

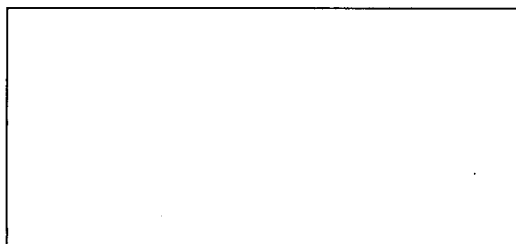
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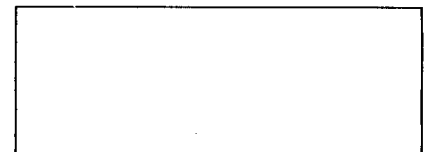


# Research Study

## *INDONESIA—1965* *The Coup That Backfired*



December 1968



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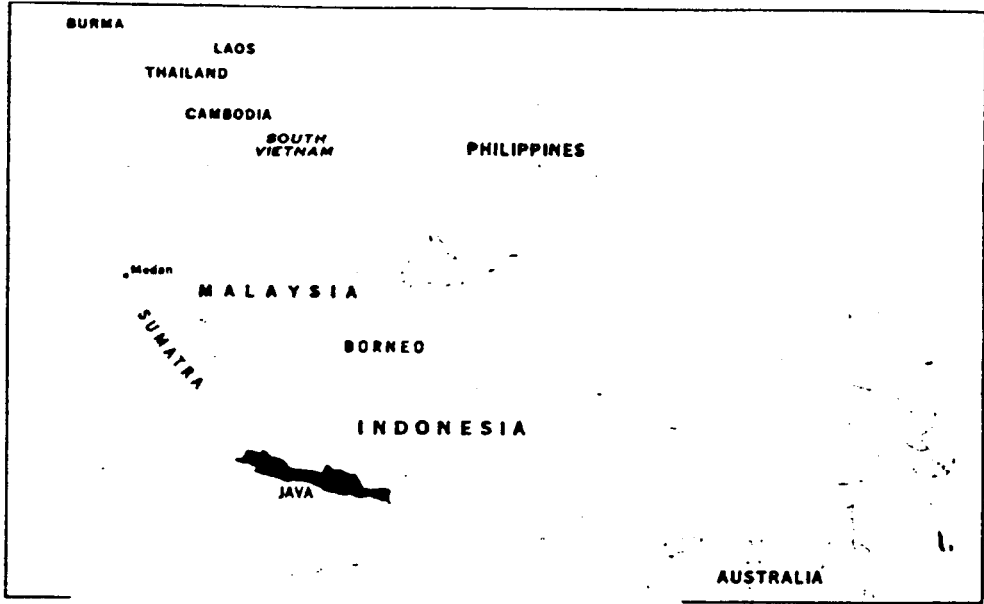
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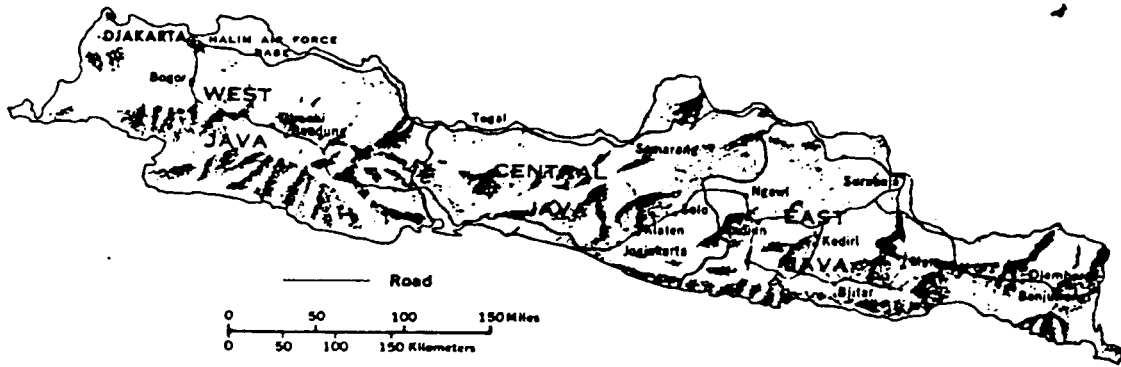
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INDONESIA — 1965  
The Coup That Backfired

December 1968



# JAVA





## Foreword

What is commonly referred to as the Indonesian coup is more properly called "The 30 September Movement," the name the conspirators themselves gave their movement. In this paper, the term "Indonesian coup" is used interchangeably with "The 30 September Movement," mainly for the sake of variety. It is technically correct to refer to the events in Indonesia as a "coup" in the literal sense of the word, meaning "a sudden, forceful stroke in politics." To the extent that the word has been accepted in common usage to mean "the sudden and forcible overthrow of the government," however, it may be misleading. For it now seems clear that the Indonesian coup was not a move to overthrow Sukarno and/or the established government of Indonesia. Essentially, it was a purge of the Army leadership, which was intended to bring about certain changes in the composition of the cabinet. In this sense, it is more correct to refer to the 30 September Movement as a purge, rather than a coup.

A word should also be said about the organization of the paper. It is divided into four main sections. The first one treats the actual events of the coup on 1 October; the second one traces the movements of the key figures in the coup up to the time of their capture or, in the case of Sukarno, up to March 1966, when he lost de facto control of the government to Gen. Suharto, who assumed full responsibility for restoring law and order; the third one discusses the planning for the coup that was done in the one month of September 1965; and the last one, perhaps the most important one, reviews the events leading up to the coup, including the decision to stage the coup.

This organization was chosen for several reasons. First of all, there was the consideration of the evidence itself. For the most part, the matters that are discussed in the first two sections are matters of established fact; in other words, they are part of the record against which we must examine the words and testimony of the various

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individuals who were involved in the coup. Our knowledge of the conspiracy behind the events, which is the subject of the third section of the paper, comes entirely from the interrogation of the people involved in the conspiracy. Naturally, this kind of evidence must be considered in a slightly different light than the evidence that is presented in the first two sections. The reader is in a better position to make his own judgment, based on the evidence, if he has a clear understanding of the kind of evidence that is involved.

The matters that are discussed in the fourth section are much more matters of judgment. The coup can only be understood, of course, against the background of Indonesian politics in 1965. Many of the events that form that background are open to varying interpretation, however. Again, the reader is in a better position to evaluate those events if he can view them from the vantage point of hindsight, as it were, with the events of the coup clearly drawn in his mind. The one difficulty with the arrangement of the paper, with the events of the coup at the beginning, is the possibility of its creating the false impression that the coup was a distinct occurrence, which can be treated apart from the rest of the Indonesian political scene. Of course, it can not. It should be viewed as the culmination of many events over the years.

There has been a deliberate effort in telling the story of the coup to present the evidence in as straightforward a manner as possible, to let the facts speak for themselves. The purpose of this has been to allow the reader to make his own conclusions as he goes along. A final section at the end of the paper summarizes the conclusions of the author.

All the events that are discussed in the paper, including the events of the coup itself and the major events leading up to the coup, are presented in chronological order in the Chronology of Events. Also included in the Appendix is a brief discussion of the validity of the Army interrogation reports as evidence.

INDONESIA - 1965  
The Coup that Backfired

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## Preface

On 14 September 1965 Indonesian Army Intelligence, of which General Parman was the chief, presented a detailed report on the internal security situation to the Army Chief of Staff, General Yani. The report summarized all information known about the activities of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as of that date. In particular, it mentioned a report of a plan to assassinate the army's top leadership, giving a list of the Army generals who were to be killed. In conclusion, it stated the Army Intelligence judgment that "something was going to happen."

At first, General Parman had been reluctant to accept the judgment of his staff. He was more conservative on the question; in the end, however, he agreed to take the case to General Yani. Yani, in turn, presented the report to President Sukarno, laying particular stress on the "assassination list," which included the names of three generals--Suharto, Mursjid, and Sukendro--in addition to the seven generals who were later to be the target of the Indonesian coup of 30 September.

The report mentioned September 18 as the date of the planned attack, and, on that evening, the army took special security precautions; but nothing happened. After that, Yani apparently did not take the report seriously, and no special precautions were observed.

Late in September the former military attache in Peking, Brig. Gen. Sudono, told Maj. Gen. M.T. Harjono, a subsequent victim of the coup, that he had learned that a number of Army generals would be abducted within a few days. Although General Harjono did not believe the information, he decided to call a staff meeting at Army headquarters on 30 September since General Sudono was so obviously in earnest. Apparently, PKI intelligence learned about this meeting but drew the wrong conclusions as to the subject under such high-level discussion. At the meeting, General Sudono reportedly became "the butt of laughter" of everyone present.

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Yet, within a matter of hours of the staff meeting at Army headquarters, exactly what General Sudono said he had heard would happen "within a few days" happened that very night. That the Army was totally unprepared for an attack from its political enemies was the most obvious feature of the Indonesian coup. In one night alone, the army was to suffer the staggering loss of six of its most senior generals. Never before, in any of the great wars, have six generals been lost in a single night.

## The Coup

At approximately 0400 hours on the morning of 1 October 1965 the leaders of the 30 September Movement launched their surprise attack on the Army leadership in the form of simultaneous raids on the homes of seven generals. In a matter of hours, the military action involved in the coup was over; besides the raids, it involved only the securing of a few vital objectives--the Presidential Palace in Djakarta, the radio station of Radio Indonesia, the central telecommunications building, and an airbase just outside Djakarta. These purely military aspects of the coup are by now fairly clear. Thus, in beginning with a reconstruction of the military operation of the coup itself, we can establish certain necessary facts about the coup before discussing what we do and do not know for sure about the planning of the coup.

### The Kidnapping of the Generals

The staging ground for the attack was an abandoned rubber plantation that was within the confines of Lubang Buaja, a small village or hamlet on the outskirts of Halim Air Force Base, about seven miles from the Presidential Palace in Djakarta. Reached by another road than the main approach to the airbase, Lubang Buaja was a remote area that could easily be sealed off for purposes of security.\*

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\*In the tightly structured organization of local government in Indonesia, Lubang Buaja is properly referred to as a Kompung or "hamlet," which is smaller than a "village" or "town" or "city." It is the lowest level of local government in Indonesia. Usually, a Kompung is set apart by a fence that encloses the whole area of the Kompung. In the case of Lubang Buaja, the only road into the Kompung runs parallel to the road into Halim Air Force Base from the main Bogor-Djakarta Highway. A security guard on this road can guarantee the security of the whole area. (See map of "Djakarta and Vicinity.") The literal meaning of the name "Lubang Buaja" is "Crocodile's Hole," which suggests that the area was once a swamp land.



Early on the morning of 1 October, at about 0400 hours while it was still dark, some 10-15 trucks and buses left Lubang Buaja and began a 30-minute drive into Djakarta. The assortment of vehicles--all of which belonged to the Air Force--carried 4 fully-armed companies of troops: one company from the special Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard that guarded President Sukarno, one company from the 454th battalion of Central Java, one company from the 530th battalion of East Java, and one company of the 1st Infantry Brigade of the 5th Territorial Command. In view of the persistent belief that some civilians, namely Communist party members and sympathizers, participated in the kidnapping raids on the generals' homes, it should be emphasized that only regular military officers and men wearing army uniforms, were actually involved. The troops were under the command of Marine Lt. Dul Arief, a direct subordinate of Col. Untung, one of the three battalion Commanders of the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard and the chosen leader for the coup.

As it neared the residential area in which the top Army leaders lived, the caravan of trucks broke up into seven separate raiding parties destined for seven different targets, the homes of seven of the Army's senior generals.\* A force of one fully-armed platoon was assigned to handle each of the following five generals: General Suprpto, General Harjono, General Parman, General Pandjaitan, and General Sutojo. Special forces of one fully-armed company each were assigned to the homes of Minister/Coordinator of Defense Nasution and Army Minister/Commander Yani, respectively. Contrary to widespread belief, the

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\*All of the generals except Gen. Pandjaitan lived in an elite residential section of Djakarta called Menteng. Before the caravan of trucks reached this section of town, one or two of the trucks must have turned off in the direction of Kebajoran, where Gen. Pandjaitan lived. As they approached the Menteng area, the others broke up into six separate raiding parties destined for the homes of the six other Army generals.

coup leaders had not included General Suharto, a former commander of the Central Java Territorial Division (the Diponegoro Division) and the then chief of the army's strategic reserve force (KOSTRAD), with headquarters in Djakarta, in the list of generals to be eliminated as the top leadership of the army. The error of not seizing Suharto, known as a strong and capable officer but obviously underestimated and not foreseen to be the man who would quickly and effectively take command of the situation in the crisis hours of the coup was certainly a major error of the coup planners. It was an error in the planning of the coup, not in its execution. Suharto did not escape from would-be kidnappers, as did Nasution. No effort was ever made to capture him.

At the various target homes, the attacking parties followed the same general tactics. One-third of the force stood guard on the streets around the house, one-third surrounded the house itself, and one-third entered the house to bring out the victim. A member of the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard told each general that he was wanted by Sukarno at the Palace immediately. It is clear from the reports of the kidnapping of Harjono and Pandjaitan, that they, at least, suspected that they were being arrested on orders of the Palace. Harjono even went so far as to cry out that he was about to be murdered. When he resisted further, he was, in fact, the first general shot that morning. A little later, General Pandjaitan was also shot and killed resisting capture. Generals Suprpto, Satojo, and Parman, quickly overpowered, blindfolded, with their hands tied behind their backs, were forcibly pushed into the waiting trucks and rushed back to Lubang Buaja.\*

Meanwhile, the larger raiding parties were handling what was expected to be a more difficult assignment --the capture of Generals Yani and Nasution--whose homes

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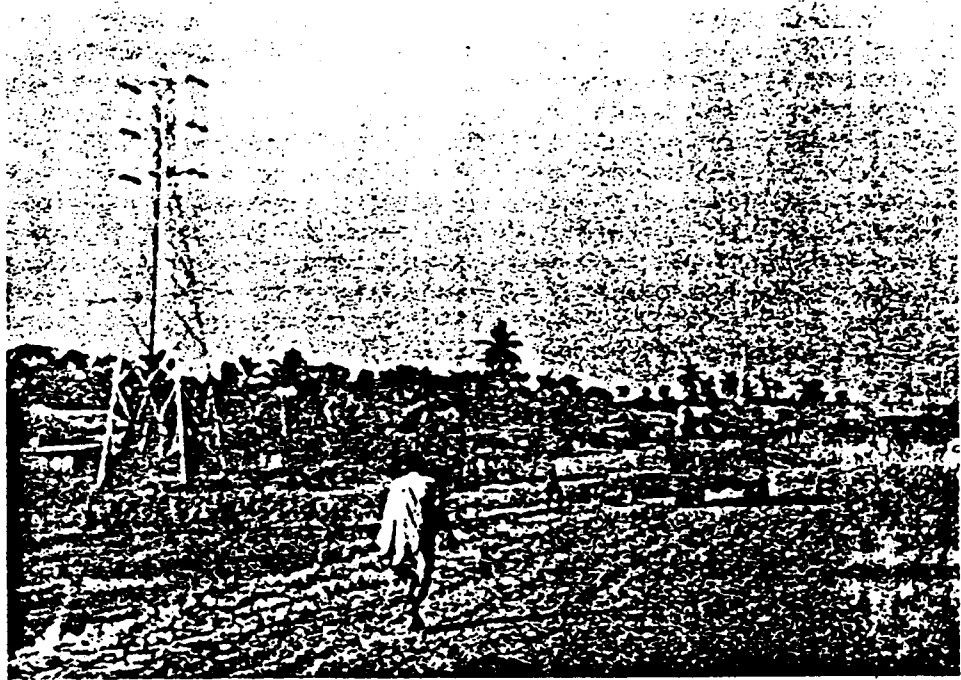
\*For a more detailed account of the actual capture of the generals in their homes, see Indonesian Upheaval by John Hughes, Davis McKay Company, Inc., 1967, pp. 30-42.

were normally more heavily guarded. At Yani's house, the attacking troops managed to engage the guards in conversation, telling them that they had an urgent message for Yani from the President. Seeing their Tjakrabirawa uniforms, the guards apparently suspected nothing until the invading group was near enough to overpower and disarm them. Yani himself does not seem to have doubted the story that Sukarno wanted to see him at once. He merely asked for time to bathe and dress. However, when he was told that there was not time for that, he apparently became angry and struck one of the men. Thereupon, they opened fire on him. Like the others, his body was carried out of the house, put aboard a truck, and taken back to Lubang Buaja.

The attack on General Nasution's house was on the largest scale of all, altogether, about one hundred men were involved. That General Nasution--who was in the house at the time--could have escaped from such an ambush, with 60-70 soldiers surrounding his home and another 20-30 searching the house, seems almost unbelievable. It was one of those twists of fate that all but re-shape history. The one and only failure in the execution of the coup, it was to prove nothing less than a major disaster for the coup leaders.

In part, it was due to mistaken identity. Awakened by the commotion outside, the Nasutions had quickly determined that someone was trying to kidnap General Nasution. They locked the door to their first-floor bedroom and, while the troops outside were still struggling with the door, Mrs. Nasution quickly led her husband through the next room, down a corridor and out a side entrance near the wall adjoining the residence of the Iraqi Ambassador. In Nasution's own words:

I climbed the wall and from the top of the wall I first saw that my daughter Irma had been shot in the back. I was going to come back to face the soldiers that had done it, but my wife prevented me, imploring me to save myself.



The road from Halim to Djakarta, the route travelled by the raiding parties on their mission to kidnap the generals

*"...they shall not have died in vain."*



General Yani



General Suprpto



General Parman



General Harjono



General Sutojo



General Pandjaitan

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It later was determined that my house was closely surrounded. The person guarding the wall was only a few meters away, but I was protected from his view by a dense growth of vegetation near the wall. At the moment I jumped from the wall I was fired at by the Tjakrabirawa troops who were guarding the side of the house, but...none of their bullets struck me. I heard the men who were shooting say something like, 'Someone escaped at this side. He wasn't hit.'

After jumping from the wall I hid behind a water barrel in the yard of the Iraqi ambassador's house.\* While hiding there I thought to myself, 'Why is the Tjakrabirawa staging this raid and trying to kill me? The Tjakrabirawa is the palace honor guard of the President...Perhaps the President has listened to slander and ordered the Tjakrabirawa troops

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\*In jumping the wall between his house and that of the Iraqi ambassador next door, Nasution broke his ankle. To some degree, his broken ankle was probably responsible for his removal from the scene in the days immediately after the coup. Of course, the tragic death of his daughter as a result of the wounds she received during the raid on Nasution's home on the morning of 1 October was the main thing that preoccupied Nasution for weeks after the coup. The picture of Nasution hobbling around on crutches at the funeral of the slain generals on 5 October and the funeral of his own daughter several days later will probably never be forgotten by most Indonesians.

to shoot me in my own house without a hearing!' I knew that I repeatedly had been slandered in untrue reports received by the President.

I thought of trying to get to the house of Deputy Prime Minister Leimena, which was nearby (across the street from the house where I was hiding). I believed that he would not betray me if I asked for help in contacting the President and asking why the Palace had ordered the Tjakrabirawa troops to shoot me in my own house. I gave up this idea after considering that I would have to go out on Teuku Umar Street to reach Pak Leimena's house. I knew that the street certainly would be controlled by the Tjakrabirawa. I decided to remain hidden and wait for morning and the chance that help would come from my own troops.

...Prior to the 1 October 1965 incident I had not received at my house, in either an official or unofficial capacity, reports or information that an incident of this type would occur...My escape was not due to any foreknowledge I had of the (coup) plans. It was due solely to the assistance and protection of Almighty God and the help of my wife that I escaped abduction and murder.

Inside Nasution's house, confusion reigned. Clutching her bleeding child in her arms, Mrs. Nasution hurried to the telephone to call a doctor. A few moments later, she was not prevented from driving away from the house with her wounded daughter and a servant to the Army Hospital. Meanwhile, the soldiers continued to search the large house. By this time, Nasution's adjutant, Lt. Pierre Tendean, a man of the same general build and appearance as Nasution, though much younger, had had time to put on his chief's uniform-jacket and cap. He went out to the front pavilion to meet the attackers. The detail commander said: "General Nasution?" Tendean



General Nasution



General Nasution and Mrs. Nasution with their daughter Irma (far left), who was fatally wounded during the raid on Nasution's home



replied with a curt "Yes. What is it?" He was immediately overpowered and bundled into a truck, and the convoy set off for Lubang Buaja. It was just 5:00 a.m.

There is one final detail about the kidnapping raids that should be clarified because of the persistent confusion on the point. It concerns the supposed attack on Deputy Prime Minister Leimena's house. When the raiding party arrived at General Nasution's home, the troops first moved to disarm any armed guards (assigned to the homes of certain government officials) on the street. It so happened that Leimena's house, two doors down and across the street from Nasution's home, had a three-man guard in recognition of his status of Second Deputy Prime Minister. One of the guards came down the street and was shot by mistake. His was the only death other than those of the generals and Lt. Tendean to result from the coup action in Djakarta that day. No attempt was made to enter Leimena's house or to trouble him further. The only objective was to prevent the guards at his house from coming to the rescue of Nasution. No doubt, because of the death of the policeman guarding Leimena's house the incident received immediate and perhaps greater attention than some of the other raids on the generals' homes. It was assumed that Leimena had been a major target of the coup. In fact, the targets were the seven army generals; no one else. The killing of Leimena's guard was purely accidental.

