic environment in which he was employed, but who retained a belief in and dedication to Franklin Roosevelt's idea of global peace and development, through the application of America's scientific and industrial capacity to the development of the former European colonies in the Third World.

Jones was, like then-U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Frederick Nolting, forced out by Averell Harriman and Henry Cabot Lodge, to facilitate launching the U.S. war in Vietnam. While the failure of the cause of men like Jones and Nolting can be traced in part to their inability or unwillingness to recognize that the British-created Cold War was inimical to the fundamental interests of the United States, it is most important for our purposes here to demonstrate that such moral individuals posed a mortal threat to the Anglo-American oligarchy, and had to be removed along with President Kennedy.

As we shall see, one of Jones's most praiseworthy qualities, all too rare in recent American statesmen, was his willingness to publicly identify the destructive, duplicitous, and anti-American policies of the British in Indonesia, as carried out both directly, and indirectly through influence upon U.S. policy.

In his memoirs, *Indonesia, The Possible Dream*, Ambassador Jones reflects the influence of the ideas of Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and John Kennedy: "The world cannot exist half-poor and half-rich. Yet the gap between the developed and the less-developed nations is year by year becoming greater rather than less. There is an alternative to accepting today's world conflicts merely on a political level: to explore and to understand the social and economic pressures that are the source of the conflicts and have their roots in a contrasting culture."⁵

Jones was appointed by President Dwight Eisenhower as Ambassador to Indonesia in February 1958, just at the peak of the covert British and American sponsorship of a subversive movement within Indonesia, aimed at splitting the country and bringing down Sukarno. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, like the British, had made clear his "sympathy" for the rebel forces, but instructed Jones to inform Sukarno that the United States had no involvement. In fact, as Jones wrote later, with reference to a CIA role in the rebellion, "numerous published accounts lend credence to that assumption. In May 1958, however, neither the fact nor the extent of such support was known to us in the Embassy." Jones's own view, after careful analysis of the situation within Indonesia, was that, if the United States engaged in supporting the separatist movement, "U.S. pretensions to non-interference in internal affairs of Asian nations would have been completely discredited, and

the moral quality of our leadership, so recently established in Asia by our voluntary act in granting independence to the Philippines, would have been lost."⁶ Jones believed that both John Foster Dulles at State and Allen Dulles at the CIA, and others in Washington, were acting in Indonesia in a manner contrary to the needs of the country, and contrary to U.S. interests as well. He described the subversion as "another case of predilections blinding us to facts, of prejudices blocking judgment, of the wish being father to the thought . . . , and unmovable objects, preconceptions in the minds of the readers [of my reports to Washington]."

Jones was worried about the growing strength of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), but recognized that London's and Washington's identification of a nationalist like Sukarno as a "communist" was ludicrous. Sukarno once asked Jones why the United States was so concerned with the large PKI vote in Indonesian elections. "You aren't worried about France and Italy's communist votes, yet theirs is higher," said Sukarno. Jones responded: "We were worried about Communism in these countries. That is what the Marshall Plan was all about." He pointed out that the Communist votes in Europe were decreasing as a result of economic development. Like Kennedy, he belittled the posture of "fighting Communism," if there were no true effort to foster economic development.

Jones studied Indonesia's history and culture, and confessed a deep love for the country. His admiration for President Sukarno grew from his appreciation for the richness of Indonesia's past, and the perfidy of colonialism which Sukarno had battled to overcome. He also agreed with Kennedy that Sukarno deserved the title of "the George Washington of Indonesia." Although appointed by a Republican administration, Jones showed his admiration for Kennedy during the 1960 electoral campaign by presenting Sukarno with a copy of Kennedy's book, *Strategy of Peace*, a collection of his Senate speeches. Sukarno later told Jones, "If President Kennedy means what he says in these speeches, than I agree with him completely."

Jones's anti-communism was constrained by his appreciation for the legitimate national aspirations of the former colonial peoples. He took Sukarno seriously when the President told him that PKI leader D.N. Aidit was an "Indonesian communist" rather than simply a communist, and that he was "Indonesian first, a communist second"—just as Ho Chi Minh had described himself as a "nationalist first, a communist second." Jones believed that "Aidit and his associates were confident of riding the democratic road to power." While he considered it a legitimate U.S. policy to oppose that rise to power, he thought that such an effort must be accomplished by proving the superiority of republican methods of economic and social development. Jones highlighted a quote from a

5. Howard Palfrey Jones, *Indonesia: The Possible Dream* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971).

6. *Ibid.*

FIGURE 10

Southeast Asia in the 1950s



Sukarno speech in 1958: “Indonesia’s democracy is not liberal democracy. Indonesian democracy is not the democracy of the world of Montaigne or Voltaire. Indonesian democracy is not à la America, Indonesia’s democracy is not the Soviet—No! Indonesia’s democracy is the democracy which is implanted in the breasts of the Indonesian peoples. . . . Democracy is only a means. It is not an end. The end is a just and prosperous society.”

