

# *Southeast Asian Troubles Spread*

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American and British troops are now engaged in military combat in the jungles of Southeast Asia. While to the United States the Viet Nam war is the more crucial of the conflicts, the real future of stability in Southeast Asia rests in the nation whose troops now face the British in Malaya and Borneo—the nation of Indonesia.

This former Dutch colony is by population the fifth largest country in the world. More than 100 million people inhabit the island, which stretches from Sumatra on the West to New Guinea on the East. Its natural resources are among the most fruitful anywhere in the world. And its politics and programs are for Americans mistaken, dangerous, and utterly incomprehensible.

## **Boss Of Indonesia**

It has been lead since independence almost 20 years ago by Achmed Sukarno, a nationalist leader for 35 years, and, after the collapse of Western-style parliamentary democracy in 1959, the Boss of Indonesia. He is president for life, commander of the armed forces, and "great leader of the Revolution."

Sukarno's temperment is Indonesia's best known product. He is boastful, arrogant, demagogic—and has the genuine support for virtually all elements of Indonesian society. He has become perhaps the first imperialist of the Afro-Asian world, or as he has called it, the "New Emerging Forces." He bluffed the Dutch into ceding West New Guinea to his nation, and his latest foray against the new nation of Malaysia is a challenge both to the military establishment of the Atlantic Alliance and to the United Nations.

## **'NEO-COLONIALIST PLOT'**

It is Sukarno's contention—which is echoed through the communications media and political leadership, both of which he controls—that Malaysia is a "neo-colonialist plot" to perpetuate British rule in Southeast Asia, politically and economically.

He views its Prime Minister, Tunku Abduhl Rahman, as a "stooge" of the British. He repudiated the U.N.-conducted survey in the two North Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak which concluded that the people did want unity with Malaya and Singapore.

## **Crush Malaysia**

Since September, 1963, when Malaysia became independent, Indonesia has been conducting an all-out, all-fronts campaign to "Crush Malaysia." The British embassy in Jakarta was sacked and burned shortly after Malaysian independence, with the tacit consent of Sukarno himself. Nationalist and Communist youth and labor groups, all loyal to the Indonesian government, rioted in large cities and seized British-run industries.

To understand this apparently senseless campaign against a stable, prosperous Malaysia, one must understand some of Indonesia's own history. It fought a savage, brutal war to rid itself of Dutch colonialism; a colonialism unmarked by any great concern for the educational or economic improvement of the Indonesians. To Indonesian nationalists, a colonial power is evil; and any truck with colonialism is indefensible.

## **British-Malaysian Relations**

Thus to an Indonesia, the friendly relations between Malaysia and Britain, the use of British troops as the bulwark of the Malaysia military, and British-Malaysian economic agreements all smack of a suspicious collusion, inevitably against the interests of the people of the area.

There is however, another issue, as yet unclear as it is explosive. And that is the extent of Sukarno's own territorial ambitions in Southeast Asia.

It has long been recognized that Sukarno's intensely nationalistic posturings have as an ultimate goal some form of unity among all the Malay peoples, stretching

from the Philippines to Sumatra and up to the Malay peninsula. Sukarno regards Indonesia as the Third Force in the world—"neither Jefferson nor Marx" is a favorite slogan of his.

## **Nation Building**

Additionally, Indonesia's economic development has been consistently subjugated to what is called "nation-building"—an attempt to ignite the patriotic fervor of Indonesia's diverse people that many suspect explains the repeated ventures into international trouble-making in which Sukarno seems to delight.

Sukarno has said repeatedly that he has no territorial interest in the Borneo territories which are now part of Indonesia; but he also said in 1962 that he favored the formation of Malaysia. It is possible that his real goal is effective political control over Sabah and Sarawak as a prelude to offensives throughout the Malay peninsula. Such steps would enable his propaganda apparatus to keep Indonesia's attention on foreign nationalistic matters, and away from the increasingly deteriorating economy of Indonesia.

## **Sukarno's Goal**

Whether aggrandizement is Sukarno's goal or whether he views himself as a genuine guardian of Malay interests is not now clear. What is clear, and what is not understood in too many quarters here, is that Indonesia is a powerhouse in an already complex and confused area. Peking has an unabashed aim of hegemony over Southeast Asia. British vital interests are scattered throughout the area.

If Sukarno continues flexing Soviet-supplied military might and embarks on a long-term power thrust in Asia, the troubles of the West now so evident in Viet Nam and Malaysia may just be beginning.