#### Suharto Takes Command of the Army

Besides the heroism of Lt. Tendean in posing as General Nasution, thereby helping to save the life of his chief at the loss of his own, and the calm presence of mind of Mrs. Nasution in a crisis situation, it was the quick thinking of another member of the Nasution household that frustrated the coup plans for a fait accompli--the elimination of the top army leadership--

before the army could react to the first staggering blow. Namdan, an aide of Nasution, contacted the Djakarta garrison commander Major General Umar Wirahadikusumah, on the special KOTI communication system, sometime around 0515 hours. General Umar went directly to Nasution's house, arriving there about 0530 hours; shortly thereafter, five tanks he had ordered also arrived. As the vehicles of the raiding party had been seen to set off in the direction of Bogor, General Umar ordered a pursuit by the tanks in that direction. The effort was not successful, however, as the tanks were unable to catch sight of any of the fleeing trucks or buses.

Nasution, still in hiding next door in the yard of the Iraqi Ambassador's house, heard the commotion of the arrival of the men and tanks under General Umar, but uncertain as to who it was, he dared not come out of hiding. Not until about 0630 hours when he saw Col, Hidajat Wirasondjaja, the commander of the headquarters detachment of the Armed Forces Staff, near the wall did he venture to reveal himself to anyone. The colonel, one of Nasution's adjutants, and his brother-in-law accompanied Nasution, concealed on the floor of the car, to a safe place not far from KOSTRAD headquarters.

General Suharto has given a detailed account of how he first learned about the raids that morning and what actions he took as the senior surviving general of the army (except for Nasution, whose whereabouts were still unknown). About 0530 hours, a neighbor of Suharto arrived at the General's home to inform him that shooting had been heard down the street. (Suharto was head of the neighborhood association that was concerned with law and order in the neighborhood; members were responsible for reporting anything unusual that they saw or heard to the head of the association.) Shortly thereafter, Suharto received a message from General Umar that a number of Army generals had been abducted by unknown parties. There was no information of the fate of the generals, and it was incorrectly reported that Deputy Prime Minister Leimena had also been taken.

Suharto did not hesitate. In his own words:

I concluded that the leadership (of the Army) was paralyzed. I knew that without leadership things would become even more confused. I was the senior officer in the Army after the Commander of the Army (Yani) and was ordinarily designated to represent him when he went abroad...I decided without hesitation that I would take over the leadership of the Army until something was learned of the fate of its commander.

As my driver had not yet arrived, I drove a jeep to KOSTRAD headquarters myself, arriving there between 0630 and 0700 hours....Soon General Umar arrived and was able to provide clearer information as to what had happened... He said that he had gone to several of the generals' homes and then to the Palace but was unable to meet with the President. He did see General Supardjo at the Palace, however, which surprised me, since I did not know he was in Djakarta.\*

I told General Umar that I was taking over the leadership of the Army; he agreed. I issued my first order to him, which was that all troops be placed on stand-by but that they not be allowed to go out except on my orders. This was done because we did not know who was friend and foe...and we wanted to avoid shooting until we knew.

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\*As Commander of the 4th Combat Command of KOSTRAD in West Borneo, General Supardjo should have been at his post near Manggaian in West Borneo. Suharto would have known that he was in Djakarta if he had been there for proper reasons--either official or personal. His presence in the capital, unknown to Suharto, was thus immediately suspicious.

## The Show of Force in Djakarta

Simultaneously with the raids on the homes of the generals, the coup forces had fanned out in the center of Djakarta, seizing control of the most important installations, above all the Palace and the radio station.\* The troops used in this phase of the coup were those of the 454th Battalion and the 530th Battalion minus the one company from each that had been sent on the raiding missions. The two battalions mustered about 1,000 men each. As in the case of the army units assigned to kidnap the generals, these troops were dressed in regular army uniform and armed. There were no civilians, armed or unarmed, among them, as far as we know.

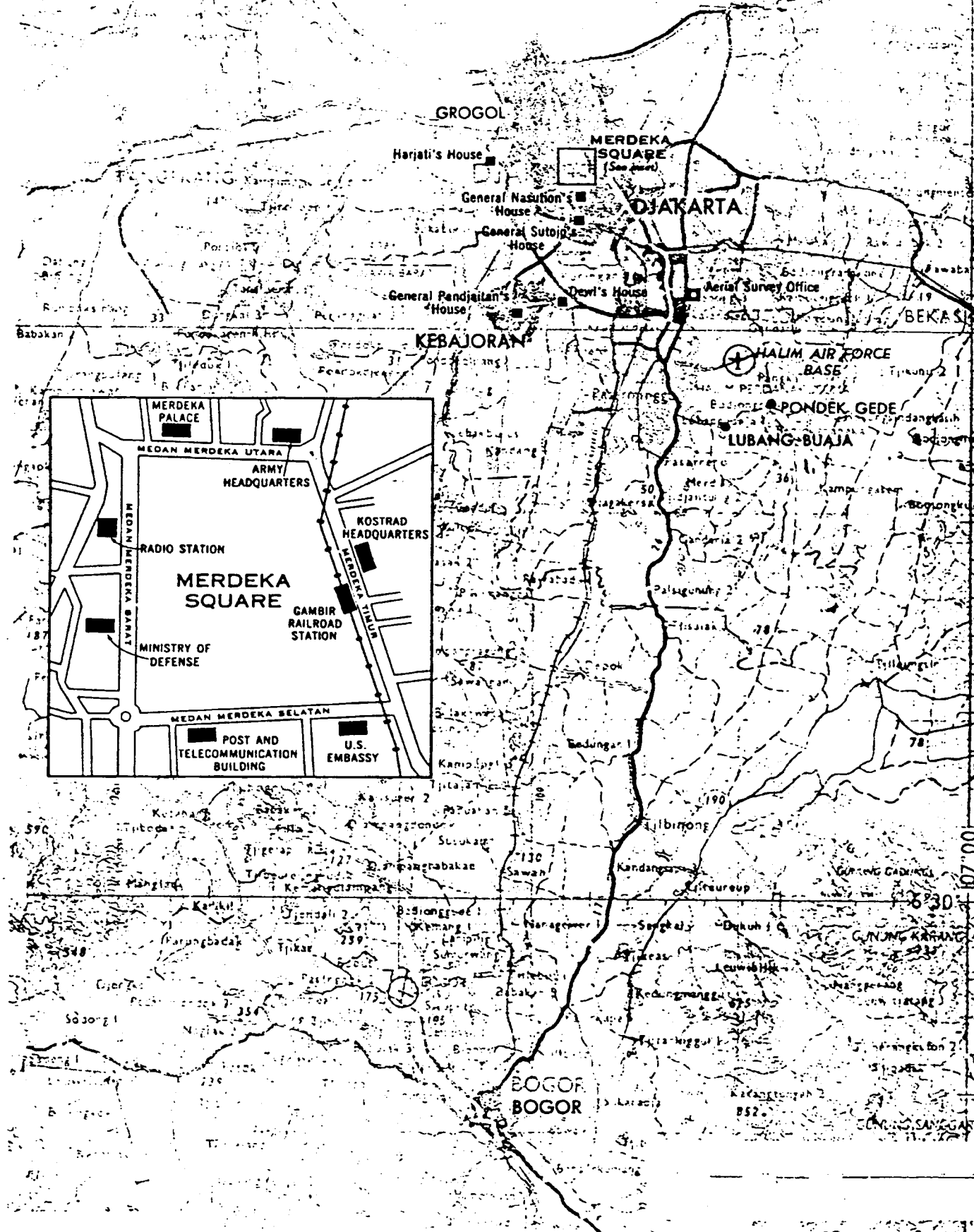
By 0600 hours component units of these two battalions were stationed at different points around Merdeka Square, in front of the Presidential Palace, and around the radio station. General Umar had seen the troops on his drive to KOSTRAD headquarters to report to General Suharto. He was able to identify them as elements of the 454th and 530th battalions, which had arrived in Djakarta only two days previously to take part in the Armed Forces Day parade on 5 October. Since Suharto knew that these troops were to have taken part in a rehearsal for the parade that very morning and thus should not have been where they were, he could calculate that he

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\*The location of the Palace, the radio station, the telecommunications building, and the railroad station around one large square, Merdeka Square, in the center of Djakarta made it a relatively easy military operation to seize control of these vital objectives of any coup attempt. In this sense, Djakarta was the ideal city for a coup. All of the coup forces, except those involved in the raids on the generals' homes, were concentrated around Merdeka Square. (See the insert of Merdeka Square on the map of Djakarta and vicinity.)

# DJAKARTA AND VICINITY

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was dealing with an enemy that had control of at least two main battalions of the Indonesian Army and at least part of the inter-service Tjakrabirawa unit that was Sukarno's special guard. What was unclear was just who was giving the orders to these units.

#### The Central Command in Djakarta

Although Suharto did not know it, the Central Command of the coup had established itself in the Aerial Survey Office building, next to the PENAS film studio, on the main road from Djakarta to Bogor. Situated near the juncture of the Djakarta-Bogor Highway and the road into Halim, the Aerial Survey office was only a few miles from Suharto's KOSTRAD headquarters. The five men who comprised the Command had been there most of the night, having moved there from Lubang Buaja where they had inspected the troops sometime around midnight.\* Of these five men Suharto would have been personally acquainted with three of them--the three who were in the military. He would never have heard of the other two--the two civilians in the group.

1. Lt. Col. Untung, aged 40, was a battalion commander of the special Tjakrabirawa Honor Guard that guarded President Sukarno. Newly appointed to the job, he had commanded the 454th Battalion of the Diponegoro Division (the Central Java Territorial Division) until a few months before the coup. Although limited in some respects and politically naive, he was well-thought of as a military officer and was considered to be on his way up in the Army.

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\*One of the men who composed the Central Command, Air Force Major Sujono, had not arrived at the Aerial Survey Office until 0630 hours; the others had come several hours earlier, as soon as they had completed their review of the troops at Lubang Buaja.

2. Air Force Major Sujono, aged 45, was Regimental Commander, Air Base Defense Troops (PPP) in command of the troops that were assigned to guard Halim Air Force Base, a major air base some seven miles distant from Djakarta.

3. Col. Latief was Commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade of the 5th Territorial Command, a post which involved control of a number of the mobile battalions in Djakarta.

4. Sjam, aged 42, was a man whose true identity was known to only a very few people. The military officers involved in the coup knew him only as Sjam--one of his several aliases. They all accepted the fact that he spoke for the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), without asking too many questions. Actually, they seem to have had some idea (whether they knew for sure or not), that he represented Aidit, the Chairman of the PKI personally.\*

Sjam's true identity and function in the PKI organization have now been clearly established. (It must be remembered that we now know more about the secret party organization of the PKI before the coup than we have ever known about most other Communist parties. Before the coup, only a few of the most trusted members of the PKI itself would have known of the secret organization Sjam headed, and even fewer would have known the identity of the man who ran the organization.) Sjam's real name was Kamarusaman Bin Achmad Mubaidah, and he was

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\*At his trial, Untung testified: "It is true that Sjam stated that he was a friend of Aidit; on one occasion, he said he was a messenger from Aidit, who had ordered him to attend the meetings in order to be in on the planning of the 30 September Movement. Whether this happened to be true or not, I did not know. My understanding was that he was simply from the PKI." Apparently, Sujono and Latief and the others had the same vague understanding of who Sjam really was.

the Chief of the Special Bureau of the PKI--the clandestine arm of the PKI. Established as a special apparatus for handling those matters that could not be accomplished through the overt PKI organization, the Special Bureau was primarily concerned with military matters, in particular PKI penetration of the Indonesian military organization. Among those in the military whom the Special Bureau "managed" were Air Force Chief of Staff Omar Dani, Brig. General Supardjo, Col. Untung, Col. Latief, and Air Force Major Sujono.\* (Apparently, Sjam personally "managed" Brig. Gen. Supardjo, while the others were "managed" by subordinates of his in the Special Bureau.) In its operations, the Bureau was apparently entirely free of the control of the politburo and maintained direct contact only with Aidit.

5. Pono, whose real name was Marsudidjojo, was a subordinate of Sjam as the second-ranking member of the PKI's Special Bureau. His job was to "manage" PKI contacts in the 1st Infantry Brigade of the 5th Territorial Command (Latief's brigade), the PPP units guarding Air Force installations (Maj. Sujono's regiment), the Tjak-rabirawa Palace Guard, and the Djakarta Military Police.

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\*These men were not necessarily Communist (in the sense of being Communist party members) because they had regular contacts with important PKI persons connected with the Special Bureau. They all deny being Communists and that may well be true, although it is also possible that one or two--like Dani or Supardjo or Untung--were "sleepers." There are some reports that Untung and Dani were secret party members, but there is no convincing evidence that this was true. Certainly, they were pro-Communist, and, being sympathetic to the party and its aims, they were able to be used by the PKI for its own purposes. The PKI "managed" them in the sense of directing their thinking and their actions along certain lines. In carrying out the coup under PKI direction, they were in fact agents of the PKI, whether they chose to look at it that way or not.



Pono personally "managed" both Latief and Sujono.\*

In addition to the five men of the Central Command whom we know were at the Aerial Survey Office Building from the early morning hours, General Supardjo arrived there about 0400 hours while it was still dark; he, too, had visited Lubang Buaja earlier in the night. As commander of the 4th Combat Command of KOSTRAD in West Borneo, General Supardjo should have been at his post near Manggaion in West Borneo. He had no official reason to be in Djakarta, and he had not reported his presence there to Army Commander Yani or KOSTRAD Commander Suharto. As we shall see later, only a few persons--including President Sukarno and Chief of the Air Force Dani--knew that he had arrived in Djakarta on 28 September, ostensibly to visit his sick daughter. In connection with events on the morning of 1 October, he had been given the assignment of contacting the President, with the purpose of informing him of the action that had been carried out against the generals and/or taking him to Halim Air Force Base, where a safe place had been prepared

\*The third-ranking member of the Special Bureau--Walujo (whose real name is Subono) had the assignment of "managing" PKI contacts in the Air Force (excluding the Air Force PPP troops that guarded Air Force installations) and the Palace Guard. Thus, he was the PKI contact man for Omar Dani, Untung, General Pranoto, and others. He was not a member of the five-man Central Command of the coup, however; in fact, he is not known to have played any role in the coup or in the planning for it; his only known involvement was his presence at the 29 September meeting of the Central Command that was concerned with last-minute preparations for the coup.

Since Walujo had been Untung's contact man from the Special Bureau, Untung had not met either Sjam or Pono before September 1965, when the planning for the coup got underway. He seems to have appreciated the fact that these men were all close associates of Aidit, however. At his trial, he stated that Pono was "also a buddy of Aidit, just as Sjam was."



Supardjo

*The Central Command*



Sjam



Untung



Sujono

Not pictured: Pono and Latief

for him. There is reason to think that Supardjo actually intended to accompany Sukarno to Halim, although the coup leaders have preferred to explain Supardjo's mission as simply that of informing the President of the coup action that morning.

Originally, Police Commissioner Anwas and Air Force Col. Heru were to accompany Supardjo in the party to inform Sukarno, and they were to await word from Lubang Buaja that all the generals had been taken captive. However, Anwas did not arrive at the Aerial Survey Office and, for some reason, Supardjo left before the Central Command had received a report from Lubang Buaja.\* The commanders of the 454th and 530th battalions--Major Sukirno of the 454th and Major Bambang Supeno of the 530th-- had just arrived at the Aerial Survey Office to report on the successful securing of the Palace and the radio station, and it was decided that they would go with General Supardjo and Col. Heru to see Sukarno. The delegation arrived at the Palace around 0630 hours.

It is important to an understanding of Sukarno's actions that day, as well as to an understanding of the source of the conflicting reports that all of the generals had or had not been captured, that one keep in mind that Supardjo left on his mission to the Palace under the impression that the kidnapping raids had indeed been a success. He was not to learn otherwise until some hours later, when he finally arrived back at Halim Air Force Base and after he had seen Sukarno.

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\*In commenting on the change of plans, Supardjo has said simply: "It was decided to bring the President after the report that General Parman had been secured was received"--without explaining why it was decided not to wait for word about the other generals. Obviously, the coup group was confident of success. And it may be that time was pressing, and they were anxious to have Sukarno safely in their custody.

### Sukarno Hears the News

The exact whereabouts of President Sukarno and his actions on the day of the coup have been fairly well established by a variety of sources. On the evening of 30 September, Sukarno had addressed the National Conference of Technicians at the Senajan Sports Stadium in Djakarta. Apparently, he returned to the palace sometime around 2300 hours. Shortly after that, he suddenly left again to spend the night at his wife Dewi's home, accompanied only by his personal bodyguard. According to Dewi, Sukarno was furious upon arriving at her house to find that she had not yet returned home from a party at the Hotel Indonesia. He sent a message for her to return home immediately.

Sukarno spent the night at Dewi's house, arising early in the morning as was his custom. It seems quite clear that he fully expected to be back at the Palace before anyone might want to see him that morning. At 0600 hours, he was enroute to the Palace when he received a report on the car radio (on the Tjakrabirawa radio communication system) that shooting had occurred at the homes of General Nasution, Dr. Leimena, and General Pandjaitan. Apparently, only the one personal bodyguard who had accompanied Sukarno to Dewi's house the night before knew where he was. Neither Col. Saelan, deputy commander of the Tjakrabirawa Presidential Guard, nor Capt. Suwarno, company commander of Battalion I of the Tjakrabirawa, who were on duty at the Palace that morning had been able to locate him earlier, around 0530 hours, when they first received a report from Chief of Police Sumirat about the kidnappings. It might seem that Sukarno had deliberately put himself out of touch with the rest of the government machinery in order to protect his options as events developed--assuming that he knew beforehand of the coup plans. At other times of crisis in the past, it had been characteristic of him to disappear from the scene and remain incommunicado at some unknown hiding place until the situation cleared. In this case, however, he definitely seems to have been on his way to the Palace and would have been there in time to receive Supardjo if

everything had gone according to plan. Certainly, Supardjo and the other coup leaders expected to find him there.

Col. Saelan and Capt. Suwarno had first looked for Sukarno at the home of Harjati, another of his wives. Not finding him there, they had finally succeeded in contacting the President on the car radio. Having learned from Chief of Police Sumirat that the Palace was surrounded by unidentified troops, Saelan ordered the presidential party not to enter the Palace but to proceed to Harjati's home in Grogol. By the time Sukarno arrived there, Saelan had received a later report that General Nasution had escaped his abductors, that the general's aide had been abducted, and that his daughter had been wounded. Saelan reported the news to the President as soon as he came inside Harjati's house.

That Sukarno first learned the true story of the raid on Nasution's home--before Supardjo (who was then at the Palace) heard the news and before Untung and the rest of the Central Command at the Aerial Survey learned the true facts and, apparently, even before those at Lubang Buaja recognized the mistaken identity of Lt. Tendean, certainly before those at Halim Air Force Base were informed--is a crucial fact about the coup that has never been mentioned in any account of the coup. It gave Sukarno an advantage of time that the leaders of the coup did not have in considering their course of action in the light of the unexpected escape of Nasution.

After Sukarno received Saelan's report, he is reported to have said that it came as an "absolute surprise" to him. It is unclear whether he meant the news of the action taken against the generals or the news of Nasution's escape. He then asked Saelan: "What will you do with me?"

On the grounds that Dewi's house, Harjati's house and the Palace were not safe, Sukarno made the decision himself to go to Halim Air Force Base, where he would be near an airfield in case of an emergency. Preceded by an escort, the President and his entourage were driven to Halim, arriving there about 0930 hours. He was welcomed at the air base's Operations Command Center by the Minister

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Commander of the Air Force, Omar Dani, who seemed to be expecting him.

There is an unaccounted-for period of almost three hours from the time that Sukarno arrived at Harjati's house to the time that he must have left for Halim to arrive there at approximately 0930 hours. Apparently, he was at Harjati's house the whole time. He may have been awaiting word on the fate of Nasution. Sometime after 0630 hours, Lt Col. Ebram, the head of the Tjak-rabirawa intelligence section, and several of his men arrived at Nasution's house on the orders of the President, they said, to ask about the whereabouts and safety of General Nasution. No doubt. Sukarno did order such an independent check on the report that Nasution had escaped. Col. Ebram was the head escort of the Presidential party on the trip to Halim, so he was clearly acting on behalf of Sukarno that morning. He was unable to establish the truth regarding Nasution's whereabouts.

#### The Murder of the Generals

As already suggested, the Central Command at the Aerial Survey Office had not heard the news of Nasution's escape. As a matter of fact, they did not learn about the unexpected turn of events until they had disbanded the Command Center at the Aerial Survey office and moved back to Halim Air Force Base.

Around 0800 hours, Lt. Dul Arief, who had been in command of the troops on the raids to the generals' homes, arrived at the Aerial Survey Office to report to Untung and Latief in person on the success of his mission. He had just come from Lubang Buaja where he had discharged his final duty in turning over the generals to Air Force Major Gatot Sukrisno, who had been designated to receive them there. As of that moment, it is clear that Arief did not realize the error of the mistaken identity of Lt. Tendean. He reported that four generals (supposing one to be General Nasution) had been captured alive and three had been killed in the process of capturing them.