Sukarno pursued what he called “Guided Democracy,”

whereby the political parties continued to function in the society, but the cabinet was composed of all the major parties (including the communist PKI), while a National Council, under Sukarno’s leadership, included both party representatives and others from the “functional groups” in society (labor, peasantry, military, religious, business, etc.).

John Foster Dulles found Guided Democracy to be adequate evidence to prove that Sukarno was taking Indonesia down the road to communism.



U.S. Ambassador Howard Jones, with President Sukarno, gives the shout “Merdeka!” (“Freedom!”). Jones studied Indonesia’s history and culture intensively, and expressed admiration for both the country and its President.

Following the failure of the Anglo-American separatist subversion in 1957-58, Dulles and his British allies tried to instigate another military coup against Sukarno in 1960. The plot collapsed when the Dutch (with backing from London and Washington) insulted Indonesian nationalism, by reinforcing their military position in Irian Jaya, the western half of the island of New Guinea, which the Dutch had refused to liberate from colonial control at the time of Indonesian independence. The Indonesian military rallied behind Sukarno’s uncompromising demand that the Dutch relinquish colonial control over Irian Jaya. The Army would not turn on Sukarno while that nationalist battle for liberation from colonialism remained incomplete, and the coup plot evaporated.

With Kennedy’s inauguration in 1961, U.S. relations with Indonesia improved radically. Sukarno was warmly received on a visit to the White House and the Congress, and Kennedy delegated his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, to convince (or coerce) the Dutch to give up Irian Jaya, which he accomplished in short order. At the same time, the last holdouts of the 1957-58 rebellion in Sumatra and Sulawesi were finally subdued, and the Darul Islam, a movement dedicated to making Indonesia an Islamic state, put up their arms—all due in great part to the publicly acknowledged termination of all U.S. backing for subversion. In 1962, for the first time since 1945, there was peace throughout Indonesia.

Sukarno also initiated a process aimed at the integration of the three nations composed primarily of the Malay people—Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia—to be called Maphilindo. Potentially included in the union were the three British colonies of northern Borneo: Sabah, Brunei, and Sarawak (the

larger, southern portion of the island of Borneo is part of Indonesia). President Kennedy supported Sukarno’s Maphilindo project, much to the consternation of the British.

British Sabotage

Although the British had granted independence to Malaya in 1957, it retained colonial control over Singapore (run by London’s leading comprador in Asia, Lee Kuan Yew) and the three North Borneo states. The British had not completely broken from their Nineteenth-Century methods of assigning colonial power to a “private” firm under Crown control, such as the British East India Company. Sabah had been run by the British North Borneo Chartered Company until the Japanese occupation, while British adventurer James Brooke, who was accorded the title of Raja of Sarawak in 1841, founded a dynasty of “White Rajas” that ruled the colony until World War II. Both Sabah and Sarawak became “traditional” British Crown Colonies, controlled by London, after the war. Brunei, the oil-rich mini-state, was separated off and run indirectly by British Malayan Petroleum (later Brunei Shell) through the resident Sultan. In 1950, when the Sultan threatened to break from British control (with some help from the United States), he conveniently died in Singapore while en route to London, and his written instructions to his subordinates, including his choice for his successor, were ripped up by the British Resident of Brunei, who handed titular leadership to a more pliant brother of the Sultan.

It was in Brunei, the most tightly controlled British enclave, that a Malay-nationalist revolt in December 1962 was turned to London’s advantage in its drive to sabotage Maphilindo and eliminate Sukarno. The British wanted to include



The Indonesian Republic's first postage stamps show the new nation's orientation toward the American System. Shown are leaders from the Sukarno era, clockwise from top left: Mohammad Hatta (with Abraham Lincoln); A.A. Maramis (with Alexander Hamilton); Haji Agus Salim (with Benjamin Franklin); and Sutan Sjahrir (with Thomas Jefferson).

the North Borneo colonies in a proposed merger between the colonial city-state of Singapore and Malaya, forming a new state to be called Malaysia. Although Indonesia was not totally opposed to the creation of Malaysia, the Sukarno government insisted that the people of the North Borneo states be allowed to determine whether or not they wished to join the union.

The leader of the Brunei revolt, Sheikh Ahmad Mahmud Azahari, was not some loose cannon, but the head of the dominant political party in Brunei, with good relations with the Sultan. He had a long history of ties to Indonesia, where he had lived after World War II, fighting alongside the Indonesian nationalists against the Dutch, and serving in local government until 1951, when he returned to Brunei and established a political movement. His movement, and the December 1962 revolt, were not against the Sultan (whom they expected would support it), but against the British, against absorption into Malaysia, and for a unification of the North Borneo States. Azahari also had close ties to government leaders in the Philippines, and supported Sukarno's Maphilindo concept of close ties between and among all the Malay states.