The well at Lubang Buaja in which the bodies of the generals were found



As to the fate of the generals at Lubang Buaja, they were taken inside a tent as each arrived on separate trucks at slightly different times. A reliable witness to the scene has described events as follows:

When I entered the tent I saw 7 men treated as prisoners (he must not have realized that three were already dead) who were in a sad condition. Some lay on their backs, soiled and bloody, and two sat down, their hands bound and eyes covered with a red cloth. I heard a member of the Tjakrabirawa say: 'Yani has already been killed.' An officer of the Tjakrabirawa with the name Dul Arief on his uniform was (issuing orders).

The tent was near a small house with an old well close to the kitchen of the house. At about half past six in the morning I saw some civilians crowd around the old well screaming 'Crush the unbelievers.' I saw then how the persons who had been lying on their backs were carried out of the tent and thrown into the well. This was followed by a burst of fire from an automatic weapon aimed into the well by a member of the Air Force who had two white stripes on his shoulders. Then a handcuffed prisoner was taken to the well. His eyes were covered before he was thrown head-first into the well, followed by a burst of rifle fire.

I was afraid. Then a soldier of the Tjakrabirawa came over to me and said 'You need not be afraid. This killing takes place on the orders of the President because these people are members of the Council of Generals and wanted to kill the President on Armed Forces Day. We are killing them therefore before they can kill the President. You know that it is the task of the Tjakrabirawa to protect the President.'

I saw how the last prisoner was dragged to the edge of the well, but I could not see his face clearly, as it was scratched and soiled with blood. He was thrown into the well like the others. The civilians piled litter and leaves in the well, and I saw how a helicopter hovered above us, apparently to watch the people working around the well. I could not see who was in the helicopter.

The initial Army accounts of the killing of the generals placed great emphasis on the alleged torture and mutilation of the generals by the civilians mentioned above, who were Communist youth and women in military training at Lubang Buaja. This theme found lurid elaboration in many instances. Without doubt, these stories suffered from severe inflation. All of the victims except possibly Lt. Tendean were shot without any hint of torture or mutilation. Lt. Tendean may have received several blows from rifle butts before he was shot. There was none of the ghastly mutilation of the bodies that was recounted in the press, however. For the death of the generals and the actual circumstances of the deaths, the military officers at Lubang Buaja--and they alone--must bear the responsibility, it would seem. There is no convincing evidence that the PKI civilians who were at Lubang Buaja for military training (and who were armed by the Air Force later that morning to serve as "reserve troops" for the coup) played any significant role in the murders--except as witnesses to the scene.\*

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\*The "confessions" of the members of the PKI youth and women's organizations that were implicated in the assassinations leave the impression that they were little aware of what was happening and that they might have been used unwittingly. Their accounts of the murder scene differ markedly, so that it is difficult to put much faith in any of their stories. No doubt many of the "confessions" were contrived by the army. In other cases, some of the people interrogated may have been in shock at seeing the murders and, later, they were unable to recall precisely what they had witnessed.

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### The Coup is Proclaimed

At precisely the moment that the generals were meeting death at Lubang Buaja, an impatient Captain Suradi was waving a pistol at the announcer of Radio Indonesia who was reading the morning news broadcast. With some 20 of his men standing guard outside the building, the captain, who was acting as commander of the troops dispatched to secure the Palace, the radio station, and the telecommunications building, had forced his way into the broadcasting room and threatened the station manager and the announcer if they refused to read a statement over the radio that he wanted broadcast. They agreed to read it at the end of the first news report of the day. And so at 0710 hours the official announcement of the coup was broadcast to the nation.

In announcing the fact that a movement "directed against the generals who are members of the Council of Generals" had taken place that morning, the statement repeatedly stressed that the action was purely and simply an internal Army affair. Untung, as commander of the movement, assumed full responsibility for what he called "preventive action against a plot by the Generals' Council, a CIA-sponsored subversive movement...which planned to stage a coup on 5 October." The generals involved were said to have been arrested, and President Sukarno and "a number of other public figures who would have been targets of the Council of Generals" were said to be "safely under the protection of the 30 September Movement."\*

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\*It is to be remembered that at 0710 hours, when this announcement was made that Sukarno was under "the safe protection of the 30 September Movement," the President was still at Harjati's house, and the coup group had not yet made contact with him. Under these circumstances, it was a remarkably confident assertion to make unless the coup leaders had some prearranged understanding with Sukarno that he would be taken to some agreed upon place at a certain time that morning.

The announcement was notable for the absence of the usual perfunctory praise of Sukarno; his name was scarcely mentioned except for the fact that he had been taken to a safe place. It was almost inconceivable that anyone staging a coup in Indonesia in 1965 would not have tried to make use of Sukarno's authority to swing public support behind their movement. Regardless of the facts, one would have expected the coup leaders to make a public statement claiming that they were acting on orders from Sukarno, to protect Sukarno from his enemies, to safeguard the Indonesian revolution. The fact that Sukarno was mentioned only as being "under the protection of the 30 September Movement" created a vague impression that the coup might be anti-Sukarno. The only other credible explanation, if this was not the case, was that the conspirators felt that it would look better if Sukarno were not directly associated with the removal of the Generals but were to emerge later to give his blessing to the coup. In this case, one could hypothesize that Sukarno must have held out the promise of making a subsequent broadcast announcing his endorsement of the coup; either that, or the coup group must have felt absolutely confident that Sukarno would endorse their movement after the fact, even if he had not given his approval beforehand.

#### The Central Command Moves to Halim

The radio announcement was made at a time when the leaders of the 30 September Movement thought their movement had succeeded. Shortly afterwards, around 0900 hours, the Central Command moved from the Aerial Survey Office in Djakarta to Halim Air Force Base. This was not a retreat; it was a move planned in advance as the coup moved into the political stage after the initial military action. Sukarno, Commander of the Air Force Dani and a yet unmentioned but important figure in the coup--D.N. Aidit, chairman of the PKI--were already there or on the way.

The principals were not together in one location at Halim; they were at three different places, all within a distance of less than one mile of each other. Couriers

were sent back and forth with important communications; for instance, General Supardjo served as the main liaison between the President and the Central Command of Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, and Pono. As far as we know, Sukarno never had any direct contact with any of these five men in connection with the coup, either before the coup, the day of the coup, or after the coup. He was in the company of Dani and Supardjo, mainly, while he was at Halim. Similarly, Aidit remained apart from the men actually directing the coup. He communicated with the Central Command only by courier and apparently with Sukarno and Dani not at all. Still, he was near enough to be in close touch with events as they developed, should his lieutenants Sjam and Pono need his advice

Major Sujono had personally brought Aidit to Halim, picking him up at his home around 0200 hours that morning. He had made the arrangements himself for the use of the home of one of the enlisted men on the base; Aidit and his two bodyguards spent the day there. Dani appears to have spent the night at Halim's Command Operations office, which included sleeping accommodations for the senior Air Force Command Staff. It probably would not have seemed extraordinary for Dani to sleep there. He, too, stayed in the one place the whole day of the coup. Sukarno came directly there when he arrived at the base.

The Central Command of the coup was installed in the home of Air Force Sergeant Sujatno, an aide of Major Sujono. Sergeant Sujatno had spent the whole day of the 30th as well as that night at the Aerial Survey Office, on a "stand by" order from Major Sujono. On the morning of the 1st Sujono reportedly asked him if he could use his house at Halim Air Force Base for a while as his office. Sujatno drove ahead to get things ready for Sujono. Soon, Latief, Untung, Sjam, Pono and Sujono arrived. Sujatno's description of the five men while they were at his house seems worth quoting, as it gives the flavor of the day at the Central Command.

I was ordered by Sujono to get something to eat for these gentlemen. So we sat down and had some rice and some meat side dishes. When I went to get the rice in my room, I noticed that someone was sleeping in my bed....It was Col. Latief.

We sat eating for about an hour, and then Sujono called me and handed me an envelope, saying that I should take it to Capt. Suradi, who was supposed to be at Radio Republic... (When I got back) I was ordered to cook up some more rice. So I did. I noticed at this time that Untung had been seated in the back of the room, and neither changed his place nor said anything. There were two civilians there and I asked Sujono about them, and he answered that I didn't need to know.

Then, after I had cooked enough rice for them, I was ordered by Sujono to take a sealed envelope to Air Sergeant Suwadi's place, which was located within the complex. When I got there, someone met me at the door; I learned later from Sujono that the man was Aidit. I had to wait three or four minutes there, and then I was given a small envelope containing a reply and was ordered to deliver it. Aidit gave me the envelope; he was wearing glasses.

General Supardjo had arrived back at Halim only a little while after Untung and Latief and the others. He came from the Palace by helicopter. (Omar Dani had sent the helicopter from Halim to pick up Supardjo after word had been received that the President was not at the Palace.) Dani is reported to have welcomed Supardjo with the exclamation "Success!" Then he explained that Sukarno would soon arrive at the air base. Since it would still be a little while before he could report to the President, Supardjo asked Dani for permission to meet with the leaders of the group at Sgt Sujatno's house

in order to obtain the latest information on the development of the coup from the Central Command. Sgt. Sujatno has confirmed that Supardjo came to his home soon after the other coup leaders arrived and that he joined them at the first meal served that morning. There is no information as to what was discussed, but presumably the formation of the Revolutionary Council was one of the topics. General Supardjo signed the Decree establishing the Revolutionary Council while he was at Sgt. Sujatno's house with the Central Command at this time.

#### The New Order is Announced

The Decree was one of three important orders issued by the Central Command that morning: Decree No. 1, which was signed by Untung, Supardjo, and Air Force Colonel Heru, concerned the formation of the Revolutionary Council; Decision No. 1, which was signed by Untung only, listed the members of the new council; and Decision No. 2, which was also signed only by Untung, concerned ranks and promotions in the military. Untung has said that it was approximately 1000 hours when he signed the Decree and about 1100 hours when he signed Decisions No. 1 and 2. This would check perfectly with the time, as best we can calculate it, that Supardjo was at the Central Command. We know that he arrived there after Untung and the others did, around 0930 hours; he and Untung could well have signed the Decree at just about 1000 hours, as Untung claims. At 1100, when Untung is supposed to have signed the Decisions, Supardjo had left the Central Command and was with the President.\*

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\*There seems to have been a two-hour delay in the case of both the Decree and the Decisions between the time that the orders were signed and the time they were first broadcast on the radio. The apparent disagreement between various sources on the matter of the timing of the broadcasts would seem to result from the fact that the (footnote continued on page 26)

The point to be emphasized in connection with the timing of these orders is that they were signed before Untung and the rest of the Central Command learned of Nasution's escape though they were broadcast after they had finally received an accurate report. Untung seems to have made no attempt to stop the broadcasts after he realized that Nasution had actually escaped, but perhaps there would not have been time to do it, or he may have thought that it was already too late to stop them.

The importance of settling the matter of the time that these orders were signed and then broadcast lies in the fact that it argues against the thesis that the Decree establishing the Revolutionary Council was an ad hoc decision of the Central Command, a last desperate effort of a failing movement. It has been argued that the coup leaders were obviously improvising at this point in the unforeseen situation of having missed one of the prime targets of the coup and having failed to get the public support of Sukarno for their undertaking. In support of this hypothesis, it is argued that the rather peculiar assortment of names on the Revolutionary Council could only reflect an extemporaneous selection; furthermore, there is the established fact that many, if not most, of the persons on the Revolutionary Council had not been consulted ahead of time. The argument simply does not stand up in the face of what is known to have been the time sequence of the orders. Moreover, there is overwhelming evidence that the Revolutionary Council was always part of PKI planning for the coup, even if some of the major participants

(footnote continued from page 25)

orders were re-broadcast at regular intervals after they were first announced. Thus, Decree No. 1 was first broadcast at 1200 and again at 1300 and 1400 and 1430 hours. Untung heard the 1200 broadcast but Sukarno didn't hear the news broadcast about the Revolutionary Council until 1430 hours. The so-called Decisions were first announced at the 1300 hours broadcast.





of the coup (such as Sukarno perhaps) were unaware of its full implications.\* From the beginning, the coup leaders were prepared to announce the formation of the Revolutionary Council as an element of the coup; they did so, very much according to plan, at a time when they still thought everything else had gone pretty much according to plan.

Sjam is reported to have brought the original copy of Decree No. 1 out of his briefcase at Sgt. Sujatno's house. According to Untung, "we took turns reading it, first myself, then Supardjo, and then Lt. Col. Heru. Then we signed it...I was (already) acquainted with the contents and purport of the decree."

The purpose of the Decree was to eliminate the Generals' Council from the Dwikora Cabinet. We didn't mean to eliminate Sukarno from the cabinet. We intended that Sukarno would appoint a new cabinet, but the Decree said that the Revolutionary Council would appoint it.

The precise formulation contained in the Decree was as follows:

With the collapse of state power into the hands of the Indonesian Revolutionary Council, the Dwikora Cabinet is considered to be decommissioned. Until a new cabinet is formed by the Indonesian Revolutionary Council, the former Ministers are authorized to conduct routine business, to maintain peace and security within their respective departments, but are prohibited from appointing new officials or taking any actions of consequence.

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\*The evidence as far as Sukarno's knowledge of the Revolutionary Council is concerned is contradictory. For a fuller discussion of this point, see p. 91.

For the time being, the Indonesian Revolutionary Council will be the locus of all authority of the Republic of Indonesia... As agencies of the Indonesian Revolutionary Council, provincial revolutionary councils will be formed, as well as regency revolutionary councils, district revolutionary councils, and village revolutionary councils, with the councils consisting of both civilian and military personnel who support the 30 September Movement unreservedly.

At the least, the statement is ambiguous. There is absolutely no mention of Sukarno in any context--a most curious omission. The office of the Presidency is not even mentioned. It is left entirely to one's own interpretation whether there would be any change in the office, either in the person holding the office or the power of the office itself.

With the announcement of Decision No. 1 of the 30 September Movement, it was clear that Sukarno was not a member of the Revolutionary Council, whether it was presumed that he would continue as President or not. Untung was to serve as Chairman of the Council, and General Supardjo, Air Force Col. Heru, Navy Col. Sunardi, and Police Commissioner Anwas were to be the vice-chairmen. Omar Dani, Air Force Major Sujono, and Col. Latief were among the other 40 members. Thus, with the exception of Sukarno and Aidit and Aidit's two high-level agents, Sjam and Pono, all of the major participants of the coup who were at Halim were included as members of the Council.

The coup group may well have intended that Sukarno's authority remain as before in the new government but may have had special reasons for not wanting to mention his name in connection with the coup. As we will see later, this was probably the explanation for the curious omission of any reference to Sukarno in the Decree. It may not have occurred to them that their declaration might be construed as being aimed at the President rather than simply at the cabinet. Under the circumstances, however,

of its being absolutely routine to praise Sukarno at length at every occasion, the failure to make any reference whatsoever to the President was quite likely to be interpreted as an indication of anti-Sukarno motives. The Decree seemed to convey the impression that the President had been put aside.

It is possible, of course, that the coup leaders did not intend that Sukarno continue as President, with undiminished powers. If so, the PKI must have been planning a double-cross of the President and some of the military leaders involved in the coup who clearly believed that they were acting in support of Sukarno. (This point is examined later, in connection with the testimony of various individuals who were involved in the planning of the coup.) From the point of view of the PKI, the Revolutionary Council would have been the perfect Nasakom Cabinet that the party had long been pressuring Sukarno to form.\* On the face of it, its membership was representative of the major power groups in Indonesia. Almost half of the 45 members were government officials, a few of them high-level, like Foreign Minister Subandrio and Deputy Prime Minister Leimena. Among the leading political figures were the top party leaders, either the chairman or the secretary-general, of the seven major non-Communist political parties. There was no Communist party leader of equivalent status; of the five known Communists on the Council, three were lesser known members of the PKI Central Committee. In the case of the military, which composed the other half of the Council, there had obviously been the same deliberate effort to have all four of Indonesia's armed services--the army, navy, air force, and

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\*As the most immediate goal in its long-range plan to seize power peacefully, the PKI was demanding equal representation with the Nationalist and Religious parties in Indonesia in a so-called "Nasakom" cabinet. The word "Nasakom" was a word coined from the first letters of the Indonesian words NASionalis (nationalist), Agama (religious), and KOMunis (Communist).

police--represented. Among the Army officers included were 6 Generals of the Army, one of them being Gen. Umar Wirahadikusumah, the Commander of the Djakarta area who had been first on the scene at Nasution's home, after the raid on his house. Gen. Umar was one of the many Council members who have categorically denied knowing anything about the Revolutionary Council before they heard their names read off on the radio as members of the Council. A high-level PKI official has said that even the PKI members on the Council were not informed ahead of time nor was their approval requested.

Actually, the Revolutionary Council was the perfect Communist front organization. With only one-ninth of its membership known to be Communist, it included as many well-known anti-Communists as Communists and pro-Communists together. From what was generally known at the time about its various members, therefore, Communist control of the group was not readily apparent. However, there was a group of middle-level military officers who were almost inconspicuous among the list of well-known figures; this group held the balance of power on the Council. Practically nothing was known about these men, especially their politics. Few people outside the Indonesian military had ever heard of Untung or Heru or Sundardi or Sujono or Latief. It might be assumed that they were anti-Communist like the majority of the Indonesian military. Who would have suspected that they were so totally under PKI influence, even if not Communist party members, that they were prepared to do the party's bidding, even to the point of conspiring to murder the top Army leadership?

#### President Sukarno at Halim

Soon after signing the Decree establishing the Revolutionary Council, General Supardjo left the Central Command at Sgt. Sujatno's house and went back to Halim's Operations Command Center, where the President had arrived at about 0930 hours. Sukarno had received a general report from Omar Dani but was awaiting a detailed report from General Supardjo on the events of the day.

Supardjo's much-delayed meeting with the President, which finally took place about 1030 hours, has been the subject of conflicting stories, many of them pure speculation, no doubt. It would certainly be a major factor in determining the role of Sukarno in the coup if we knew for sure what transpired at the meeting. According to Untung (whose testimony on the coup seems to provide the most reliable and complete story of events), after General Supardjo reported on the coup and the kidnapping of the Generals, Sukarno asked two questions: (1) if it was true that General Nasution had been captured, and (2) why was Untung leading the movement. Supardjo replied that it was true that Nasution had been captured and that Untung assumed the leadership because "he was the one considered most appropriate by the comrades." Some reports have claimed that Sukarno also asked Supardjo where Untung was, but apparently it was General Sabur, the Commander of the Tjakrabirawa Presidential Guard and Untung's immediate superior, who had come to Halim at Sukarno's call, who asked Supardjo that question later in the day.\* According to the most well-known version of the Sukarno-Supardjo meeting (the official Army version), Sukarno is reported to have patted Supardjo on the back and said in Dutch: "Good job." Although it is quite believable--and it may well be true--that he did this, it can not be proved. Supardjo denies it and Untung is not known to have commented on it. Similarly, there is disagreement as to whether or not Sukarno said to Supardjo: "Now, then, I shall take over the leadership and appoint another Commander-in-Chief." Untung has denied that Sukarno said

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\*Apparently, General Sabur arrived at Halim while Supardjo was talking to the President. Once at Halim, General Sabur stayed close to Sukarno, accompanying him to Air Commodore Susanto's house (which was on the base) when the Presidential party moved there from Operations Command soon after 1200 hours. General Sabur remained with Sukarno all afternoon and finally accompanied him to the Presidential Palace at Bogor that evening after the collapse of the coup.

anything about taking over the leadership. Apparently, the subject of the new Commander-in-Chief of the Army did come up, because Supardjo asked that he be given an opportunity to consult with his "comrades" on the matter. The President answered: "Yes, all right, but return immediately."

For a second time that morning, Supardjo went to the Central Command at Sgt. Sujatno's house and briefed Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, and Pono on the results of the meeting with the President. After conferring, they decided to recommend to Sukarno that he appoint Maj. General Pranoto, then third assistant to Army Chief of Staff Yani, as the new Commander of the Army.\*

<sup>1.</sup>  
\*General Pranoto had succeeded General Suharto as Commander of the Diponegoro (Central Java) Territorial Division. Apparently, Nasution had been responsible for his removal as Commander before his normal tour of duty in that command was up. During his years as commander of the Diponegoro Division, he is reported to have done nothing to obstruct Communist influence in the military.

At the time of the coup, Pranoto was director of personnel for the Army, which meant that he had authority in the crucial matter of military assignments. From the point of view of the PKI, he was ideally placed to serve the party's interests. Since the coup, it has been revealed that Pranoto was a "contact" of the PKI Special Bureau, just like Untung, Latief, Sujono, Supardjo, and Dani. He and Latief were both "managed" by Pono, the number two man in the Special Bureau and one of the central figures in the coup. Pranoto was known to be a close friend of Dani. It was rumored that his relations with Suharto were very cool, for personal as well as political reasons. In Pranoto, the PKI and Sukarno would have had a Commander of the Army as responsive to their wishes as Dani was as Commander of the Air Force.