The Sultan, however, did not back the revolt as expected, and the British Army moved in, crushing the revolt, and blaming it on Sukarno. In January 1963, with British troops heavily deployed along the Indonesian border to suppress the broad-

based popular revolt, Sukarno announced a campaign to confront the British over the forced inclusion of the North Borneo States into the new union of Malaysia, calling the campaign by the Dutch term "Konfrontasi" (confrontation).

The Konfrontasi was to last, with ebbs and flows, for the next three years, leading eventually to the aborted coup of Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1965, and the slaughter that followed. Throughout the Konfrontasi, Sukarno tried to sustain the Maphilindo initiative, posing this as the proper framework for solving the conflict over Malaysia. Several conferences were held between Sukarno, Malaya's leader Tunku Abdul Rahman, and Philippines President Diosdado Macapagal, or their representatives, eventually reaching an agreement on Maphilindo, and arranging a UN-controlled appraisal of the views of the North Borneo populations regarding the Malaysia merger. All three leaders agreed to abide by the results of the UN survey.

In his memoirs, U.S. Ambassador Jones reviews the various theories proposed by Western sources as to Sukarno's "real" reason for launching the Konfrontasi: that Sukarno and Zhou Enlai had agreed at Bandung to "split up" Asia between them, with Sukarno getting the islands; or that Sukarno was only trying to divert attention from his domestic economic problems by creating a foreign diversion. Jones dismisses these theories as "wholly inapplicable." Sukarno, he writes, was sincerely and legitimately concerned about British colo-

nialism: “He was ready to fight for people’s freedom anywhere, at any time; he was highly suspicious of British motivation.”

Jones also reported on a most revealing discussion he held with the British Deputy High Commissioner in Singapore in June 1963. The commissioner, after adding his voice to those who criticized Jones for being “soft” on Sukarno, lied that the British had no plans to topple Sukarno, but nonetheless “wanted to know whether there was a possibility of a breakup of Indonesia owing to the antagonism between Sumatra and Java.”

In other words, the British were still trying to reactivate their 1957-58 subversion, by turning the outer islands against the center, and angling for a re-run of U.S. support for their dirty work. When Jones told him that such plans were unrealistic, the commissioner went to the next level: “What, in your opinion, would happen if Sukarno were no longer on-stage?” Coming just a few months before the assassinations of President Kennedy and President Ngo Dinh Diem in Vietnam, such a question was not idle speculation.

Jones travelled to Manila to be “in the wings” at the crucial heads-of-state Maphilindo conference at the end of July 1963, and helped shape a deal which brought in UN Secretary General U Thant to conduct the survey in the North Borneo states. The British tried by various means to sabotage the process (Commonwealth Relations Secretary Duncan Sandys, said Jones, “had determined to make it as difficult as possible”), and then, just days before the survey was complete, the British brought the Malayan leader, the Tunku, to London, where they declared that Malaysia would be formed regardless of the results of U Thant’s survey! Since it was generally acknowledged, even by Sukarno, that the survey would turn out in favor of Malaysia, the announcement had no purpose other than to insult Indonesia and the Philippines (which concurred with Indonesia in regard to the Malaysia question), making it impossible for Sukarno to concede with dignity to the results of U Thant’s survey. Ambassador Jones wrote that the Indonesian leader “was quite aware, as I was, that the British were a key factor in determining the Tunku’s position.”

The situation exploded precisely as the British had desired. With the Manila agreement in shambles, the Konfrontasi continued, and Indonesia refused to accept the declaration creating Malaysia in September. Jones returned to Washington for consultations, meeting with President Kennedy at some length on Nov. 19, 1963 — just three weeks after President Diem’s assassination. He briefed the President on the British duplicity, urging “empathy” for Indonesia, despite Sukarno’s intransigence and the mounting anti-Anglo-American sentiment within Indonesia. President Kennedy concurred, and *agreed to schedule a trip to Indonesia in early 1964*, pending only a peaceful settlement to the Konfrontasi, while also agreeing to ship emergency rice to Jakarta, to resus-

citate a stalled aid program, and to help in setting up another Maphilindo meeting. Three days later, President Kennedy was killed.

The Disaster Plays Itself Out

Jones met with the new American President, Lyndon Johnson, a few days later. Indonesia was not foremost on the President’s mind, and nothing was concluded. Almost immediately, however, Johnson submitted to the British approach, supported by the advisers left over from the Kennedy Administration, as well as most of Johnson’s friends among the Southern Democrats, to punish Indonesia for allowing the existence of a strong Communist Party, and for its resistance to England and Malaysia. Johnson refused to sign a required assessment that aid to Indonesia was in the national interest, thus sabotaging the promised U.S. aid, a “major setback in our efforts to build a good-will bridge,” according to Jones. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who was concurrently planning “progressive escalation” of the war in Vietnam, proposed “progressive curtailment” of aid to Indonesia, supposedly to force the U.S. will upon Sukarno.

Johnson did agree to send Robert Kennedy back to Indonesia, to try to settle the Konfrontasi. Drawing on the continuing goodwill from his role in settling the Irian Jaya issue, Kennedy succeeded in setting up a new Maphilindo meeting, including Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. But Kennedy’s report back to Washington fell on deaf ears, and lack of U.S. support contributed to the failure of the new initiative.

Jones continued to work with Sukarno toward solving the Konfrontasi and arranging economic aid. One of the biggest problems he faced came from the fact that the Economic Declaration worked out between Indonesia’s financial leaders and the United States in March 1963, was essentially an IMF prescription for cuts and austerity. One of the earliest “IMF assistance” programs, it was just as disastrous as the IMF looting 35 years later, which brought down the Suharto regime and threw Indonesia into chaos. The March 1963 program provided an IMF loan, but the conditions included 400-600% increases in the prices for transportation, postal, electric, and other utilities, along with devaluation of the currency, the rupiah, and imposition of overall austerity. Food prices doubled in 1963. The result was almost universal rage, not only from the PKI base, but from the business sector and the military as well. Easily foreseeable anti-Chinese riots broke out, as responsibility for the price hikes was falsely blamed on the Chinese, who dominated the business and retail sectors. And, of course, anti-U.S. sentiment skyrocketed, feeding the PKI’s identification of the United States as the most dangerous imperialist power.

The outbreak of the Konfrontasi in the Fall ended the Economic Declaration, and the IMF program, but Jones (who does not appear to have acknowledged the destructiveness of

the IMF conditions) had to face mounting anti-U.S. antagonism, in trying to rebuild relations.

The related problem Jones faced, was overt subversion by the British. Jones was convinced that Sukarno was prepared to call off the Konfrontasi if the British would stop intentionally humiliating his country, and allow the development of relations within the Maphilindo framework. However, wrote Jones, "Part of the trouble was that the British and Malaysia had no intention of supplying Sukarno with an easy solution. They felt they had this troublemaking Asian leader on the run."

This is also the view of one of Indonesia's most prominent citizens, the author Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who spent 14 years in prison (without any charges ever being brought against him) under General Suharto's New Order, after 1965. In his introduction to a recent book by Australian Greg Poulgrain on the Konfrontasi,⁷ Pramoedya writes: "G30S [the abbreviation for the Sept. 30, 1965 coup attempt which sparked the bloody reaction] is nothing but the metamorphosis of protracted British opposition to Sukarno's confrontation policy. . . . Until now, generally the suspicion is rather one-sided towards the Americans, the CIA, while, in fact, British intelligence played a substantial role in the G30S conspiracy," beginning with the multiple military and political provocations during the Konfrontasi.

The British, in fact, welcomed the Konfrontasi as the opportunity to destroy Indonesian nationalism once and for all. The British Chief of Staff had already prepared a staff report, at the time of the September 1963 provocation which led to the Konfrontasi, which proposed covert operations to achieve their goal. Lord Louis Mountbatten, who had led London's effort during and after World War II to recolonize Asia, was now Chief of the British Defence Staff, in charge of operations. The British had lost patience with President Kennedy, who had refused British demands to cut off all aid, to undermine Sukarno. Once Kennedy was removed by an assassin's bullet, the British rushed into action. At Kennedy's funeral, the new British Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Hume, met with U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who agreed to take punitive action in Indonesia. In December, Commonwealth Relations Secretary Duncan Sandys met with Rusk to go over the details.⁸ McNamara, preoccupied with preparing a war in Vietnam, was delighted to have the British take the lead in covert operations against Sukarno.

During 1963 and 1964, London reactivated the separatist

7. Greg Poulgrain, *The Genesis of Konfrontasi: Malaya, Brunei, Indonesia, 1945-1965* (Bathurst, U.K.: Crawford House, 1998), Foreword by Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

8. David Easter, "British and Malaysia Covert Support for Rebel Movements in Indonesia during the Confrontation, 1963-66," in Ed Richard and J. Aldrich, *The Clandestine Cold War in Asia, 1945-65*, Western Intelligence Propaganda and Special Operations (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000).

movements it had sponsored in 1957-58. The most successful British front was in the Celebes, but they also supplied weapons and support to rebels in Kalimantan, Sumatra, and elsewhere. However, toward the end of 1964, and especially after the Harold Wilson government came in, in October, the British made a shift in tactics, reflecting the lesson of their failure in 1957-58. The operative British policy document of January 1965 noted that, "in the long term, effective support for dissident movements in Indonesia may be countproductive in that it might impair the capacity of the Army to resist the PKI." Britain should, therefore, "make it clear to the Indonesian Army that any support for dissidents is no more than a tactical response to 'confrontation.'"⁹

Beginning in August 1964, the British established secret contacts with the man in charge of the military side of Indonesia's Konfrontasi, General Suharto, who deployed his intelligence chief, Col. Ali Murtopo, to meet with British and Malaysian leaders in Malaysia.¹⁰ The details of those contacts have never been revealed. Any competent analysis of the 1965-66 mass slaughter must examine the timing and content of those meetings in relation to the simultaneous British determination to cultivate Indonesian military opposition to Sukarno and the PKI.