Apparently, the Central Command still had no definite information that Nasution had escaped, although by this time they seem to have been alerted to the possibility of this having happened. At both the Central Command and Operations Command there was general confusion and uncertainty as to what really had happened, as conflicting reports began to be received.

When Supardjo re-appeared at Operations Command, the possibility that General Nasution had eluded his captors was beginning to be seriously considered as more and more reports confirmed Sukarno's first information on the subject. For a matter of some hours now the President had been in doubt. As early as 0630 hours he had received a report from Col. Saelan that Nasution had escaped. Since that time, he had been trying to verify that report. He had sent Col. Ebram to Nasution's house to check out the information, but the Colonel had been unable to learn anything definite about Nasution's whereabouts. General Supardjo had assured him that reports of Nasution's escape were not true, but soon thereafter Gen. Sabur arrived at Halim to tell him just the opposite.

It is difficult to establish just when Sukarno finally was convinced by the reports that Nasution had escaped. As long as he continued to receive conflicting reports--which was all morning long and into the afternoon--he may simply not have known what to believe. In that case, he--and the rest of the coup group--may have made some of the important decisions of the day in a state of uncertainty, not knowing for sure what had occurred at Nasution's home but aware of the difference it made to their planning whether Nasution had escaped or not.

At their second meeting of the day, which took place as soon as Supardjo returned to Operations Command following his conference with the coup leaders on the matter of the appointment of a new Army commander, Sukarno and Supardjo discussed the report that Nasution had escaped. According to Supardjo, the President said to him: "It is Nekolim that will benefit. Yes, in a



revolution, such things will happen, and when they do it is Nekolim that benefits."\* Again according to Supardjo, Sukarno asked his advice about what to do now. Supardjo replied: "It depends on Bapak (Indonesian word for "father" which was commonly used to refer to Sukarno). I have two battalions that are at the President's disposal." Apparently, Sukarno did not make a decision at that moment.

It seems that Nasution's escape--or the possibility of it--had a profound effect on the President. If it was not the main reason, it was certainly a contributing factor in his final decision to stop the movement. We can only speculate as to the main factor influencing Sukarno's decision. It may have been the failure of the coup to capture Nasution and realization that the coup plans had seriously gone awry. Or it may have been his shock and disapproval over certain aspects of the action, such as the murder of the generals, which he may not have anticipated. Or it may have been his concern that Suharto had rallied the army to oppose the coup in a way never anticipated by the coup leaders.

Apparently, Sukarno was very much concerned to learn that two battalions of the RPKAD, the paracommando units of the Army under the command of Col. Sarwo Edhy, had arrived in Djakarta and were waiting further orders from Suharto. These two paratroop battalions, which had been stationed just outside the city, had been scheduled to depart for North Borneo several days before the coup. Unknown to Sukarno, their departure had been delayed because of some confusion over transportation. Quite possibly, the coup plans had taken into account the fact that the paratroopers would have departed for Borneo by the time of the coup; apparently, no one had checked to see whether they had actually departed on schedule. Sukarno is reported to have shown great interest in the

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Nekolim was an acronym for NEokolonialisme-KOLonialisme-IMperialisme, the three evil isms according to Sukarno.

RPKAD on the morning of the coup. According to a very reliable source, he protested to Supardjo at one point: "You told me the RPKAD would not be in Djakarta." Supardjo is reported to have assured Sukarno that it made no difference to the coup plans.

However, around 1200 hours, Sukarno called Supardjo in to tell him of his decision to stop the movement. According to Supardjo, the President asked him to take care to prevent further bloodshed. Supardjo said that he and the two battalion commanders would see to this. Then, according to Supardjo, the President said: "If you can't stop the movement, you'll be butchered." In the official Army version of events, Sukarno is reported to have said: "Be careful. If you can't stop the movement, I'm the butcher."

If Sukarno ever had any intention of making a public statement in support of the coup--as the coup leaders have intimated that he did--he had apparently given up all thought of it now. From the moment that he issued the order to stop the movement, his main concern was clearly to dissociate himself from it; he would hardly have considered anything that would implicate him further.

At this point, President Sukarno left the Operations Command Center and moved to the nearby home of Air Commodore Susanto. Earlier that morning, Major Sujono had personally informed Susanto that his house would be occupied by the President at 0800 hours. (This would tend to confirm other indications we have that the coup leaders definitely expected Sukarno to join them at the air base that morning, either on his own initiative according to a prearranged plan or as a hostage of the coup group.) Apparently, Sujono had thought that Sukarno would go directly to Susanto's house when he arrived at Halim. Sukarno had asked to go to Operations Command first, however, possibly because he wanted to see Omar Dani.

Sukarno was to spend all afternoon at the home of Susanto; he was there until about 2030 hours when he finally left Halim to go to Bogor Palace. Amazing as it might seem under the circumstances he apparently spent

a good part of his time there just resting and sleeping --and listening to the radio. He was at Susanto's house when he heard the radio broadcast about the Revolutionary Council. According to some reports, the President was surprised to learn about the establishment of such a Council. After the coup, he was quoted as saying that he disapproved of the Revolutionary Council; but, if that was true, he took no action whatsoever at the time to do anything about it.

And the explanation for this would seem not to have been that he was a prisoner or virtual prisoner of the coup group and therefore not able to influence the course of events at Halim. On the contrary, Sukarno seems to have been very much his own free agent from the time that he went to Halim at his own initiative to the moment that he decided to leave for Bogor, several hours after Leimena and others at the airbase had first urged him to depart.\* His complete independence of action that day was certainly clear from the fact that he sent his own emissaries back and forth from Halim all afternoon. It was from one of these emissaries that Gen. Suharto at KOSTRAD headquarters first learned that Sukarno was at Halim. Sukarno sent a courier to Nasution as well as

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\*After the coup, Sukarno repeatedly emphasized his "freedom of action" throughout the day at Halim and the fact that he had gone there in the first place of his own free will to avoid the threat of "undesirable events" in Djakarta and to be near an airplane in case of emergency. It seems that he said this to prevent the Army from using his supposed "arrest" by the coup group and "vicious PKI elements" to destroy the PKI. He was concerned at all costs not to allow the Army to make it look as though the already implicated PKI had taken action against the President rather than against the Council of Generals. Despite his particular motives for stressing the point after the coup, it seems that he was not distorting history at all by emphasizing that he was not a prisoner of anybody while he was at Halim.

Suharto asking them both to come to Halim. Couriers dispatched by Sukarno were also in touch with Gen. Sabur, Commander of the Tjakrabirawa Presidential Guard, Deputy Prime Minister Leimena, Gen. Pranoto, Navy Commander Martadinata, and Police Commander Sutjipto. The message was the same in every case, that Sukarno wanted to see these men at Halim immediately.\* Clearly, Sukarno was under no restraint from the coup leaders in communicating with people outside Halim Air Force Base.

One of his most trusted and loyal advisers--First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Subandrio--with whom Sukarno was also now anxious to confer, was not in Djakarta at the time. He had left town on the morning of the 29th, along with twelve other ministers of the cabinet, for an official inspection tour of Sumatra. (No specific reason for the trip was ever given.) On the

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\*Apparently, Martadinata, Sutjipto, and Leimena checked first with Suharto before deciding to go to Halim. As we shall see, Leimena delivered a message to Sukarno from Suharto that the President should be out of Halim by 1630 hours, as Suharto was considering attacking the airbase if the coup forces had not surrendered by then. Leimena and Gen. Sabur were the only two men of those contacted by Sukarno who went to Halim. Suharto refused to allow Pranoto, Martadinata, and Sutjipto to go, on the grounds that the Army "had already lost enough generals." It is not clear whether Sabur asked Suharto's approval, first, as Leimena did, or whether he went on his own, as soon as he received Sukarno's summons; most likely, it was the latter. It is surprising that Sabur was not with Sukarno when the President went out to Halim in the morning. As Commander of the Tjakrabirawa Presidential Guard, he was usually with Sukarno whenever he went anywhere. The whereabouts of Gen. Sabur had been one of the questions that everyone had been asking all morning. Where was President Sukarno? Where was Gen. Sabur? And why was he not at Halim if Sukarno was there?

afternoon of the 1st, when Sukarno suddenly had need of his confidant, Subandrio was in Medan. Sukarno ordered his own Presidential jet airplane, which was normally kept at Halim Air Force Base instead of Djakarta's commercial airport for reasons of security, to fly up to Medan to pick up Subandrio.\* The President may have been in communication with Subandrio earlier in the morning to tell him of the news of the coup, but this is not certain. There is still some confusion about the first communication Subandrio received about the coup. According to one story, he received a written note from a courier who said he was acting on instructions of the PKI representative in the North Sumatran National Front; this was about 1000 hours. Apparently, he was not informed that Sukarno's personal plane was on its way up to Medan to get him; he does not seem to have realized that until the plane was already there. Sukarno probably did not think of sending a plane for Subandrio until the early afternoon, when events made Subandrio's presence at Halim suddenly very important to him.

Sukarno's independence of action at Halim extended to the use of the coup-controlled radio to broadcast a Presidential statement to the nation. For everyone listening to the radio that morning the most puzzling phenomenon of the day must have been the fact that the President did not speak. The original Untung announcement had strongly suggested that he would soon appear and explain to the nation what was going on; but he did not. Finally, at 1330 hours, an announcement was read over the radio that "Sukarno was alive, safe, in good health, and still in control of the state and the revolution. It was explained that the announcement was made on the authority of General Sabur, the commander of the Tjakrabirawa Presidential

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\*It is unclear precisely when the Presidential plane left Halim; no one seems to have taken note of the time that they heard a plane overhead, as they did later that evening when two planes departed Halim--one carrying Aidit and the other Dani--and a third plane landed (it was Sukarno's jet returning from Medan).

Guard. Later, it was announced that Sukarno had temporarily taken over the leadership of the armed forces and that he had appointed General Pranoto as the "caretaker" commander of the army "to carry out the day-to-day business of the army."\*

In hindsight, the statement authorized by the President and issued in the name of Gen. Sabur seems to have been a move by Sukarno to dissociate himself from a failing movement. It may not have seemed that way at the time, however. Certainly, it was not the strong public endorsement of the coup by Sukarno that the coup leaders evidently expected him to make. The President carefully avoided committing himself on the coup. It might be presumed, however, that he was in agreement with what had been done since he did not condemn the action taken against the generals that morning. Moreover, in appointing General Pranoto as the "caretaker" commander of the army, he definitely was acting in the interests of the coup leaders.

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\*In the opinion of some observers, Sukarno's appointment of a "caretaker" commander of the army suggests that he had definite information that the generals were dead. At the time, only the leaders of the coup and those directly involved in the killing of the generals knew this for sure. Sukarno could only have gotten this information from the coup leaders themselves. Suharto and the rest of the world, still in doubt about the fate of the generals, were quick to seize upon the announcement of Pranoto's appointment as an indication that Sukarno had inside information on what had happened to the generals; the announcement seemed to confirm their worst fears that the generals were already dead. In Sukarno's defense, however, it seems that this is not conclusive evidence. The President might have appointed a "caretaker" commander of the army if he thought that the generals had simply been kidnapped and were being held some place. The "caretaker" commander would be just that; he would take charge of the army temporarily, until there was definite word about the generals.

The one thing that seemed clear from the announcement was that Sukarno was not a prisoner of events. The fact that it was an announcement from the President, issued with the authority of his trusted security chief, and not an "Untung" announcement seemed to indicate that Sukarno was not the victim of any sort of coup attempt.

But though the statement seemed to imply that Sukarno approved of the coup, that was not enough to save it. At a time when a public endorsement by Sukarno--and only that--might well have turned the tide in its favor, Sukarno refused to commit himself on the coup explicitly, publicly. It is quite clear now that the coup leaders felt themselves betrayed by the President, whether they had good reason to expect a public statement of support from the President or not. Col. Latief is reported to have been "very aggressive" in urging General Supardjo "to force Sukarno to give his blessings to the movement." He indicated that Supardjo should threaten Sukarno if he refused. It is clear that he had a radio broadcast by Sukarno in mind, as Latief is quoted as saying "Bring a tape recorder, so that Sukarno's voice can be taped and broadcast." Major Supeno, Commander of the 530th battalion, who heard the conversation, drew the conclusion that there was a possibility that Sukarno would be killed if he resisted their pressure. Although it was obviously a mistaken judgment, it suggests the amount of pressure the coup leaders tried to exert on Sukarno to get him to make a public statement of support. At this point, however, Sukarno was not about to be found supporting a dying movement. He was maneuvering to preserve his independence of action whatever the outcome of the coup; in the statement broadcast over the radio he hoped to re-assert his own authority over the situation without committing himself on the events of the past several hours.

This was, of course, the turning point of the coup. The coup leaders had tried and failed to get Sukarno's support at a crucial stage, when their coup plans had seriously gone awry with the escape of one of the prime targets of the coup and when their last hope lay with Sukarno.

### Dani Seals His Fate

Two hours after Sukarno had studiously avoided committing himself in public and after the coup was all but lost, it was announced over the radio that Air Force Chief Dani had pledged the support of the air force to the coup. This had been made official in an order-of-the-day signed by Dani himself.\* The explanation for what would seem to have been an incredibly poorly timed decision on Dani's part was that he had drafted the order early in the morning--when he apparently felt so sure things were going well that he was willing to commit the entire air force organization to the coup--but it was not broadcast until that afternoon. Dani has given the following account of his actions that morning:

I awoke (he had spent the night at Operations Command) at about 0600, bathed, etc. till 0630. At 0710 I heard the radio news broadcast which mentioned the kidnapping of the army generals. Between 0730 and 0800 I received a telephone call from Major Suparto who said: 'Bapak (the President) will be taken to Halim.' I wanted to pick him up but Major Suparto would not allow me. I called Major Sujono to take care of the President's security because the President was entering Halim. I remained at the Operations Command office and did not go outside. I then drafted the concept of my Standing Order. My custom in drafting an order was to draft points. I gave these points to Major Willyarto so that they could be refined before the order was sent to the Department of the Air Force. I told Major Willyarto not to broadcast the order yet.

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\*Dani's statement appeared in Harian Rakjat on 2 October, but it was announced over the radio before that, on the afternoon of 1 October. It was dated 0930 hours, 1 October



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(Later) I accompanied the President to the house of Commodore Susanto for a rest. He ordered the summoning of the Navy and Police Force commanders. (After conferring with them) he decided to issue a statement. I then ordered Major Willyarto: 'My statement may be issued. I need not examine it first.'\*

After stating that the coup action had been taken to safeguard the revolution and the president against "CIA subversion," Dani's order pledged that the air force would "always and continuously support and uphold any progressive revolutionary movement and combat any action which endangers the Indonesian revolution." With the broadcast of the order, Dani's fate was all-but sealed. His complicity in the coup was now documented; he could never hope to disclaim any involvement as Sukarno had left himself the option of doing.

#### Suharto: The Making of a Hero

It must be remembered that people who had any idea of what was going on during the period of Untung's dominance were very few. They were nearly all at Halim or KOSTRAD headquarters in Djakarta; the few others who were not --such as the emissaries going back and forth between the two places and the military negotiators whom Suharto sent

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\*Dani may have been under the impression that Sukarno intended to issue a statement of support for the coup rather than the noncommittal statement about his still being "in control of the state and the revolution." It seems that Dani would not have issued his order-of-the-day pledging the support of the Air Force to the coup if he had not thought that Sukarno's statement would also commit the President to the side of the coup.



Chief of the Air Force Dani

to confer with the troops surrounding the Palace and the radio station--were not discussing things with the general public.

To the ordinary citizen, things probably seemed pretty much as usual. Except for the fact that the telephones were not working, business went on as usual. Only a few blocks away from Merdeka Square, one would have been unaware of the events taking place a short distance away. The streets of Djakarta were not guarded, and no curfew or state of emergency was declared. (The next day, a curfew was imposed.) One could move around the city freely. When the coup was first announced on the radio, most of Djakarta's government workers had already arrived at their offices. They put in a normal working day. It was noted that PKI headquarters was open, as usual; employees had been seen coming to work at the normal time. Contrary to some reports, the office had not been open all night.

Even at Halim Air Force Base, the momentous events of the day might have gone unnoticed to an outside observer. The principal figures of the coup were quietly secured in three inconspicuous homes of air force personnel who lived on the base; besides these three homes, only one other building was being used by the coup forces--the Operations Command Center, which was normally the center of activity on the base. The troops available to the coup which were not stationed around Merdeka Square in Djakarta were gathered at Lubang Buaja, out of sight of the main part of the air base.

Around Merdeka Square, however, it was a different story. Troops were stationed all around the Square. Machine guns were set up in front of the U.S. Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the radio station and the telecommunications building, all of which fronted on the Square. All the main arteries into the square were sealed off, including the railroad station, which meant that traffic in the whole area was blocked off. Thus, in spite of the heavy concentration of troops and the presence of machine guns and other military equipment, there was an almost eerie quietness about everything. One could sense the tension in the atmosphere, but on the

surface everything was calm, abnormally calm. American observers who watched the events of the day from the windows of the U.S. Embassy, which had a view across Merdeka Square in the direction of the Palace, described it as "the spookiest day" of their lives. They, like most people, had little idea what was going on. Since the telephones weren't working, it was impossible to get news as to what was happening in other parts of the city.

As one looked at Merdeka Square, the scene was one of seeming inactivity. The only noticeable activity, as the afternoon wore on, was that of emissaries and the officers from KOSTRAD who shuttled back and forth across the square, conferring with the commanders of the armed units in front of the Palace and radio station.\* Suharto had taken care to avoid hasty action. With two battalions in revolt, stationed just across Merdeka Square from KOSTRAD headquarters, he had a potentially explosive situation on his hands. He was concerned above all else to prevent bloodshed. His strategy would be to try to talk the forces surrounding the Palace into surrender. It was a strategy of bluff, threat, negotiation, and cajolment--in the traditional Javanese manner.

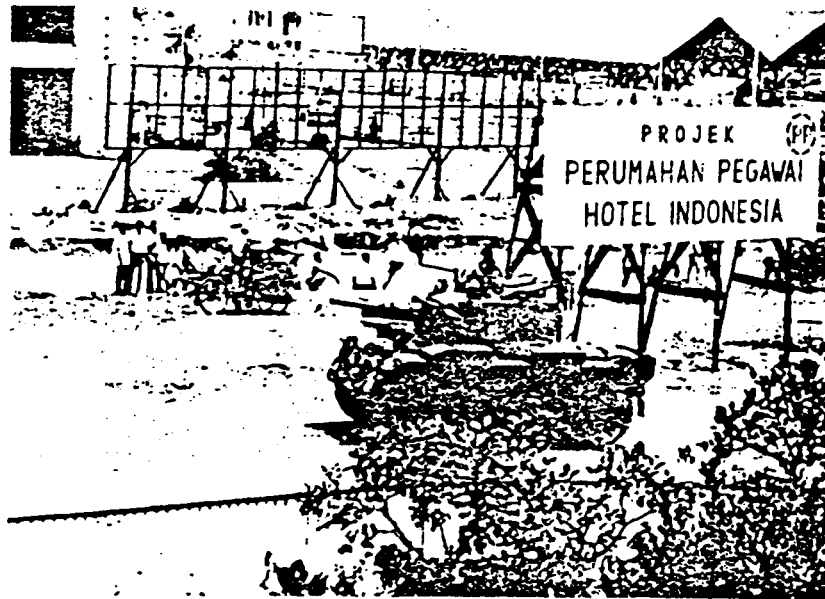
As his first move, Suharto had tried to contact the commanders of the other three armed services to explain his strategy to them. He won assurances of help from both the naval command and the police force. However, he was never able to make contact with Air Force Chief Dani; as he later explained:

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\*Merdeka Square is too large actually to see across it. On its long side, it is about half a mile long. It is a huge grassy expanse, with trees that obstruct one's vision across it. As mentioned earlier, the location of the Palace, Army Headquarters, KOSTRAD Headquarters, Gambir Railroad Station, the U.S. Embassy, the telecommunications building, the Ministry of Defense, and the radio station around this one main square in the center of Djakarta makes it a rather unique setup for seizing power. All of the vital objectives of a coup attempt are right there.



Siliwangi troops from West Java move into Djakarta under General Suharto's command



Siliwangi troops in front of the Hotel Indonesia

Difficulty was experienced in attempting to contact the Air Force. I sent liaison officers to Halim...but things did not go as smoothly as they had with the Navy and police. They had assigned liaison officers to KOSTRAD to facilitate communication, but it was not so easy to establish coordination with the Armed Force.

Suharto had received an early report that Dani had been abducted along with the generals, but about 0800 hours he received definite information that this was not true, that Dani had been "saved" by his own men, who had picked him up at his home about 0200 or 0300 hours and taken him somewhere. At this point, Suharto seems to have been more confused than suspicious about Dani's whereabouts and the reasons for the difficulty in establishing contact with the Air Force command. Naturally, he became suspicious of the role of the Air Force in the coup when he realized that Halim was being used by the coup forces as their center of operations, but apparently it was only after Dani's order-of-the-day was broadcast (around 1530 hours) that he finally accepted the fact of Dani's complicity in the coup. As he said later:

...Then, Dani made the announcement supporting the coup. First the leader of the Air Force had been 'saved' before the movement had been launched, then it had been difficult to achieve coordination with the Air Force, and lastly the statement of support had been issued. Even a fool could see that the Air Force had to be grouped with the foe.