A few words about the Army leadership and the PKI are necessary. Sukarno used the acronym NASAKOM to describe his approach to nationalist cooperation in governing Indonesia—nationalism (NAS), religion or *agama* (A), and communism (KOM). Sukarno had always tried to balance the three primary social forces in Indonesia: the revolutionary Army; the popular, mass-based Islamic organizations; and the PKI. When the 1957-58 subversion threatened to dismember the nation, Sukarno declared martial law and strengthened his Guided Democracy, bringing the PKI into his coalition government. Following the successful battle over Irian Jaya, in 1962, Sukarno ended martial law, over the opposition of the military, and shifted the Army leadership. Long-standing Army chief Nasution, who had served the nation admirably while also occasionally clashing with Sukarno, was "kicked upstairs" to Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, and Gen. Ahmad Yani took over the Army. Nearly all the military leaders were anti-communist to some extent, in the sense that they wanted to at least prevent a PKI rise to power. But Yani and his circle were essentially loyal to Sukarno himself, and were more willing to tolerate the strength of the PKI, as long as the government remained within Sukarno's general control. There was not a clear, factional breakdown between Yani and Nasution, and many of Nasution's closest allies retained their positions when Yani took command, but Yani replaced several regional commanders with people in his own circle, who

9. Ibid.

10. Ulf Sundhausen, *The Road to Power: Indonesian Military Politics, 1945-67* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982).

were also strong supporters of Sukarno.

Tensions within the military increased during 1964. At the same time, the PKI was strengthened, due both to its leading role in supporting Sukarno's Konfrontasi, and because of a militant PKI organizing campaign in the countryside, based on the enforcement of Sukarno's land reform policies. As a result, in December 1964, both Yani and his critics agreed that a direct meeting of the emerging military factions was necessary to prevent a breakdown in the high command. A secret meeting was held on Jan. 13, 1965, between six members of Yani's group from Army headquarters, and five generals, including General Suharto, who held grievances against Yani in regard to the role of Sukarno and the PKI. The problems were not resolved.¹¹ It is most pertinent to note that four of the six generals representing Yani at this meeting were killed, along with Yani himself, in the Sept. 30, 1965 aborted military coup, while three of the five critics of Yani and Sukarno became leaders in Suharto's deployment to "crush the coup."¹² These facts, and many others, dramatically challenge the credibility of the "official" analysis of the aborted coup of Sept. 30, 1965 as a PKI-led operation.

Since the generals targeted for kidnapping and assassination were all part of the Yani group (with the exception of Nasution), and were among the strongest supporters of President Sukarno and the President's policy of accommodating the PKI, it is beyond credibility that the military coup attempt was masterminded by the PKI, although PKI leader Aidit had clearly had some association with the coup group. As the writer Pramoedya said: "That the G30S kidnapped generals who were faithful to Sukarno indicates that the wishes of Sir Andrew Gilchrist (then British Ambassador to Indonesia) were carried out."¹³ Pramoedya quotes a telegram which Gilchrist sent to London in 1965, which said: "I have never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change."

The claim that the kidnapping and brutal murder of the six generals was an attempted "PKI coup," later became the justification for the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of supposed communists. Therefore, the question must be asked, how was this patently false and simplistic claim "sold" as legitimate? As in all such strategic matters in a time of great global crisis, the answer cannot be found within Indonesia alone, but in the policies emanating from the centers of power internationally. As is easily demonstrated, the "PKI coup" story was ready-made in London and Washington, and filled the London-controlled world press almost before the event took place!

Most of the accounts of the 1965-66 aborted coup and

11. Harold A. Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988).

12. Peter Dale Scott, "The U.S. and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-1967," *Public Affairs*, 58, Summer 1985.