With pledges of support from the Navy and the police, and the run-a-round from the Air Force, Suharto set about the business of winning over the troops of the two battalions that were acting on the orders of Untung and associates. To help him in the task he assembled various officers who had friends in the two battalions or who had commanded them at one time or another. One of these was General Basukhi Rachmat, the commander of the East Java Territorial Division, who was in Djakarta to brief General

Yani on Communist strength in the military in East Java. (He had conferred with Yani at the latter's home late on the evening of the 30th, just a few hours before Yani was shot and killed in his home.)

Suharto was able to discover that whereas the component units of the 454th and the 530th battalions were stationed at different key points around Merdeka Square, the commanders of the units themselves--Major Sukirno of the 454th and Major Bambang Supeno of the 530th--were inside the Palace. (It will be remembered that the two commanders had reported to the Central Command at the Aerial Survey Office after the troops under their command had taken up positions in front of the Palace; from there, they had gone with Gen. Supardjo to the Palace to report to Sukarno.) Suharto sent special emissaries to the deputy battalion commanders and the company commanders left in charge. To their astonishment, the rebel troops snapped smartly to attention and saluted as they approached to confer with the officers in charge. This was an indication that at least the ordinary soldiers were confused, with no clear idea whom they were serving. The deputy battalion commanders told Suharto's emissaries that they were there to protect President Sukarno from a coup by the Generals' Council.

Eventually, Suharto himself met with the deputy commanders. He assured them that there was no generals' coup, that they had simply been tricked into believing that when in fact they were being used to protect the activities of a coup movement. He explained that the Revolutionary Council had suspended the cabinet and Sukarno's name was not on the Revolutionary Council. Finally, he warned them that if they did not go back and collect their men and report to him at KOSTRAD headquarters, he'd be "forced to take drastic action." Within about two hours, the 530th Battalion had assembled, boarded trucks, and reported to KOSTRAD. With the 454th Battalion, Suharto was not so successful. Just as the deputy commander was passing on to his colleagues the story that Suharto had told him, the battalion commander returned, resumed control, and kept his men working in the service of the coup.

At this juncture, the Presidential couriers from Halim began to arrive in Djakarta. Apparently, they had no trouble in persuading Deputy Prime Minister Leimena to go to Halim since the President wanted to confer with him there. They also contacted Gen. Umar and Gen. Pranoto, but Gen. Umar, at least, referred them to Suharto, saying that he was acting only on Suharto's orders. The couriers then moved on to KOSTRAD headquarters to ask Suharto to send Pranoto and Umar to Halim.

The arrival of the Presidential couriers at KOSTRAD headquarters (shortly after noon) and the exchange of messages that they delivered was to prove a turning point of the coup. Up to this point, Suharto did not know where Sukarno was, although it seemed clear that he was not in the Palace. Now he realized that the President was at Halim, but obviously not there as a prisoner in any strict sense, since he had the liberty to send messengers into the city. His relationship to Untung was ambiguous, but the possibility that Sukarno was involved in the kidnapping of the generals was now wide open.\*

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\*According to one source, Suharto's first thought about Sukarno had been that he was dead. Early in the morning, as events started to unfold and there was no word from Sukarno, Suharto is reported to have figured that the coup leaders had learned of the President's death and moved quickly to neutralize the Army in the struggle for power that was expected after Sukarno's death. After Untung's announcement of a provisional government, Suharto was in touch with the Sultan of Jogjakarta, with whom he discussed the idea of the Sultan's going to Bandung to set up a rival government there. The Sultan is reported to have advised Suharto against this idea until they had more definite information on Sukarno. The Sultan apparently had a feeling that Sukarno just might be involved in the coup; he told Suharto that "the whole thing sounds like Sukarno to me." He realized that it would be a mistake to announce the formation of a rival government that might later seem to have been a move against Sukarno. After the coup, the President could have used this as (footnote continued on page 48)



Suharto decided to send one person--Deputy Prime Minister Leimena--to Halim to negotiate with the President. He refused to allow Gen. Umar and Gen. Pranoto and the others whom Sukarno had asked to see to go there, on the grounds that "we have already lost enough generals." Actually, Leimena delivered an ultimatum to Sukarno from Suharto. Suharto told the President to leave the airbase by 1600 hours; if he didn't, the Army would attack Halim.\*

If the couriers gave Gen. Suharto the crucial information that he needed to take full command of the situation, their errand was of equal moment to Sukarno. When they returned to Halim with Suharto's flat refusal to allow Pranoto or Umar to confer with the President, Sukarno realized that Suharto had not only declared against the conspirators but had effectively neutralized all the high army officers who might be used to cover up the Untung coup. No doubt to his shrewd eye, the situation seemed already hopeless.\*\* It is in the light of

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(footnote continued from page 47)

evidence that the Army was in fact plotting his overthrow. From this point on, Suharto is reported to have acted on the assumption that Sukarno might be involved in the coup. When he learned later in the day that the President was at Halim, he had very definite reason to suspect his involvement.

\*As we shall see, Sukarno did not leave Halim by 1630 hours and Suharto did not open fire on the airbase, as he had threatened. He decided to wait a little longer, in the hope of avoiding a direct fight with Sukarno. In the end, Leimena was successful in persuading the President to go to Bogor. He was the one who talked Sukarno out of going to Central Java which Aidit and the other PKI leaders were trying to persuade Sukarno to do.

\*\*An indication of Sukarno's appreciation of the change in the balance of forces in the mid-afternoon was the "rescuing" of his children from the Palace, where they had been all day. At about 1600 hours, the children were brought out to Halim and from there flown to Bandung, out of harm's way. It is clear that Sukarno felt at this point that the Palace would not stay much longer in Untung's hands and the children had to be removed before the Army took over there.

the information gained by Sukarno upon the return of the couriers that we must understand his decision to announce over the radio that he was "well and safe and still in control of the state and the revolution"--an announcement that seemed to be a move by Sukarno to dissociate himself from a failing movement.

Meanwhile, Suharto had taken advantage of the new information that he had acquired to make one final attempt to break up the troop formations outside the radio station and the telecommunications building. This time he gave the 454th Battalion an ultimatum: either it must evacuate its positions by 2000 hours or he would blast it out with his own guns and troops.\* Suharto was still very much concerned to avoid bloodshed. By 1800 hours, however, he had his troops in offensive position, ready to assault the radio station and telecommunications building.

However, the attack was not necessary. In no mood to fight, the rebels quietly withdrew and moved out by truck in the direction of Halim; Suharto did nothing to hinder their orderly withdrawal. He was only too happy to have the center of the city cleared of coup forces without violence.

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\*Actually, Suharto was not in a position of overwhelming military strength in threatening the coup forces in Djakarta with an ultimatum. As one of his first moves after assuming command of the army, he had called up from its base about 15 miles outside Djakarta the crack paracommando unit (RPKAD) led by Col. Sarwo Edhy. Together with a battalion of the Siliwangi (West Java) Division that was already in the capital for the Armed Forces Day parade on 5 October, the RPKAD units were the only troops that he had available at his disposal in Djakarta. He couldn't have taken the Palace or the radio station and the telecommunications building in the morning or even in the early afternoon. Only after the 530th Battalion withdrew, late in the afternoon, was he in a position to threaten the 454th Battalion, the sole remaining coup force in the city.

As the withdrawal of these troops proceeded, however, a new armed force appeared on the scene. Armed Communist youths suddenly emerged at the south end of Merdeka Square, having come from the direction of Halim, it seemed. To their obvious surprise, they were abruptly disarmed and arrested by Suharto's forces. They surrendered without a fight. Under interrogation, the Communist youths admitted that air force officers at Halim had issued them the weapons with which they were armed and had ordered them into the city.\*

This development in the coup has been the subject of much distortion. At the time, the presence of such armed and undisciplined elements in the center of the city was the cause for genuine alarm on the part of Suharto, to whom it seemed that the PKI and its front groups had resorted to arms. More violent events, possibly a general attack, in Djakarta or elsewhere, could be expected. Such speculation, based on the involvement of a considerable number of Communist youths in a disorganized and pointless entry into Djakarta in the late hours of the coup, may have been responsible, in part, for the exaggerated reports of PKI involvement in the military events of the coup. As noted earlier, armed PKI civilians were incorrectly --but persistently--reported to have participated in the raids on the generals' homes; they were also supposed to have been included among the troops guarding the Palace and radio station. When Suharto's forces finally occupied the radio station and telecommunications building, they apparently did find some of these Communist youth elements inside; but they had only just arrived on the scene. It is now an established fact that the Communist front groups that were armed by the coup leaders as a kind of "reserve

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\*Estimates of the numbers of Communist volunteers who were sent from Halim into Djakarta vary considerably, with some estimates as high as 3,000. We are inclined to think that the reports of there being around 3,000 are exaggerated, although this is the figure most often reported. Apparently, not all of the Communist youths were armed.

force" were not sent from Halim into Djakarta until late in the afternoon. They had played no role in the coup up to that point--except as witnesses to the murder scene at Lubang Buaja, where they had spent the whole morning and most of the afternoon.

Early that morning, a certain Major Sukrisno of the Air Force whom Major Sujono had personally recruited for the special coup assignment of commander of these "reserve troops" at Lubang Buaja, had received his orders from Sujono to "get weapons from the Air Force ammunition depot at Mampang Crossroads" (which was the headquarters of the Regional Air Force Command for the Greater Djakarta area). Sukrisno was informed that "His Excellency the Minister/Chief of Staff of the Air Force (Dani) has informed the Chief of Staff of the Regional Air Command of this matter; if he is not there and time is pressing, then the ammunition depot there can be broken into. A vehicle for this purpose will be waiting at the 3rd light pole of the Djakarta Bypass." Estimates of the number of weapons taken from the Mampang depot and distributed to members of Communist front organizations that morning range from 300 to 10,000 with 3,000 probably being the best estimate. The weapons were all small arms of Chinese origin, with the "Chung" trademark stamped on them. The Indonesian army was known not to have any weapons of that type. There is absolutely no doubt that the arms were the property of the Indonesian Air Force.

We have reliable information that the military leaders of the coup--particularly Untung--had strong reservations about using the Communist volunteer troops in the military operation of the coup. Untung has testified:

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I had not given permission for the use of the People's Youth groups (in the raids on the generals' homes). My reasons had nothing at all to do with the battle experience and ability of the troops, but rather with discipline. If the militarily undisciplined and inexperienced troops of the People's Youth were used, a situation could develop during the military action in which these forces would not obey the orders given by the leaders. Whereas what we required at the time was a discipline dedicated to the carrying out of orders. That is why I rejected the idea of using the People's Youth.

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As we shall see later, it was the plan of the coup leaders to arm these volunteer troops with the thought of using them as a "reserve force" to guard Halim Air Force Base. However, when Suharto showed energetic opposition to the coup, never expected by the leaders of the coup, and when Sukarno failed them in their hour of need, panic apparently struck the people at Halim. The handling of defense and logistics had proved completely inadequate. Air Force units promised had not shown up and neither had a cavalry unit. The coup leaders were desperately short of reinforcements for the units guarding the Palace and the radio station; these units had been on duty since early morning, and, among other things they had not eaten all day. The hundreds of Communist youth volunteers who

awaited orders at Lubang Buaja were neither well trained nor experienced and thus were totally unprepared to confront army units of proven capability; but it was decided to send them into Djakarta anyway, as the only reinforcements available. They were instructed in the use of the secret password with which they could identify themselves to the coup forces guarding the Palace and radio station. When they arrived in Djakarta at Merdeka Square, they confidently called out this password; but instead of the counter-password, they were greeted with pointed weapons and swiftly put under arrest by Suharto's forces. Unknown to them, the rebel army units previously in the area had quietly evacuated to Halim.

By 2000 hours Suharto was in control of the whole downtown area around Merdeka Square. Soon thereafter, the radio station broadcast an announcement that it had been liberated from counterrevolutionary control by the armed forces loyal to Suharto. An official Army announcement then explained that the coup was definitely a counterrevolutionary action, that a number of army generals had been kidnapped and the radio station illegally occupied, that Suharto had temporarily taken over leadership of the army and was now in full control of the situation, and that both Sukarno and Nasution were safe.

At about this time Suharto received a second communication from Sukarno, who asked for a clarification of the situation. Suharto sent back the message that Sukarno "must move from Halim." Because of the danger of more nonmilitary forces being armed by the Air Force and sent into Djakarta from Halim, Suharto had decided that he must establish control over the air base that night. He said that he would wait for confirmation that Sukarno had departed before attacking the base.

#### The Collapse of The Coup

Back at Halim, Sukarno was torn with indecision, as he received conflicting advice from his advisers. By

then, the coup leaders were in a state of desperate gloom and making plans to flee. Dani and others urged the President to fly with them to Madiun in Central Java, where they could establish a second front. Apparently, Sukarno seriously considered doing this. There is good evidence that Aidit fully expected Sukarno to join him when he made arrangements for a plane to fly him out of Halim. At the last moment, however, Sukarno was talked out of the plan. Deputy Prime Minister Leimena, who had been summoned to Halim by Sukarno and who had stayed close to the President all afternoon, seems to have been primarily responsible for changing Sukarno's mind. He argued that Sukarno ought to disentangle himself from the coup and go straight to his palace at Bogor, where he normally went every Friday afternoon (and it was then Friday evening) to spend the week-end. It is not known what words of wifely advice Sukarno may have received from Dewi on the matter. She hurried out to Halim by car and talked with him shortly before he left Halim.\*

\*Apparently, Sukarno had left a note for Dewi when he left her home early that morning. In it he is reported to have said that he had received information from several persons about "things that had occurred in the Army the preceding night." He explained that "the men who were carrying out this so-called revolution intended to safeguard Bapak and did not intend to oppose him," so Dewi should not worry because "Bapak was safe."

Later, Dewi made the following comments about her meeting with Sukarno at Halim that evening: "As regards the conversation between Bapak and myself at that time, I asked Bapak what he knew about the things that had happened. Bapak said, as I recall, that there were several generals in the Army who wanted to try to stage a coup against Bapak and that several other men had learned of this before they could do so and had taken action to safeguard Bapak. Gen. Pandjaitan and another general (I forget whether it was Gen. Harjono or Gen. Parman) resisted arrest and a fight occurred and they were killed."

Dewi appears to have been completely unsuspecting of any important event in the offing, before the coup. If Sukarno did know of the plans for the coup beforehand, (footnote continued on page 55)

Afterwards, she returned to her home in Djakarta; he went on to Bogor, his week-end home which he shared with his second wife Hartini.

Suharto wanted to be very sure that Sukarno was safely out of Halim before he ordered any offensive action against the base; he recognized the grave consequences of anything happening to the President which might be considered his responsibility. At about 2200 hours he received a long distance call from Bogor saying that Sukarno had arrived there. Suharto ordered Col. Alex, who was in Bogor, to check out this information personally. He found Sukarno in the Palace.

With the sure knowledge that Sukarno was no longer at Halim, Suharto began his move against the last stronghold of those forces. He selected the RPKAD paracommando unit led by Col. Sarwo Edhy to spearhead the attack on Halim. He ordered them to infiltrate the base under cover of darkness and not to shoot unless fired upon. Throughout the night, the paracommandos quietly surrounded the base and infiltrated its perimeter. The only shooting incident took place around midnight; Suharto's anti-aircraft units opened fire on an incoming plane, which they thought might be bringing supplies to the rebels. It was Sukarno's own jet airplane that had been sent up to Medan to bring back Subandrio. Subandrio had decided not to return to Djakarta,

(footnote continued from page 54)

he apparently did not say anything about them to her. After the coup, she seemed slow to realize that he might have approved of the action taken against the generals (she may still not believe that he did); for a long while, she seemed honestly not to understand why he did not take firm action against those responsible for the murders. About two weeks after the coup, when Dani and his family were living in the Palace under Sukarno's protection, she is reported to have remarked privately that she could not understand why Sukarno was protecting Dani as "everyone knows" that he was implicated in the coup.



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however, so he was not on the plane. It managed to land safely without being hit.

About an hour and a half later (around 0130 hours on the morning of the 2nd), another plane was heard overhead. It was definitely identified by several witnesses at the time as a plane of the Indonesian Air Force, but only a very few people would have known of its secret mission. Just before midnight, General Supardjo, who was still acting as the chief liaison between the Central Command of the coup at Sgt. Sujatno's house and Dani at Halim's Operations Command Center and Aidit at Sgt. Suwadi's house, arrived at the Operations Command Center and spoke to Dani about an urgent request from Aidit for the use of an Air Force plane to fly him to Jogjakarta that evening. Dani immediately arranged for a plane. Col. Latief, who happened to be out searching for Maj. Sujono and Sjam at the time, actually saw the plane take off; he was told that Aidit and his two bodyguards were being flown out to Jogjakarta; he later reported this to Untung when he returned to Sgt. Sujatno's house. According to one story (told by the sister of the pilot of the plane), Aidit was obviously furious about something; at one point, he reportedly threw his coat on the ground and stamped on it. This story, which may or may not be true, fits nicely with other information we have about Aidit's state of mind that evening. Apparently, he was furious at Sukarno, who by then had left Halim and was at Bogor. He may have had some reason for thinking that Sukarno would accompany him to Central Java; as noted earlier, Sukarno seems to have considered this seriously and only at the last moment to have changed his mind. If Aidit had earlier felt betrayed by the President when he failed to make a public statement of support for the coup, his sense of outrage and betrayal must have been all the more acute when he realized that Sukarno had again changed his mind and was not going with him. Later, Aidit is reported to have said that it was Sukarno who ordered him to flee to Central Java and that he was to find a safe hiding place for the

President there.\* It is possible that Aidit still had some hope of Sukarno eventually joining him in Central Java when he left Halim, but he had already lost his best chance for success in establishing some kind of a second front in Central Java, which we know that Sjam and Pono --and presumably Aidit--were arguing for during those last desperate hours at Halim--when he failed to convince Sukarno to go with him then.\*\*

Dani fled soon after Aidit. He and Air Commodore Leo Wattimena left together on a C-130 Hercules aircraft of the Indonesian Air Force. Some five hours later, they finally landed at Iswahjudi Air Force Base in Madiun; for most of that time, they had been flying around aimlessly, as the pilot monitored the security situation at Halim and other airbases.

The Central Command of Untung, Sujono, Latief, Sjam, and Pono was now in utter despair. Apparently, the original coup plans had not provided for this particular contingency, and Untung and the others seem to have been

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\*When Aidit arrived in Semarang on the morning of 2 October to confer with PKI leaders Lukman and Sakirman after the collapse of the coup, he is reported to have told them that the purpose of his coming to Central Java was "to prepare conditions for moving Sukarno to Jogjakarta." Apparently, there was also another occasion on which he referred to Sukarno's plans to join him in Central Java; he indicated that the President had been the one to suggest the idea.

\*\*Apparently, Aidit and Sjam and Pono had no success in convincing Untung and the other military leaders of the coup of the possibility of establishing a second front in Central Java. According to Untung's testimony in court, "Sjam proposed that a follow-up movement be launched. We made no reply to Sjam's proposal. In general, our thinking was very much influenced by the unsuccessful Pasupati Movement (the operation to kidnap the seven generals)."

at a complete loss as to what to do under the circumstances. Various sources have reported Untung as being "almost in a daze" or "bewildered" or "just sitting around, not doing anything." Even Sjam reportedly became confused and seemed unsure what to do; he didn't have the ready answers to Untung's questions that Untung had come to expect from him. It is not clear what contact Sjam may have had with Aidit during those last hours at Halim; it is possible that he acted pretty much on his own.

In part, the lack of decisive leadership from the military leaders of the coup can be explained by their state of absolute exhaustion after the strain of the day and the lack of sleep. But it also strongly suggests that they were not really used to making the crucial decisions on matters of such importance. It was almost as if they expected someone to tell them what to do in the situation. As we shall see later, this was exactly what had been the case with respect to Untung, Latief, and Sujono. Sjam had made all the important decisions, certainly all the political decisions, relating to the planning of the coup and he had always decided everything with the utmost confidence and assurance. It was not clear to Untung and the others whether he made certain decisions on his own or whether he checked everything out with Aidit, but they felt reasonably sure that Aidit at least knew and approved of the main lines of the coup planning. The fact that Sjam did not take the same control of the situation on the evening of the 1st that he had earlier in the planning of the coup suggests that either he did really panic as his plans for a coup blew up in his face or he was not prepared to make the decisions involved without first checking with Aidit and there was neither the time nor the opportunity for the two men to coordinate a whole new plan of action in keeping with the fast-changing circumstances of the day. Probably, it was a little bit of both. Certainly, communications between Aidit and Sjam, as the day wore on, were not very frequent, if they occurred at all. There is nothing to indicate that Sjam knew ahead of time of Aidit's decision to fly to Central Java; it appears that he learned of it when Col. Latief returned to the Central Command and reported it to Untung and the others there. It is somewhat surprising that

Sjam did not go with Aidit that night to Jogjakarta. They may have had some understanding, however, that Aidit would go to Central Java to try to keep the situation there in hand while Sjam would stay in Djakarta to help manage things there.

In any case, Sjam left Halim, sometime in the early morning of 2 October, in the company of Gen. Supardjo. They made their way on foot to the home of a PKI member in Djakarta, where they spent that day and night together. The next day they went their separate ways. Untung and Latief left Halim together, about the same time. For at least a week, they stayed together, travelling around the environs of Djakarta but apparently not going into the city. Sujono seems to have stayed at Sgt. Sujatno's house that first night. It would have been natural for him to be at Halim, since (before the coup) he was the Commander of the Air Force troops assigned to the defense of the base.

At dawn, when Col. Edhy's paratroopers rushed the airbase, the leaders of the coup had scattered. Many of the troops of the 454th Battalion, which had been evacuated to Halim after its earlier guard duty at the Palace, had wandered off during the night.\* Those who were left

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\*From the interrogation reports of the soldiers of the 454th who left their posts that night at Halim, it seems that they had no clear idea of where they were going or how they were going to get there. But they now realized that they had been tricked into believing that they were defending Sukarno against a coup attempt whereas in fact they had been used to defend a coup action. Some had some vague idea of returning to their post in Central Java but no idea how they would get there; others talked of turning themselves in. When Suharto the next day announced a general amnesty to all those soldiers involved in the coup who promptly turned themselves in, they did just that. Thus, none of them got very far from Halim that night, before turning around and going back into Djakarta to report to KOSTRAD headquarters.

put up practically no resistance. By 0610 hours, Suharto had taken Halim--without the loss of a single man.

### Reflections of the Coup Throughout Indonesia

As there is a great deal of confusion about events connected with the 30 September Movement that occurred outside Djakarta, it is important to clarify just what happened in cities like Semarang, Jogjakarta, and Solo, which followed Djakarta's lead in establishing Revolutionary Councils, as called for in the Decree of the 30 September Movement broadcast from Djakarta at mid-day on 1 October.

In the three key cities of Central Java, there occurred the same basic pattern of military action followed by a public statement of support for Untung's movement and an announcement of the formation of a Revolutionary Council. Very shortly after the Untung announcement on the radio, Col. Suherman,\* Chief of Army Intelligence for

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\*Untung had been an intimate confidant of Suherman when the latter was Battalion Commander and Untung a Company Commander in the Central Java Territorial Division. On the two trips that Untung made to Semarang after he was transferred to Djakarta in May 1965, he had stayed at Suherman's house. Thus, he had last seen Suherman about a month and a half before the coup. On the second trip in August, he had stopped off in Sron dol, staying at the home of Major Sukirno, who had succeeded Untung as Commander of the 454th Battalion. In his testimony at Untung's trial, Sukrisno stated that there had been no discussion of a coup on that occasion. No doubt, Sukrisno was telling the truth. Untung himself was not brought into the planning for the coup until early September. Most likely, Untung and Suherman never discussed the matter of the coup, either. Suherman's activities on behalf of the coup were almost certainly arranged by the regional bureau of the PKI Special Bureau in Semarang. There is no evidence that any of the military officers (footnote continued on page 61)

Central Java, stationed in Semarang, acting in close collaboration with Col. Marjono, chief of personnel, and Lt. Col. Sastrodibroto, bureau chief for civil-military relations, seized control of the Divisional headquarters and placed the Commander of the Central Java Division, Gen. Surjosumpeno, under arrest.\* Sometime around mid-morning, Suherman occupied the studio of Radio Indonesia in Semarang to broadcast two important announcements: one, that he had taken over command of the division and, two, that a Revolutionary Council in Central Java had been formed in accordance with the Decree of the 30 September Movement.

Subsequent to the radio announcement from Djakarta, a Major Muljono stationed in Jogjakarta went to see his commanding officer, Col. Katamso, to urge him to accept the Untung proclamation and declare the Jogjakarta Command behind it. When Katamso stalled, Muljono sent a squad of men loyal to him to arrest Katamso and the deputy commander, Lt. Col. Sugijono.\*\* The two men were taken

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(footnote continued from page 60)

involved in the coup in Djakarta discussed plans for the coup with military officers in other cities. The PKI Special Bureau would have handled such matters as coordinating events in Semarang or Jogjakarta or Solo with those in Djakarta.

\*Surjosumpeno was able to trick the young officers who guarded him into leaving him alone long enough to allow him to make his escape from the Divisional Headquarters. From there he fled southwards out of Semarang to Magelang, where he contacted local military officers. Widespread reports that he was one of the victims of the 30 September Movement were not true.

\*\*Apparently, the troops that were sent to arrest Katamso first looked for him at his home before they went to the district military headquarters where they found him. The story was spread that, not finding him at home, they murdered his wife and 8 children ("brutally chopping them to bits"). Again, there was no truth to the story, although it is still widely believed, no doubt because it has been repeated so often. Katamso and Sugijono were killed, however; they were the only victims of the 30 September Movement in Central Java.

to the army barracks three miles outside Jogjakarta and held there all day. Muljono then ordered his troops to surround the palace complex of the Sultan of Jogjakarta, who happened to be out of town at the time. He also seized the Jogjakarta Radio Station. At 2000 hours Radio Indonesia in Jogjakarta began broadcasting support for Untung's coup in Djakarta, which was itself now in the last stages of collapse.

Sometime in the afternoon of 1 October, the newly appointed commander of the Solo (Surakarta) military district, Lt. Col. Ezy Suharto, together with his chief of staff and a brigade commander under him, were put under arrest by a certain Major Iskandar, after they had delayed in giving support to Untung's movement. At 1800 hours, some two hours before Jogjakarta, Radio Indonesia in Solo put out a statement on the formation of a Revolutionary Council for Solo on the model of the Central Revolutionary Council announced by Untung. This initial statement was issued by the Communist mayor of Solo, Utomo Ramelan, whom the top leaders of the PKI (Aidit, Lukman, and Sakirman) would visit the very next day for high-level discussions of PKI policy in the aftermath of the coup's failure.

Nothing of the sort that happened in Semarang, Jogjakarta, and Solo happened anywhere else in Java, not even in East Java, where there were many powerful centers of Communist strength. According to one unconfirmed report, the Governor of Bali is reported to have made some statement about the formation of a Revolutionary Council for Bali, but nothing more came of it, if in fact he ever made such a statement. There was much concern at the time about Sumatra, where the PKI was thought to have an impressive capability for paramilitary-type activities that could create widespread civil disorder. The leftist Governor of North Sumatra, Army General Ulung Sitepu, is known to have sent a cable to Djakarta congratulating Untung on his "move to save the Republic" and pledging the full support of North Sumatra to the 30

September Movement.\* But otherwise, there was no observable response from Sumatra to events in Djakarta. The city of Medan was quiet; no unusual activity by any group was noted at any time after the news from Djakarta was first received. There was no evidence of any unusual military action in Surabaya, either. In the days after the coup, certain wall posters that appeared in Surabaya supporting the coup were suspected to be the work of the PKI; otherwise, there was no known PKI activity in support of the coup anywhere in Sumatra. Between 2-12 October, about 150 PKI leaders, plus many ordinary members of the party from all areas of Sumatra, went into hiding in the jungle mountain areas of North Sumatra, at various prearranged locations. It was presumed that they were organizing themselves into a para-military force for an all-out showdown with the army, but no such showdown ever materialized. In keeping with Aidit's policy, they had simply gone into hiding until the situation cleared. They never challenged the army in any resort to armed force. Several hundred of them were finally captured by the army, having put up almost no resistance--which was the story of the PKI surrender to the army all over Indonesia after the coup.

But on the day of 1 October, the prospect of military opposition from the supporters of the 30 September Movement in Central Java and other areas outside Djakarta seemed quite real to Suharto. Around 2000-2100 hours, messages began to be received in Djakarta from Central Java that the radio station in Jogjakarta and Semarang were in rebel hands. Once Sukarno decided to go to Bogor rather than Central Java, Suharto was free to consider his move against the rebel strongholds in Central Java without the concern for the President's safety which had

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\*On 8 October, after the collapse of the coup, Gov. Ulung Sitepu and his wife fled Medan, taking all their personal valuables with them. They were reported to have gone to the Kabandjahe area where he had a strong leftist following.



influenced his decision not to attack Halim until he was sure that Sukarno had left the airbase. Suharto's strategy of winning over the forces loyal to Untung in Central Java was very much the same strategy he had used against the troops acting under the orders of the coup leaders in Djakarta. He began with what was to prove a long series of appeals and countermanding of orders over the military telex system and the radio. In a radiogram to Central Java he explicitly disavowed Col. Suherman's order to all commanders within the Central Java Territorial Division; as a former commander of that Division, he was undoubtedly hoping to rally loyalties to himself. In the meantime, he ordered army units in Central Java to be placed on 24-hour combat readiness to resist any seizures of government authority by the revolutionary councils; otherwise, they were not to take any precipitate action that might lead to a civil war.\*

By late afternoon on 1 October the staff officers of the Central Java Territorial Command had decided without reservation against the rebel forces of Untung and Col. Suherman. The reason that some of the troops apparently hesitated in following the lead of the officers was their uncertainty as to Sukarno's position on the coup. At the height of the coup fortunes on 1 October, the troops of the rebels were estimated to have the strength of only one battalion; during the next two days, these forces gradually melted away, much as the troops of the 530th and 454th battalions deserted the cause of the coup in Djakarta and went over to the side of Suharto.

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\*There was never any plan for the use of West Javanese or any other non-Central Javanese forces against the rebels. Central Java Divisional Commander Surjosumpeno, who had escaped from the rebel officers who had put him under arrest, felt assured that he could deal with the situation, and Suharto thought he should be given the chance to do so.

Semarang was the first of the rebel cities to fall. The troops of Suherman had been hearing on the radio about the failure of Untung's coup in Djakarta. Suherman's authority dwindled rapidly after that. Division Commander Surjosumpeno had brought loyal troops to the outskirts of Semarang. After "Suharto-style" negotiations with some of the rebel officers, the troops were largely won over. On the morning of 2 October, Surjosumpeno re-occupied Semarang without a shot being fired. Suherman, Marjono, and Sastrodibroto fled with a handful of troops still loyal to them.\*

Surjosumpeno began sending tank and paratroop units to Jogjakarta and Solo to try to win back the loyalty of individual units there. Some crucial battalions were won over, but the two cities were still in rebel hands that afternoon when the afternoon editions of the newspapers in the two cities came out. That afternoon a large demonstration supporting Untung's coup took place in the main part of Jogjakarta. The major PKI mass organizations were restrained from action, but the local Communist youth group was conspicuous along with other youth groups of the other political parties. Apparently Muljono was able to influence the Communist youth more than the PKI leadership. Their participation in the demonstration was to prove very damaging to the PKI's effort to claim complete non-involvement in the coup. The only bloodshed of the coup in Central Java occurred that same afternoon in Jogjakarta. Katomso and Sugijono were removed from their temporary place of incarceration and taken out of town and shot.

In Solo also, the pro-coup tide was still strong on 2 October. Placards indicating support for Untung were plastered all over the city. Groups of Communist

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\*After the failure of the coup, Suherman and Col. Marjono hid in the mountains of Central Java in the region of Jogjakarta. They were finally captured in December 1965.

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youth wandered about in a vaguely threatening way; almost everyone else kept off the streets.

Late in the day of the 2nd, there were signs that the tide had begun to change. At 0130 hours on the 3rd, Sukarno made his radio broadcast to the nation, and this was relayed to Jogjakarta and Solo. Anti-Untung placards began to appear. By 4 October, the radio stations in both cities were in the hands of Surjosumpeno's men, and local military commanders arrested by the coup group were released unharmed. The situation remained tense but calm with both pro-coup and anti-coup groups unwilling to start anything. As we shall see later, Aidit and other top PKI leaders were able to move about the city of Solo openly, even though it was militarily in Surjosumpeno's hands.

By the morning of 5 October overt military resistance to Surjosumpeno had ceased throughout Central Java. Aside from the murders of the two Jogjakarta army chiefs, there had been an astonishing lack of violence. Cities and loyalties had changed hands silently and peacefully. It had been a game of bluff and counter-bluff, threat and counter-threat, appeal and counter-appeal.

#### The Coup de Grace for the PKI

In Djakarta, the outcome of the coup had not hung in the balance even the short period of 2-3 days as it had in Central Java. By the end of the day on 1 October, the coup forces had fled in defeat and Suharto was in full control of the situation. Untung had not held the city long enough for any sort of mass demonstration of support --either spontaneous or otherwise--to materialize. Had there been plans for a demonstration, like the one in Jogjakarta, for 2 October or the days following, it would naturally have been called off in the hopeless situation of the utter collapse of the coup. Thus, there never was the spectacle of groups of Communists and other leftists out on the streets of Djakarta in support of the coup--as there was in Jogjakarta and Solo.

In view of this, one important development of 2 October is all the more intriguing and mystifying. It is the editorial that appeared in the PKI newspaper Harian Rakjat, published in Djakarta on the morning of 2 October. In its banner headline, Harian Rakjat claimed that Untung had saved President Sukarno from a coup of the generals' council. Accompanying the headlines was a crude cartoon, showing a mighty fist, labeled 'the 30 September Movement', smashing into the face of an Indonesian general. The general's pockets were stuffed with money; he had dollar signs for epaulettes; his shoulder badges showed him to be a member of the Council of Generals; and his cap was stamped with CIA; propping him up was a particularly unpleasant-looking Uncle Sam. Next to the cartoon, on the front page, was a brief editorial, only 202 words in length, which condemned the Generals' Council and called Untung's action "a patriotic and revolutionary measure." Although it claimed that the "nature of the action was an internal army matter," the editorial expressed the thought that "the sympathy and support of the people" ought certainly to be for the coup.\* On the whole, it was a rather cautious editorial, but this was really beside the point; the damage had already been done simply by going on record in support of the coup. In but 202 ill-advised words, which gave the coup the PKI's public endorsement, Harian Rakjat had provided the army with the documentary justification for the PKI's own obliteration.

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\*The PKI was shrewd in deceiving the public into thinking that the 30 September Movement was nothing more than an internal problem of the Army. The coup had been deliberately staged to look that way, for instance, in the selection of Untung as the nominal leader of the coup. His first public proclamation of the coup emphasized the point that the coup was an internal matter within the army. The Harian Rakjat editorial simply picked up the theme that had already been decided on as the cover story for the coup. It proved to be a convincing cover story that was accepted by many people at the time.

In keeping with the paper's normal publishing routine, the 2 October morning edition was probably set and printed late the previous afternoon.\* At that time, events seemed to be going well enough for the coup forces that the newspaper's editors would have felt confidence enough in expressing such an opinion. As far as the timing is concerned, they could have been reacting to events as they happened, but it seems clear that they were actually prepared for events to the extent of having the editorial ready for publication before 1 October. It is doubtful that the editors would have taken a stand on a matter of such importance except on the direct orders of the Politburo--or Aidit himself--which would almost have to have been agreed upon before the coup. The editorial reflects a cautious-but-positive attitude which would have appealed to Aidit and suggests that he may even have written it himself. For these reasons, which can be deduced from the editorial as it appeared and when it appeared, it would seem that the PKI must have had foreknowledge of the coup. Considering all the other evidence we have that the PKI not only had foreknowledge of the coup but was deeply involved in planning the affair, it is obvious that the editorial was part of the planning from the beginning. The editorial stressed the point that the coup was purely an internal army affair which

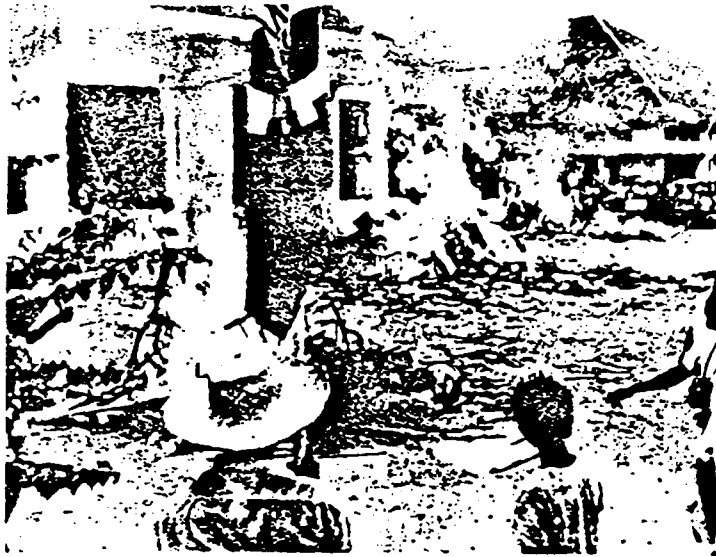
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\*Apparently, the 2 October edition of Harian Rakjat was on the newstands at the regular time on the morning of 2 October, which suggests that it was printed as usual the afternoon before. One other newspaper that appeared on 2 October--Suluh Indonesia--was published later than usual that day. Although it was stated that it was due to "technical difficulties", obviously, it was due to the coup. Suluh Indonesia's reaction to the coup is interesting. It headlined its support and that of the PNI for Sukarno and denied knowing anything about the presence of PNI people on Untung's revolutionary council. In this way, it avoided taking a direct stand on the coup, in contrast to the stand taken by Harian Rakjat.

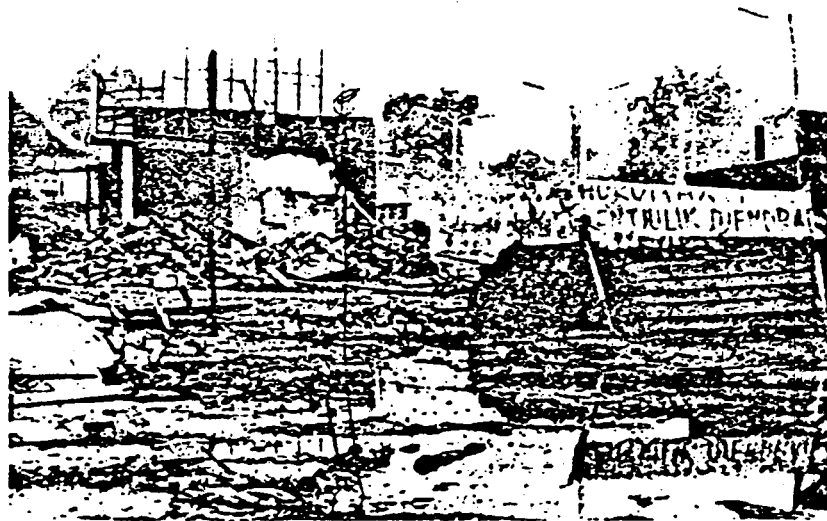
was the same point that Untung made in his first public announcement of the coup. Obviously, this was the story invented by the PKI to cover up PKI involvement in the coup. The editorial in Harian Rakjat was simply part of PKI planning ahead of time to have it accepted as the real explanation for the coup.

There is still the unanswered question of why the PKI leaders who were responsible for Harian Rakjat did not stop its distribution early on the morning of 2 October when they must have realized that the coup had failed miserably. Though the newspaper would have been printed and ready for distribution, they could certainly have prevented its circulation. The fact that they did not was probably because they were acting on previous instructions from Aidit or the Politburo and they were not prepared to do anything different without new instructions on the matter. In the confusion of the moment, Aidit obviously did not have the time or the opportunity to contact the editors of Harian Rakjat, if the matter of the editorial even occurred to him. He was totally occupied at the time with more important matters, such as trying to get Sukarno to go with him to Central Java--and when that failed, with the matter of his own flight to Central Java, his personal safety, and his urgent need to contact Lukman and other top PKI leaders to decide on party policy in the emergency situation of the coup's collapse.

Whatever the reason, the publication of the 2 October edition of Harian Rakjat with its editorial endorsing the coup was an act of political suicide. In this instance, the practice of democratic centralism within the party, which normally gave the party a certain strength because of its ability to react quickly to change (since it was totally responsive to the will of the central leadership), worked against the party, since various leadership levels within the party waited for orders from above instead of acting on their own according to their own best judgment of the situation. When the chain of command broke down --as it did on the night of 1 October--the party was all but paralyzed and suddenly made very vulnerable to attack.



Burning of the Communist Youth Headquarters



PKI Headquarters after the anti-Communist demonstration in Djakarta on 8 October 1965



## The Postlude

The Indonesian coup of September 1965 may well prove to be one of the most significant events of the post-war period. The political repercussions of the coup have not only changed the whole course of Indonesian history but they have had a profound effect on the world political scene, especially that of Southeast Asia.

In the three years since the coup we have seen in Indonesia (1) a massive purge of the Communist party organization in which thousands of people lost their lives in one of the ghastliest and most concentrated bloodlettings of current times,\* (2) the toppling of President Sukarno, who before the coup had the stature of a demigod on the Indonesian scene, and (3) a complete turnabout in the country's international alignment-- from that of being one of Communist China's closest allies in growing estrangement from the rest of the world and one of the harshest critics of the West to a new posture of being a friend of the West, seeking the goodwill of all other nations of the world except Communist China. These developments have all come about as a direct result of the coup. In a sense, they are really part of the story of the coup. But since each is also a story in itself and since this paper is intended to focus on the coup itself, they will not be treated in detail. Only those post-coup developments that seem to shed more light on the actions or intentions or sympathies of the main actors in the coup will be included in this brief postscript to the coup.