13. Poulgrain, *op. cit.*

subsequent slaughter which have at least challenged the official line, have painted the United States as the controlling hand behind the Suharto-led forces who crushed the coup and ran the operation to wipe out the PKI and Sukarno's base of support. Some, such as Peter Dale Scott, have argued that the Army faction that carried out the Sept. 30 coup attempt were actually "set up" by the United States and its assets within Indonesia, in order to wipe out the Yani faction, so that the more virulent anti-communists, centered around General Suharto, could take over, blaming the coup on the PKI, and even on Sukarno himself. Not only do these accounts leave out the crucial British role in these events, but they ignore the most important strategic evidence: that the governing policy faction in the United States, which opposed British colonial policy in the area — namely, President Kennedy and Ambassador Jones — had to be eliminated *in order to drag the United States into submission to British policy.*

To follow this trail, we must examine the process whereby Howard Jones was replaced as Ambassador by Marshall Green, who arrived in Indonesia in July 1965, a few months before the Sept. 30 coup attempt. In his memoirs, Green paints himself as the exact opposite of Jones in regard to statecraft, and, perhaps unintentionally, also exposes his virtually satanic world view. While Jones immersed himself in Indonesian history and culture, seeking what was best in that culture as a basis for collaboration, Green took no interest in the nation or its culture, concerned only with imposing what we now know as the "Kissingerian" view of America's supposed narrow self-interest — a euphemism for U.S. support for British geopolitical interests. One example: Jones, after careful study, and hours of intensive conversation with Sukarno and other Indonesians, noted: "The Indonesian believes deeply in God. His occult trappings are carried along with him as baggage, which he thinks helps him communicate with the Infinite."

Green, while making no attempt to understand Indonesia's religious beliefs, embraced the occult "baggage"! Green reports: "My experiences in Indonesia left me somewhat shaken in my disbelief in the occult." He describes how the new U.S. Embassy in Jakarta had been haunted by certain ghosts, until a "Javanese exorcism ritual, that involved several of us on the Embassy staff, preceded by chanting officiants carrying incense sticks, parading through the new building." He claims the exorcism worked (although Green, clearly a ghoul, continued haunting the place for years to come).¹⁴

Politically, Green's role in sabotaging President Kennedy's policy in Indonesia began long before his appointment as Ambassador in May 1965. He had worked closely with John Foster Dulles on East Asia policy since the 1950s, playing a hand in a coup in South Korea, and in America's belligerent China policy. Immediately after Kennedy's assassination,

14. Marshall Green, *Indonesia: Crisis and Transformation, 1965-1968* (Washington, D.C.: Compass Press, 1990).

Green was brought into LBJ's State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Far East, working closely with Cold Warriors Dean Rusk and the Bundy brothers, William and McGeorge. He soon took a leading role in opposing Ambassador Jones directly on Indonesia policy. Green writes that he and Jones were of different "schools," where Jones wanted to improve relations with Sukarno, and Green wanted to get rid of him.

Jones identifies the turning point as July 1964, when, "just as the improving internal situation (in Indonesia) seemed to justify undramatic albeit hopeful expectations that U.S.-Indonesian tensions would be eased, the boom was lowered." Robert Kennedy's trip had brought about new hope for a peaceful end to the Konfrontasi, and Jones had strongly appealed to President Johnson to remain neutral in regard to Malaysia. Then, in July 1964, without any pre-consultation with Ambassador Jones, President Johnson went over to the British side, signing a joint communiqué with the Malaysian Tunku, pledging U.S. military aid to Malaysia to fight Indonesia. In the Tunku's press conference in Washington, Sukarno was compared to Hitler, and Indonesia described as a greater threat to Malaysia than colonialism.

A few weeks later, in his annual Aug. 17 Independence Day speech, President Sukarno announced the "*vivere pericoloso*," the "Year of Living Dangerously," declaring Indonesia

to be dedicated to the cause of revolutionary resistance to colonialism. He defined an axis of anti-imperialist nationalist defense, passing through Beijing, Panmunjong, Hanoi, Phnom Penh, and Jakarta. "I have to address a few words to the government of the United States," he said. ". . . On the part of Indonesia, the desire to be friends with the U.S. is already very clear." He explained that he had forgiven the subversion of 1957-58, the insults and efforts to impose conditions contrary to Indonesian sovereignty, but, "with a heavy heart, I have to state that the Johnson-Tunku Joint Statement is really too much. It really exceeds all bounds."

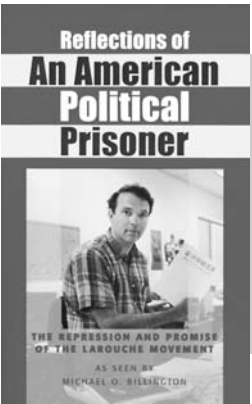
Sukarno strengthened relations with China. A plan to create an armed militia within Indonesia, a "fifth force," was put forward by Sukarno for discussion, provoking strong reactions in the military. Rumors that China was already shipping small arms to the country to equip the fifth force, and especially the PKI cadre, although they were subsequently proven to be false, further aggravated the situation.