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\*Estimates of the number of people killed in Indonesia in the anti-PKI bloodbath after the coup range from 87,000, the official Indonesian government estimate, to 500,000. The figure of 87,000, which is the figure the official commission appointed by Sukarno to investigate the anti-PKI massacres accepted as the best estimate of the number of people killed, is probably too low. The U.S. Embassy estimated the figure to be closer to 250,000. It would be a mistake to put too much faith in any of the various estimates. It was impossible, even at the time, to get accurate figures of the number of people killed in one neighborhood. (footnote continued on page 71 )

As with the actual events of the coup, which were treated in the preceding section, the post-coup developments discussed in this section are, for the most, matters of established fact; they are part of the record against which we must examine the words and testimony of various individuals as to their role in the coup.

### The Central Command in Hiding

The five men who composed the Central Command of the coup, who had emerged from obscurity to play the main role in a drama of unforeseen consequence, disappeared from the scene altogether as quickly as they had first appeared. After midnight on the 1st of October, they played no further part in influencing the course of events. They were hunted men, the object of an immediate and unrelenting search by the Army for all those responsible for the coup. Their one and only concern became that of self-preservation. They were constantly on the move, and,

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(footnote continued from page 70 )

Since it wasn't safe to travel around in Indonesia in those days, many areas were never visited by anyone interested in determining the number of people killed. Thus, there never was--and never will be--a reliable figure of the numbers dead as a result of the Indonesian coup. Undoubtedly, vast numbers were killed. The killings in Java alone put the Mau Mau massacres and the killings in the Congo in the shadow, although the latter got much more publicity. In terms of the numbers killed, the anti-PKI massacres in Indonesia rank as one of the worst mass murders of the 20th century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930's, the Nazi mass murders during the Second World War, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950's. In this regard, the Indonesian coup is certainly one of the most significant events of the 20th century, far more significant than many other events that have received much greater publicity.

as the army search for them intensified, it became harder and harder for them to find safe places to hide; when they did, they were virtually confined to that place, day in and day out. General Supardjo, who evaded capture longer than any of the other military officers involved in the coup (he was finally arrested in February 1967), has described the torture of his life as a fugitive for almost one and one-half years. During the whole time, he found only two or three occasions to communicate with former coup associates who were also in hiding.

Sjam came to the house twice but didn't stay there. Apparently he was dodging raids and discussing the security of various people. I didn't have any discussions with him.

I moved around to various houses in Djakarta. I changed identity cards. I practically never went out. I was introduced as a relative of my various hosts. During all that time I never left Djakarta. People with whom I lived financed me. Once, for a period of one month, I ate nothing but rice and slept on the floor on a mat and an old pillow.

Once I was able to send a message to my family in Bandung; they replied only that they were all right. I never saw them.

For nine days after the coup, Untung and Latief travelled around the countryside outside Djakarta. The next day Latief was arrested in his wife's home in Djakarta.\* Untung headed for Central Java. Two days later,

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\*Apparently, Latief was shot in both legs before he was captured. An infection is reported to have developed, resulting in the amputation of both legs. Although there has never been any confirmation of this, it is interesting that Latief never appeared at any of the court trials. He was not given a trial like Untung, Dani, Subandrio, Sudisman, Sjam, and the others, and his testimony at other trials, such as Untung's trial, was written testimony. There has been no reliable report on his physical condition from anyone who has seen him in prison. He may still be alive, but it is thought that he was probably one of the four military leaders of the coup (one of whom was Untung) who were executed in December 1967.

he was recognized by two soldiers (though he was wearing civilian clothes) as he rode on a public bus which was on its way to his home town, and he too was arrested. He has described his travels after the coup:

From the time that I left Lubang Buaja up to 11 October I remained out of Djakarta, but I kept going around and around between Polonia, Djatinegara, and Utan Kaju together with Col. Latief.\* On 10 October Col. Latief requested that he and I split up and thus I split from Col. Latief, and on 11 October I and Damiri left Djatinegara for Krawang and then went directly to Tjikampek where we spent the night. Between 12-13 October I went to Central Java but on 13 October I was arrested by the Tegal Branch of HANSIP in Tegal . . . and taken to Bandung . . . and from there by armored car to Djakarta, where I have been under interrogation.

According to one account of Untung's capture, which is probably apocryphal, the first words that Untung spoke after he was taken into custody were "That fellow Bung Karno (Sukarno) has let me down."\*\*

Air Force Major Sujono was captured next, sometime around 15 October, though the circumstances of his arrest are not as well known. After these early arrests of three of the five men comprising the Central Command, it was almost a year and a half before the Army captured General Supardjo. He has commented as follows on his activities during that time:

Sjam and I left Lubang Buaja and headed south toward the highway. I was wearing civilian

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\*Polonia, Djatinegara, and Utan Kaju are suburbs of Djakarta at the southern end of the city in the direction of Halim Air Force Base. Thus, Untung was traveling around in the area between Djakarta and Halim for over a week after the coup.

\*\*Tarzie Vittachi reports this in his book The Fall of Sukarno. He does not give the source of his information on Untung's capture.



The capture of Untung



Untung at his trial

clothes. We boarded a small bus headed for Djakarta. We got off at the Tjitjih building and Sjam took me up an alley to a house behind the building. There Sjam and I separated. I had hoped that Sjam would take me to Sukarno so that things could be settled further.

I was transferred to another house. The house probably belonged to one of the two civilians who were at the Central Command.

I still had the letter from the President\*.... My conversations with Marto Suwandi (in whose house Supardjo lived for a while) dealt mainly with my efforts to meet with Sukarno. My only intention was to discuss the follow-up to the dispersal of the troops, since I had been given the assignment (by the President) of dissolving the troops of the 30 September Movement. However, it was impossible to meet with Sukarno. I wrote a letter to the President saying that Sukarno's order had been carried out and the troops dispersed and explaining that this movement was not solely of a military nature since many of the people were involved. I asked the President to make a radio announcement which would allow me to meet safely with him. I gave it to another man, but there was no reply. I was considering being dropped near the palace and working my way in, but Suwandi didn't agree. No answer ever came from the palace.

I wrote letters to the commander of KOSTRAD and the Army caretaker commander saying that I had not been consulted about the inclusion of my

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\*Supardjo is reported to have had in his possession a letter from Sukarno which he used as a letter of introduction to the various people who befriended him during the time he was in hiding from the army after the coup. According to several reports, the letter was nothing more than the signed order which Sukarno is reported to have given Supardjo on the dispersing of the troops after the decision to stop the 30 September Movement had been made.

name on the list of members of the Revolutionary Council and that it should be stricken from the list.

I was convinced that the situation would get better. I depended completely on the President.

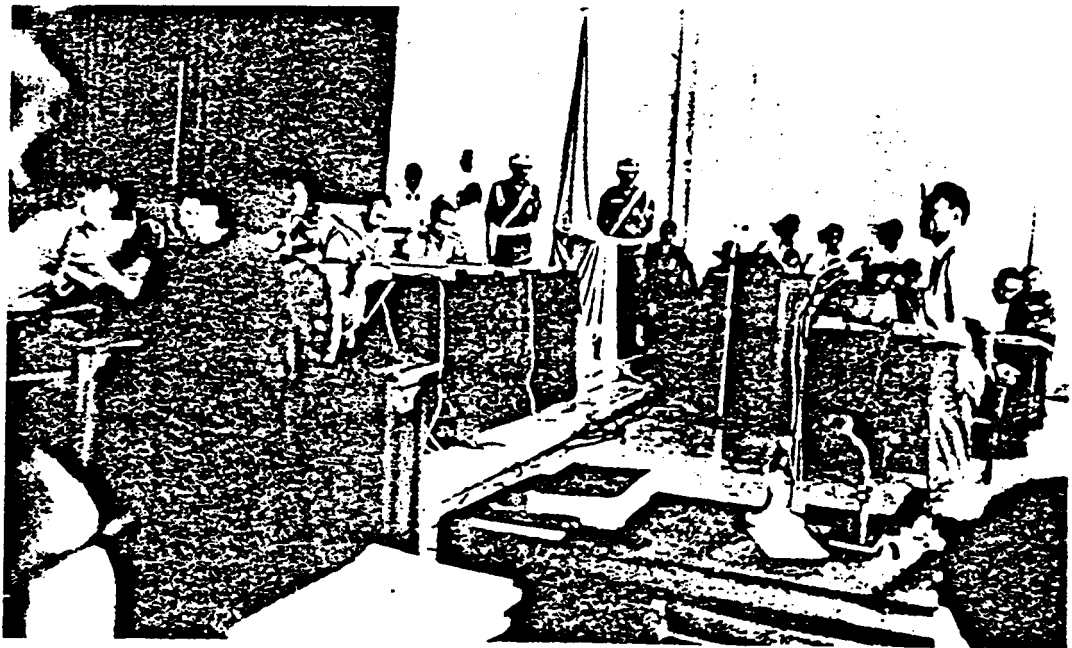
Once in mid-September 1966, Sudisman (the PKI leader) came to Suwandi's house. We talked about the security problem. They wanted to stay at Suwandi's house because this house seemed to be the safest, but I refused them. We also talked about the coup. Sudisman said the failure of the coup was due to the rashness of Aidit and his followers. I told him the problem was one of exploiting victory. It should not have been stopped when Sukarno so ordered. The Central Command lacked military technique. There was no unity of command, what with Untung, Sjam, and the others; and logistics were disorganized. We did not discuss the matter of rebuilding the PKI. I have never been a member of the PKI. The inclusion of my name (in the Revolutionary Council) was their doing.

Supardjo's capture led to the arrest of Sjam in early March 1967 in Tjimahi, West Java, a small town near Bandung. On PKI orders, Sjam had left Djakarta within a week of the coup and taken refuge in Bandung; he had left there for Tjimaha only two days before his capture. During the months in hiding, he had been able to contact the new PKI leadership in Djakarta only three times--at the end of 1966, in January 1967, and in February 1967--if we are to believe Sjam's own testimony on these matters (and this writer at least, is prepared to accept Sjam's statements in this regard, for the reasons given on pages 311-316\*). In mid-1966 Sjam had learned of the party leadership's decision to dissolve the Special Bureau, which he had headed, and transfer its functions to the West Java Greater Regional Committee. In reply to an inquiry regarding his status, he was informed that he was released from all responsibilities as Chief of the Old Special Bureau; it was emphasized that his safety was a matter of continuing concern to the party leadership. In his last communication with the party leadership, Sjam forwarded certain suggestions he had on the new organization of the party to the PKI leaders in Djakarta.

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\*In addition to the general comments on the validity of interrogation reports as evidence that are made in the Appendix (pp. 311-316), there are one or two particular comments that should be made in the case of Sjam. Once the Army got Sjam to (footnote continued on page 76)





General Supardjo facing Trial

As is well known, the complete reorganization of the party on a new covert basis had been forced upon the party after the virtual obliteration of its former overt leadership by the army after the coup. By the time Sjam was arrested in March 1967, four of the five members of the Standing Council of the Politburo and six of the ten members of the full Politburo had been killed. Njono, the Chief of the Greater Djakarta Committee of the PKI and a member of the Politburo who, as we shall see, was directly involved in the coup (he was in charge of PKI "operational-technical" preparations for the coup, such as the arrangements for the training of a PKI reserve force to be used in the coup) had been the first important Communist leader to be arrested after the coup. He had not gone into hiding immediately after the failure of the coup as the other PKI leaders had done, but had continued to show up every day at the party headquarters in Djakarta. His capture on 5 October 1965 preceded the arrests even of the military officers who had been the nominal leaders of the coup. In February 1966, Njono was the first tried in court and sentenced to death for his involvement in the coup.

(footnote continued from page 75)

talk, it seems that he was almost anxious to tell everything that he knew about the coup--almost out of a sense of pride, it seems. At his trial, he actually boasted that he was "the brains behind the 30 September Movement." Whatever his motivation, he was the most cooperative of witnesses and his testimony has been well borne out by the testimony of other people involved in the coup. One independent fact that seems to confirm the reliability of his testimony is the fact that he was denounced as a traitor by the PKI after his capture and interrogation by the Army. According to reliable sources, PKI party members were informed of Sjam's treason to the party at secret party meetings in late 1967. Those who could be compromised by Sjam were warned to take special precautions since it would have to be assumed that he had told the Army everything that he knew about the coup and the secret operations of the PKI.

The main blow to the PKI was, of course, the arrest and execution of Aidit, which came fairly early in the course of arrests made by the Army of PKI leaders--on 22 November 1965. Soon after that, Lukman and Njoto, the number two and number three men in the PKI leadership, were killed escaping capture. Sudisman, the fourth-ranking leader of the PKI, was captured by the army, tried in court, and sentenced to death. Sakirman, the fifth member of the Standing Council of the Politburo, was killed later that same year, in November 1966.

### Aidit's Last Days

Aidit's capture and summary execution--on 22 November 1965--by paracommando units of the Army under General Sarwo Edhy climaxed weeks of search-and-destroy operations against the Communists in Central Java after the coup. This operation alone was enough to make national heroes of the paracommandos who organized the raids on the homes of known Communists throughout the area, leading finally to the arrest of Aidit in Sambeng Gede, a small town near Semarang in Central Java. Aidit's travels after the coup up to his death are a fascinating story and are also of considerable interest to anyone studying the coup.

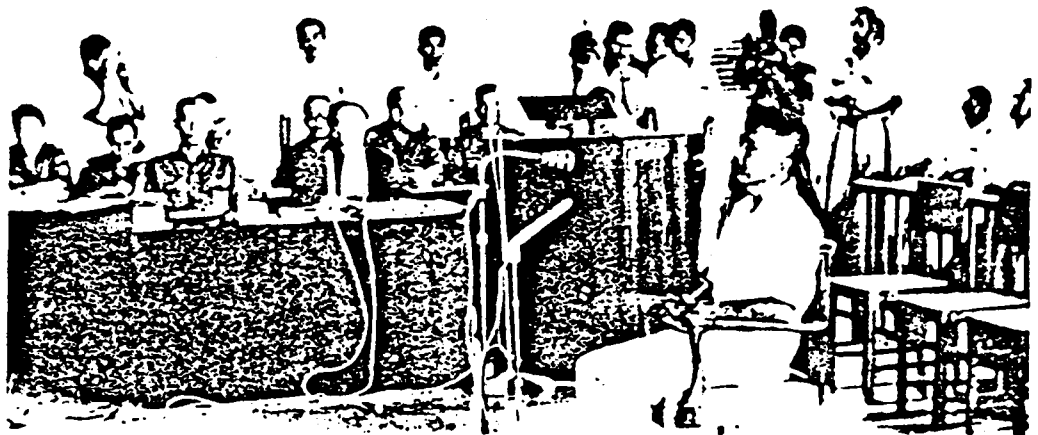
About two hours after he left Halim by plane, Aidit arrived in Jogjakarta, sometime around 0400 hours on the morning of 2 October. From there, he was driven by a certain Air Force Major Sudarjo to the home of Sutrisno, an important local PKI leader. Aidit is reported to have warned Sutrisno to call off any demonstrations he might have planned and at all costs not to allow the PKI to be provoked into violent action. He said that the PKI should indicate complete, unconditional support for any policies the President might announce.

Aidit left Jogjakarta for Semarang almost immediately, travelling in a black Fiat 1300 sedan, dressed as a Moslem in a sarong and black pitji (hat).<sup>\*</sup> At 0800 hours

<sup>\*</sup>Aidit was disguised as a religious teacher with a sarong wound around his waist, a white shirt with short sleeves, and dark glasses. He had abandoned the white suit with the three gold stars, the uniform used by cabinet ministers, which he apparently loved to wear.



Njono, as he appeared as the first defendant at the special military court trials after the coup



Njono before the military tribunal

he arrived at number 14 Dempo Street in Semarang, which was the home of an important PKI leader who was responsible for all of Central Java. His objective was to contact Lukman and Sakirman, the number two and number five men in the party hierarchy, whom he knew to be staying at that house. (Aidit himself had ordered Lukman and Sakirman to go to Semarang just before the coup so that they would be safely out of Djakarta and in a position to influence events in Central Java; they had left Djakarta by car on the evening of 28 September and arrived in Semarang the next day around noon.) Soon after Aidit arrived at the designated house in Semarang, so too did Sujono Atmo, the Acting Governor of Central Java, a known Communist sympathizer whose position would allow him to do much to keep the overall situation in control. Sujono Atmo joined in the discussions between Aidit, Lukman, and Sakirman. After about an hour, all four set off in the direction of Solo (Surakarta) in Sujono Atmo's official limousine. They stopped only once in Bojolan, for an hour, to brief a prominent local PKI official.

Once in Solo, they went straight to the home of Communist Mayor Utomo Ramelan. Presumably lengthy discussions were held with Ramelan along the same lines as those Aidit had had with other PKI officials that day. That evening the Commander of the Panasan airbase just outside Solo was summoned to Ramelan's home. He came, but apparently not without some misgivings--as by now the PKI was under general suspicion for its role in the coup. In the course of the evening's discussion, Aidit reportedly requested the use of a plane to fly to Bali. Lieutenant Colonel Sujoto refused, on the excuse that none was available. He did promise to deliver a letter to Sukarno for Aidit; but the following morning--perhaps influenced by Sukarno's radio broadcast early on the morning of 3 October--he appears to have decided that it would be best not to associate further with Aidit, and he returned the letter to him.

Aidit was busy in Solo the next day and the days following that. He toured the villages of Baki, Sewu, and Djagalan, all situated around Solo, and he may have travelled as far as Madiun and Kediri to visit other centers of PKI strength. In every place, he told the people who assembled to hear him that there must be no

demonstration of support for the coup; and in none of the places he visited was there ever any movement or activity or demonstration on behalf of the coup. He was obviously completely successful in getting the people to follow his policy--a policy of wait and see. A tense and watchful stillness reigned everywhere, but there was no sign of PKI activity anywhere.

Sometime before 5 October, Aidit presumably drafted the statement that was issued on the morning of the 5th by the PKI information bureau in Djakarta. The statement was the strongest denial of PKI participation in the coup that the party was ever to claim. It stated explicitly that the PKI was not involved in the coup, that the coup leaders had not requested the approval of party members whose names were included in the revolutionary council; that the coup was purely an internal affair of the army. Besides the obvious intent to dissociate the PKI from the coup, the statement was intended to strengthen Sukarno's hand in settling the matter, rather than the Army; the PKI had good reason to fear that the Army would use the coup to gain the upper hand against Sukarno. After all, if the coup was strictly an internal army matter, as the PKI claimed, it was logical for the Army to insist on its own right to settle the matter. Aidit wanted the coup accepted, on the one hand, as an internal army affair in which the PKI had played absolutely no part and, on the other, as a political matter which only the President could solve. The 5 October PKI statement expressed the full support of the party for whatever political settlement Sukarno announced. It is interesting to note how similar this statement was to Aidit's instructions to Sutrisno and other PKI officials with whom he talked in Semarang and Solo. The same points were also stressed in a letter he is reported to have written to the East Java Regional Committee on 2 October--all of which suggests that the 5 October PKI statement was also drafted by Aidit. In essence, it was the message that he carried to the PKI wherever he travelled after the coup.

On 4 October Djakarta Radio had broadcast the news that there would be a plenary session of the Cabinet at the palace in Bogor on 6 October, which all Ministers were urgently requested to attend. It was decided that Aidit and Lukman would both attend. Early on the morning of 5 October Lukman set off for Djakarta in his own official limousine. Stopping only in Pemalang near Brebes to talk to local PKI cadres, he reached Djakarta about 1530 hours that same day. The next morning he proceeded to Bogor, where he made his last public appearance.

It is unclear why Aidit did not also travel to Djakarta by car (possibly it was for security reasons). In any case, he was apparently determined to make the trip by plane; but once again he was frustrated in his travel plans. On 4 October he urged Mayor Utomo Ramelan to go with him to visit the commander of Panasan airbase again. Once again Colonel Sujoto refused to give him an airplane to go to Djakarta to attend the cabinet meeting. About 1500 hours the next afternoon (5 October) Aidit and Ramelan made a last forlorn appearance at Panasan; but Sujoto found new reasons for being uncooperative. Aidit and Ramelan left the base soon afterwards, and Aidit at least was never seen in public again.

For six weeks Aidit lived in hiding in Central Java, moving around between Solo and Semarang. If he ever had any serious thought of fleeing Indonesia or escaping to a more remote area of the country--some sources claim that he thought of going to Bali, among other places--he did not get very far. In Central Java, which was the area where the PKI had its greatest strength, Aidit had a rather remarkable defense organization. Trained and armed workers of the PKI and its youth organizations formed a kind of private army whose special duty it was to provide complete safety for Aidit. There was an elaborate warning system to signal the arrival of outsiders in the town in which Aidit was hiding. Thus, he always had time to escape when army units appeared on the scene to raid the homes in a certain district.