Jones continued his efforts to settle the Konfrontasi, but got no response from the British. In January 1965, he asked President Johnson to meet with Sukarno, a proposal which soon-to-be Ambassador Green proudly admitted to have sabotaged. Johnson did send Ellsworth Bunker to Indonesia in April 1965—a month after the war was launched in Vietnam—and Bunker, after extensive meetings with the Indonesian leadership, including President Sukarno, totally backed Ambassador Jones's policy to continue working with Sukarno. However, the combination of the "Rolling Thunder" bombing campaign in Vietnam, and the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in April 1965, "sent tidal waves that rocked the Indonesian boat," as Jones put it.

In July, Green arrived in Jakarta to replace Jones as Ambassador. Like Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge in Vietnam, who considered his mission to be the overthrow of President Diem and the implementation of a military dictatorship under U.S. control, Green's explicit intention was the elimination of the host nation's President, by whatever means necessary. "To leave without having a real showdown with Sukarno," wrote Green, "would, in my opinion, be a mistake." A British pro-consul couldn't have said it more clearly. In fact, Green gushed with pride in his memoirs: "My closest colleague was the British Ambassador, Sir Andrew Gilchrist (and later, his successor Horace Phillip), who lived across the street from our residence."

Jones, after years of intimate collaboration (and conflict) with President Sukarno, described him as "a human being of great warmth and magnetism, a leader of vision who . . . stuck by his precepts of unity in which he had always believed, even though this meant pulling the pillars of his temple down upon his head." Jones believed Sukarno had a tragic flaw, that he "lost himself in self-glorification, forgetting that the truly great are humble, and in so doing, betrayed his people."

Whatever the truth of this judgment, compare it to that of Green, who knew nothing of importance regarding either



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Indonesia or Sukarno, but proclaimed Sukarno to be “a vain-glorious man—a dangerous man, to be sure, but not a very serious man,” who merely wanted to “get into the world spotlight,” and who had “a striking resemblance to Mussolini.” Here we see clearly the degeneration in American statecraft in 1964-65.

Green asserted that three of the four branches of the Indonesian Armed Forces were “penetrated” by the communists. “The Army,” he wrote, “was the only remaining effective counterforce against communism; *however, the Army was loyal to the President*” (emphasis added). Reversing this, to his mind, was the neo-colonial task he was required to carry out, in league with the British, who were already on the job.

The PKI and the Slaughter

Without trying to analyze the PKI, a few points are necessary to understand the enormity of the subsequent mass slaughter. The PKI was taken over in 1951 by four young men, headed by D.N. Aidit, who remained together as the collective leadership throughout the next 14 years of the PKI’s existence. All four had been part of the nationalist youth movement during the 1945-49 independence war with the British and Dutch, joining the Communist Party in the process. From the beginning of their period of leadership, the four never deviated from a policy of achieving political power through peaceful means. Their dedication to Sukarno grew stronger over the 1950s, as the President demonstrated that he valued the revolutionary zeal of the communist organizers, while he was always cautious to keep this zeal bounded by the requirements of the general welfare of the population.

The PKI developed into the largest Communist Party outside of China and the Soviet Union. Aidit remained neutral in the Sino-Soviet split until late 1963, and, rather than adopting a “line” from either Moscow or Beijing, developed his own view of the social forces active within Indonesia. Unlike the theories advocating either “armed struggle” (associated with Beijing) or the doctrinaire “popular front” (from Moscow), Aidit rejected class distinctions altogether, to pose a division of society between those who are “pro-people” and those who are “anti-people.” While focussed on organizing workers and peasants into mass organizations, his general policy was to work with all those who were “fighting for the establishment of a national and democratic economy.” The “pro-people aspect,” said Aidit, “is embodied in the progressive attitude and policy of President Sukarno.”¹⁵ The PKI provided much of the organizational muscle for Sukarno’s campaigns against the Dutch over Irian Jaya, against the Anglo-American-backed rebellions of 1957-58, for land reform across the country, and in the Konfrontasi with the British. The PKI won 16% of the vote in 1956, and was expected to have done even better, had there been subsequent elections. The PKI-initiated

labor unions, peasant organizations, women’s organizations, and youth groups, all had several million active members.

There had always been antagonism between the military, the Islamic organizations, and the PKI, and Sukarno carefully balanced their influence. The PKI relations with the Muslims became more acrimonious in 1964, when the PKI expanded their campaign to implement the official land reform policies of the Sukarno government. Faced with stalling and diversion from landlords, often directly or indirectly tied to the Islamic institutions in the countryside, the PKI launched “unilateral actions” to seize the lands designated to be distributed to landless peasants. Sukarno backed this, saying, “I am impatient. I can no longer wait. Perhaps the farmers will also box the ears of those officials who are moving too slowly.”¹⁶ However, too many ears were getting boxed on both sides, and the campaign was scaled back in 1965, leaving behind extreme hostility against the PKI among certain Islamic layers, hostility which would be tapped by the Army under Suharto to facilitate the slaughter.

As reported above, the Army officers who conducted the kidnapping and murder of General Yani and his allies in the Army leadership all came from Army units associated with General Suharto, and several were very close to him personally. Suharto, although second in command to Yani, was inexplicably *not* included on the list for kidnapping, and the rebel forces who occupied the central square in Jakarta did *not* block the side facing the Special Forces offices under Suharto’s command. Suharto moved quickly and easily to crush the coup. Chief of Staff General Nasution, although not a member of the Yani group, was targeted for kidnapping by the coup plotters, but managed to escape. However, Suharto, upon seizing control of the Army during the coup attempt, never relinquished power to his superior, Nasution.

The actual role of the PKI in the coup is still not entirely clear. Aidit had had some contact with the conspirators, and was at the coup headquarters, an Air Force base, on the day following the kidnappings, as was President Sukarno, while the outcome of the coup was still uncertain. Both Aidit and Sukarno left (separately) before the air base was taken over by General Suharto’s forces. The PKI membership base was never mobilized or activated to support the coup in any way, and, except for a few localized pockets of resistance, was never even mobilized to defend itself against the slaughter that followed.

What *is* clear, however, is that the British, the Australians, and the U.S. Embassy under Ambassador Green, immediately declared the attempted military coup to be a *communist plot*, and promoted the massacre. Green wired Washington on Oct. 5: “Muslim groups and others except communists and their stooges are lined up behind army. . . . Army now has opportunity to move against PKI if it acts quickly. . . . In short, it’s

15. Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974).

16. J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1972).

now or never. Much remains in doubt, but it seems almost certain that agony of ridding Indonesia of effects of Sukarno . . . has begun. . . . *Spread the story of PKI's guilt, treachery and brutality—This priority effort is perhaps most needed*¹⁷ (emphasis added).

Australian Ambassador Shann echoed this sentiment: “Now or never. . . ; if Sukarno and his greasy civilian cohorts get back into the saddle it will be a change for the worse. . . . We are dealing with such an odd, devious, contradictory mess like the Indonesian mind.”

The British-American-Commonwealth leadership knew of the killing from the beginning. Under the direction of the military, much of the slaughter was carried out by enraged Muslim youth, armed and turned loose against any and all supporters of the Sukarno/PKI programs.

Ambassador Green's cables as early as Oct. 20 referred to hundreds of summary executions, but warned that the PKI was “capable of recovering quickly if . . . Army attacks were stopped.” He praised the Army for “working hard at destroying PKI and I, for one, have increasing respect for its determination and organization in carrying out this crucial assignment.” A cable from the American consul in Medan, in Northeast Sumatra, is most revealing: “Two officers of Pemuda Pantjasila [a Muslim youth group] told consulate officers that their organization intends to kill every PKI member they can catch . . . , much indiscriminate killing is taking place. . . . Attitude Pemuda Pantjasila leaders can only be described as bloodthirsty. . . . Something like a real reign of terror against PKI is taking place. The terror is not (repeat) not discriminating very carefully between PKI leaders and ordinary PKI members with no ideological bond to the party.” He added that there was “no meaningful resistance.”

Approximately one-half million Indonesians were murdered in cold blood over the next several months.

Green concluded in his memoirs that “the bloodbath . . . can be attributed to the fact that communism, with its atheism and talk of class warfare, was abhorrent to the way of life of rural Indonesians, especially in Java and Bali.” Ambassador Jones concluded otherwise: “I have witnessed what occurs when reason is replaced by fear and suspicion, when decisions are based on prejudice, rumor and propaganda.”¹⁸

It is coherent with Green's fond embrace of the genocidal “solution” to the problem (as he perceived it), that he went on to become one of the world's leading promoters of population control, setting up population control units in the State Department and the National Security Council, and heading the U.S. delegation to the UN Population Commission.

One final comparison of Jones and Green situates the analysis in the broader context of America's failure in the post-World War II era. Jones concludes his memoirs with a quote

17. This and the following quotes are all from David Jenkins, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 12, 1999.

18. Jones, op. cit.

from Franklin Roosevelt, written on April 11, 1945, intended for the fireside chat which was cancelled due to FDR's untimely death the following day: “Today we are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships—the ability of all people, of all lands, to live together and work together in the same world, at peace.”

Green, on the other hand, after helping to drive the United States into a neo-colonial “Thirty Years' War” in Asia, invited Anglophile geopolitician William Bundy to write the foreword to his memoirs, in which Bundy's praise of Green included the following incredible statement: “History is likely to regard the period from 1946 to about 1970 as the golden age of the American Foreign Service.”

Only one person of stature in American politics questioned U.S. support for the mass killing in Indonesia. Robert Kennedy, in 1966, said: “We have spoken out against inhuman slaughter perpetrated by the Nazis and the Communists. But will we speak out also against the inhuman slaughter in Indonesia, where over 100,000 alleged Communists have not been perpetrators, but victims?”¹⁹

19. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978).

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