The story of Aidit's capture provides a fascinating story in the literature of successful intelligence operations. It involves an agent of the Indonesian army intelligence service who managed to penetrate Aidit's close circle of bodyguards. After several incidents which were calculated to win Aidit's complete confidence, "Agent H" at one point had Aidit hiding in his own home. In a plan that Aidit was working on at the time of his capture--a plan of escape to Djakarta in which Aidit was to don an air force uniform with complete identification letters and be driven to Djakarta in a Russian-built jeep of the Air Force--"Agent H" was to be his sole companion on the trip. At the last moment, however, Aidit apparently became suspicious.

Suddenly, he asked the unsuspecting 'Agent H' to take him back to Sambeng Gede where he had been hiding safely and receiving extraordinary protection from his followers working for the railroad that had a depot in the neighborhood. 'Agent H' could not refuse without causing greater suspicion . . . The slyness and fine strategy of 'Agent H' had lured Aidit out of this beloved hiding place. He had moved to H's house which he had thought safer, but he was now full of suspicions. 'Agent H' had made it easier to catch Aidit.

At 2000 hours in the evening of 22 November the biggest military contingent ever used in a raid on Communist homes entered Sambeng Gede. Every house was searched.

Aidit was found hiding in the house of one Hardjo-Sumartono in a secret room of only one yard width. It was entered by a small door from the dining room. A cabinet stood in front of the door and hid it completely. Before the soldiers reached the house they had to pass the railroad depot with workers faithful to Aidit. They blew the whistle of a locomotive to give Aidit time to get into his hiding place should he be outside the secret room.

But inside Hardjo-Sumartono's house, the soldiers noticed a pair of sandals beside the dining room cabinet. They moved the cabinet, and out crawled D. N. Aidit.





General Suharto inspects the RPKAD (the paratroop commandos) after their successful operation against the Communists in Central Java. RPKAD commander General Sarwo Edhy (center) is shown in the car with Suharto.

Various documents have been presented which purport to be Aidit's interrogation report; but they all appear suspect. It is extremely doubtful that Aidit would have "confessed" to any of the things mentioned in the reports. A rather lengthy "self-criticism" of PKI strategy at the time of the coup--which was first published in the Japanese press and attributed to Aidit--is more obviously faked. It is not at all Aidit's style, nor is it his thinking. There is no convincing evidence that Aidit submitted to interrogation or signed anything during the time he was held prisoner by the army.\* Probably within a matter of hours--of a day, at the longest--he was executed by shooting. The army has never given any of the details of Aidit's death or burial, which might have been used by those wanting to make a martyr out of him.

The only document of those purportedly written by Aidit after the coup that does appear genuine is a letter from Aidit to Sukarno, written in Solo on 2 October (it will be remembered that Aidit asked Lieutenant Colonel Sujoto to deliver a letter to Sukarno that evening). It is not clear exactly how Aidit finally managed to have it delivered to Sukarno, but apparently the President received it on 6 October. Lukman could have brought it with him when he returned to Djakarta, after having been with Aidit in Central Java; he saw Sukarno at the cabinet meeting at Bogor on the morning of 6 October. In the letter, Aidit notes that he is in good health and then goes on to describe the coup as an internal army affair in which the PKI should not meddle (although he states his approval of such a "cleaning of the revolutionary apparatus" and his condemnation of the General's Council). He then recommends to Sukarno that he issue a presidential directive along the following lines:

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\*A PKI member who was a companion of Aidit in hiding was later interrogated by the Army. He is the source of much of the information on Aidit after the coup, such as the report that Aidit received a communication from Sukarno around the middle of November (discussed on the following page). Apparently, some of the information that this source provided was, either deliberately or not, but in any case, wrongly attributed to Aidit himself. At a plenary meeting of the cabinet in Bogor on 15 January 1966, Sukarno officially denied the validity of reports dealing with the interrogation of Aidit.

1. The settlement of the problem of the 30 September Movement lies solely in the hands of the President.
2. Calm is required to reach a settlement.
3. All instruments of the revolution, particularly the armed forces and political organizations, and the press and radio should operate as they did before the 30 September Movement.
4. Security problems should be turned over to the police.
5. Mutual faultfinding and the making of charges and counter-charges should be forbidden.

The specific points are interesting inasmuch as they are precisely the lines of action Sukarno tried to follow after the coup. In almost every respect, they are completely contrary to the program of action urged on the President by the army.

According to a PKI member who was Aidit's companion in hiding and who was later interrogated by the Army, President Sukarno answered Aidit's letter via a courier in mid-November. Sukarno is reported to have told Aidit that he was not yet able to make the kind of speech Aidit recommended, that he was only able to make speeches of a general nature. He said that he was "trying to change the thinking of the commanders so that they will think about something else besides the 30 September Movement." Sukarno is also reported to have told Aidit that he should not remain in Solo any longer: "Leave there quickly and try as hard as you can to get back to Djakarta. A pickup would encounter technical difficulties."

No other source has reported that Sukarno sent a reply to Aidit's letter, so the information is unconfirmed. However, it is quite possibly true. We know that just

before his capture (which would have been just after he received Sukarno's communication) Aidit was working on a plan that would enable him to travel to Djakarta. This suggests that he was following Sukarno's advice soon after he received it. If it is true that Sukarno advised Aidit to "get back to Djakarta," it suggests that Sukarno may have had some idea of offering him Presidential protection, such as he offered Dani in allowing him to live at the palace after the coup, or of providing him a means of escape from Indonesia, which he also provided Dani and which Aidit was unable to arrange himself. Otherwise, it seems that Aidit would have been much safer in Central Java than in Djakarta.

#### Dani Under Sukarno's Protection

Before we look at Sukarno's actions after the coup, there is one other important participant in events at Halim-- Air Force Chief of Staff Dani--whose actions after the coup are of interest in connection with the coup. When President Sukarno rejected Dani's request that they leave Halim and go together to Madiun, Dani was forced to go on without him. After he landed at Iswahjudi Air Force Base in Madiun, sometime around 0600 hours on the morning of the 2nd, he gave a briefing to the officers on duty there, at which he is known to have said that the President was at Halim almost all day, the day before, and that he (Sukarno) had received a report on the coup from General Supardjo personally, whom Dani added--Sukarno patted on the back when he finished giving the report. That afternoon Dani flew back to Semplak Air Force Base in Bogor, with the obvious intention of re-joining Sukarno, who was at his week-end retreat at the palace there. At a second briefing session for Air Force officers at Semplak, Dani refused to explain the whole incident of the coup because, he said, "it would bring in the name of the President."\*

\*Two weeks later, Dani is reported to have called a meeting of Air Force officers and told them not to mention the President's name in connection with the events that occurred (footnote continued on page 85 )

Dani stayed close to the President for many days. He and his family moved into the palace at Bogor and lived there with Sukarno until October 13th, when Sukarno finally moved back to Djakarta. Even after that, Dani continued to accept Sukarno's protection by staying on in the palace at Bogor. On 19 October Sukarno arranged for Dani to use his own private airplane to fly to Phnom Penh, where he and his family lived in exile for six months, in personal safety, which even Sukarno could not guarantee in Indonesia, considering the mood of revenge of the Army toward those involved in the coup. Sukarno had seemed to yield to Army pressure in removing Dani as Chief of the Air Force, but obviously he was not concerned with the justice of punishing those responsible for the death of the Army generals, as he made an outrage of any sense of justice in the matter by immediately appointing Dani to a new official position as a civilian--that of Minister

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(footnote continued from page 84)

at Halim on 1 October. Actually Dani had been the one to talk most about Sukarno's presence at Halim that day. None of the other important participants in the coup, who were also at Halim, had so casually--and so unnecessarily--bandied about the name of the President in connection with events at the airbase. Aidit, Untung, Supardjo, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, and Pono are not known to have made any reference to the fact that Sukarno was there to anybody (until some of them were forced to discuss various facts about the coup under interrogation by the army, after they were captured). Meanwhile, Dani had made several intriguing references to the President in different briefings to Air Force officers. He must have realized his error in doing this and tried to undo the damage caused by it by later ordering the Air Force not ever to mention Sukarno's name in connection with events at Halim on 1 October.

of Aviation--a job that provided an official excuse for leaving the country.\*

It is not clear why Dani finally agreed to return to Indonesia in April 1966, when it seemed virtually certain that he would only be tried and convicted for his obvious involvement in the coup. Suharto's people are known to have been in contact with him in both Paris and Phnom Penh and to have urged him to return to give a full account of what he knew about the coup. In letters exchanged with General Suharto, Dani apparently gave the Army reason to think that he had information implicating President Sukarno in the planning of the coup. Either the Army or Dani may have suggested some kind of a deal which promised Dani a certain immunity if he told his story to the authorities; there is nothing to substantiate this, however.\*\* Whatever the explanation, he voluntarily returned to Indonesia and, immediately upon his return, was placed in custody by the Indonesian Army and later tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. His testimony in court made none of the sensational revelations about Sukarno that many people expected; instead, the case centered very much around his own role in the affair.\*\*\*

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\*When Dani left Indonesia in October, it was reported in the press that he was leaving on an aircraft procurement mission, the first stop of which would be Phnom Penh. Later, in December, when he made a quick trip to Paris, the same reason was given. Yet, in fact, he conducted no such business in either place. In Paris, the Indonesian Embassy personnel would have nothing to do with him; although he claimed to be on an official mission on orders from the President.

\*\*According to several reports, Dani consented to return to Indonesia after receiving assurances from the Army that he would not be prosecuted if he testified in court against Sukarno.

\*\*\*In this connection, it is interesting to note that Dani's lengthy testimony at the Sukrisno trial in July 1966 was never released to the press. Presumably, it implicated Sukarno in the coup.

There were several good reasons why Suharto may not have wanted to turn Dani's trial into a trial against Sukarno. At that point in time, he was primarily interested in putting the blame on the PKI for the coup. He could afford to wait on the matter of Sukarno. He could always threaten (and later did threaten) to use Dani as a witness against Sukarno in a public trial of the President and in this way force concessions from Sukarno without ever having to disclose Sukarno's involvement in the coup in a trial. With the death of Aidit, Dani may have been the only person who knew the full story of Sukarno's involvement in the coup. As long as Sukarno lives, it would seem that Suharto might want to keep Dani alive--as a potential witness. It is interesting to note that, as yet, he has not been executed, though he is under sentence of death.

#### Sukarno in a Losing Cause

As for Sukarno's actions after the coup, leaving aside for the moment the question of his involvement beforehand,\* one can say nothing less than that they committed him to the side of the coup. Everything he did or said after the coup was in the interest of quieting the national furor raised over the generals' deaths, protecting those involved in the coup, and restoring the political situation to that existing before the coup.

Colonel Sarwo Edhy was the first Army commander to meet with Sukarno after the coup. On the morning of 2 October he went to Bogor to confer with the President. He asked Sukarno about the fate of the generals. After

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\*The question of Sukarno's involvement in the planning of the coup is discussed in the last section of this paper which deals with events leading up to the coup, including the decision to stage the coup.

a moment's pause, Sukarno replied that this was a common matter in a revolution. Colonel Edhy reported this to Nasution as soon as he left the Palace. It was this comment of Sukarno that Nasution was referring to in his speech of 20 February 1967:

Is it proper and acceptable for a healthy mind to view the 30 September affair, which shook the foundations of the life and livelihood of the people and the state, as nothing more than 'a ripple in the ocean of the revolution'?

At a meeting with the armed forces commanders,\* which he called later that same afternoon at Bogor Palace, Sukarno rejected various suggestions for firm measures against the Communists and other persons involved in the coup; he insisted that such questions be left to him for resolution. When Suharto asked him just what measures he was going to take, Sukarno replied: "Don't be stubborn. Leave the political settlement to me." Suharto asked: "What about our missing generals?" Sukarno replied: "See, you are too stubborn. Leave it to me." During the meeting, he turned to General Adjie and said: "I have not appointed you to command the army because you are too stubborn and too much known as an anti-Communist." The generals left the meeting depressed and dissatisfied but acquiescing to Sukarno.

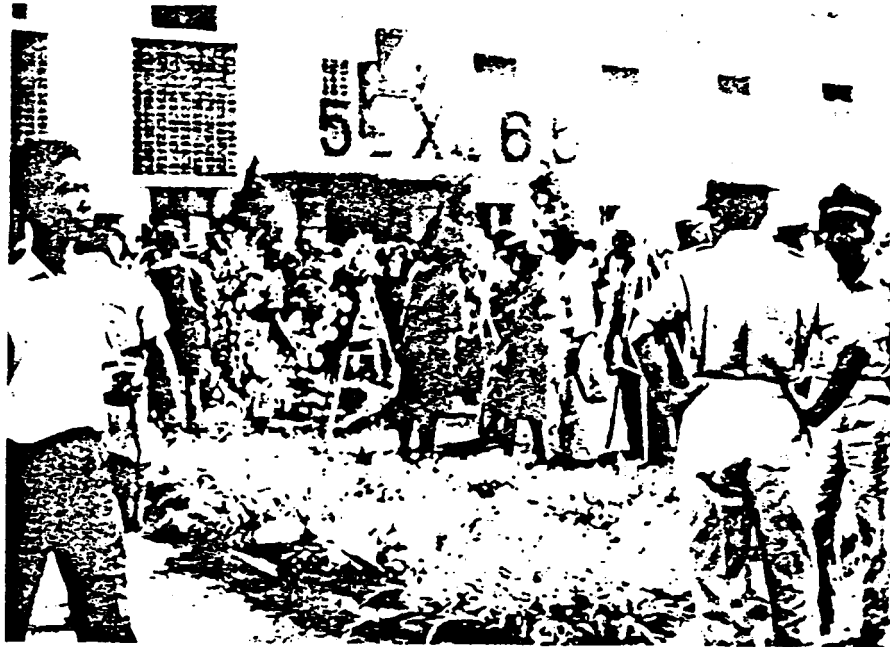
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\*Present at the meeting were Sukarno, Deputy Prime Minister Leimena, Dani, Suharto, Army General Adjie, Pranoto, General Sabur, Police Commander Sutjipto, Navy Commander Martadinata, Air Force Commander Sri Muljono Herlambang, and several other army officers. According to what is probably an apocryphal story, Suharto is reported to have confronted Dani at the meeting. Holding up a Chung rifle (Chinese-made rifle) that the Communist volunteers had in their possession when they were disarmed by the army on the day of the coup, he demanded to know: "Where did this come from?"



In a brief speech broadcast from Bogor Palace on the morning of 3 October, President Sukarno labelled as untrue the charge made by Suharto in his radio broadcast on the evening of 1 October that the Air Force was involved in the 30 September Movement. He called for the immediate establishment of an atmosphere of calm and order, in which the Army and the Air Force would not be set against each other. In his appeal for continued unity, he emphasized the need for bolstering the anti-Nekolim spirit--a bogus issue that he was again and again to insert into the settlement of the coup. It was striking that there was no word of regret for what had happened to the generals and no indication that the government would take any action against those responsible for their deaths and no word of appreciation for Suharto and the forces under him who had moved to reestablish the government's authority. There was no call to the PKI front groups to surrender their arms--in fact, no reference to the PKI at all. It was the beginning of a contest of wills, with Sukarno trying desperately to create the impression that the political situation had not changed as a result of the coup and the Army insisting that everything had changed.

The Army was quite understandably outraged by Sukarno's refusal to honor the dead generals on the day of their state funeral on Armed Forces Day (October 5th), a day which originally had been planned as a national celebration but which was now proclaimed to be a day of official mourning. Sukarno did not attend the funeral services. He added insult to injury, as far as the Army was concerned, in designating Subandrio to represent him. In this instance, perhaps for the first time, he offended the conscience of the whole nation. The solemn funeral procession through the center of Djakarta was watched by thousands of silent onlookers who lined the streets ten deep and by many thousands more watching on television. The night before, film clips of the exhumation of the bodies from the hasty grave at Lubang Buaja, which Suharto had personally witnessed, had been shown on T.V., with a short statement by Suharto about "the cruel murders of our generals who were innocent." The next day, the nation was still reeling in a state of deep emotional shock.

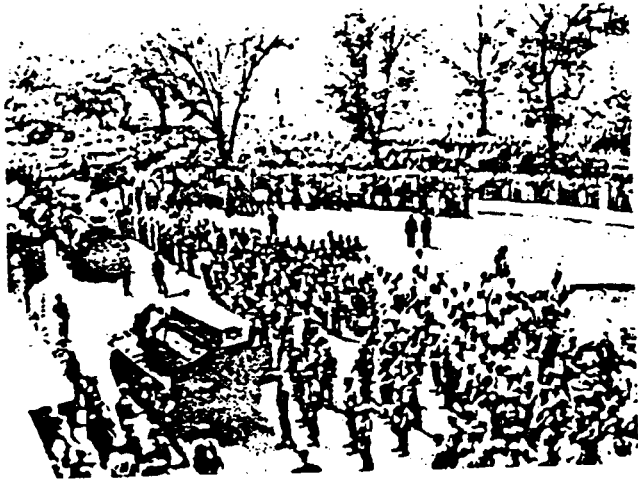


Army Headquarters on the day of the generals' funeral



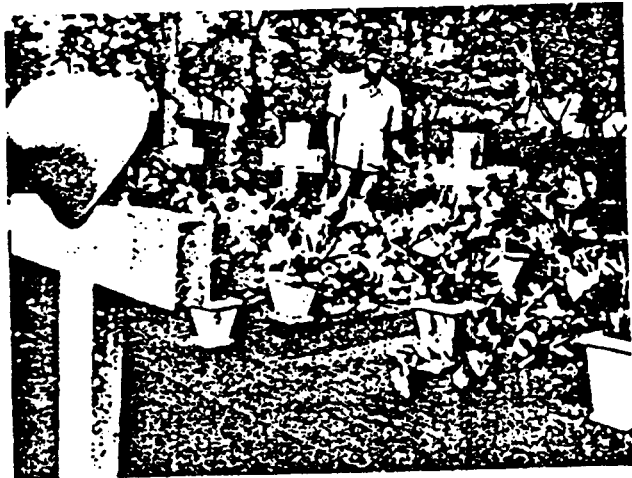
The funeral procession as it leaves from Army Headquarters

Armored trucks bearing the coffins  
through the streets of Djakarta



Relatives and wives of the  
generals arrive at the cemetery

The graves of the six  
murdered generals





General Nasution on the day of  
the generals' funeral

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At the gravesite, Nasution, looking tired and desolate, made a short speech in a voice breaking with emotion. The whole diplomatic corps--except the Chinese--and all of official Djakarta--except Sukarno--were there.

The next day Nasution's little daughter died of wounds suffered during the raid on the Nasution home on the night of 30 September-1 October. The poignant scene of Mrs. Nasution carrying her daughter to the grave touched the hearts of millions of people around the world. Expressions of sympathy were received by the family from the high and the low in Indonesia, from the leaders as well as private citizens of many other countries, but not from Sukarno. Sometime later, Sukarno is reported to have summoned the Nasutions to the Palace. Dewi reportedly broke into tears when she saw "the sadness on Mrs. Nasution's face."\* On this occasion, Sukarno uttered the only words of compassion for the Nasutions that he is ever known to have expressed.

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\*According to one story, Dewi turned to Sukarno and said: "Bapak, why don't you punish those communists who can do such brutal things to people like this?" Sukarno told her: You don't understand these matters. They are more complicated than a woman can understand."

Because of the critical condition of his daughter that morning, Nasution had not been present at the cabinet meeting called by Sukarno at Bogor at 1000 hours on 6 October. Dani and Subandrio, both of whom were now living at the Palace at Bogor, attended, staying close to Sukarno throughout the four-hour meeting. Njoto and Lukman of the PKI were also there, but not Aidit.\* Sukarno delivered a brief description of events of the week, along with an exhortation that the people's fears and resentments must be calmed. In the course of his recital of events, he did condemn the savage killings --for the first time--and he said that he did not sanction the Revolutionary Council "since only the President can dissolve the Cabinet." His remarks suggested that these were the only two things about the coup that he had not approved--the murdering of the generals and the establishment of the Revolutionary Council with the announcement that the Dwikora Cabinet was dissolved. He proposed that all newspapers, including the PKI's Harian Rakjat, now be allowed to resume publication. (The military refused to permit this.)

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\*After the cabinet meeting, Njoto and Lukman are reported to have talked in private with Sukarno, who urged the PKI to remain calm. Sukarno promised to take action within a week to protect the party. Njoto and Lukman are reported to have asked Sukarno not to appoint Suharto as the new army commander since Suharto was known to be anti-PKI. Sukarno said that he would take care of this matter also. On 9 October, when still the PKI had received no decision from Sukarno and there had been no abeyance in the Army's campaign against the party, Njoto and Lukman went to Bogor again to see the President. This time, however, they were not allowed to see him nor were they permitted to deliver a letter they had prepared for him asking for his decision. For a long time after that, the PKI waited patiently for the protection that Sukarno had promised the party. But this time, Sukarno was not able to save the PKI.

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Subandrio was the chief spokesman at the cabinet meeting; he argued at length that the events of the past week suggested to him that a U.S. and British invasion of Indonesia was imminent and, thus, Indonesians should avoid "intra-familial squabbling." Several other ministers gave their opinion. Then Sukarno spoke again, telling of past attempts on his life and his ability always to forgive and not be vengeful (he compared himself to the prophet Mohammed who, in the course of much experience, had never given precedence to revenge). He said he always thought only of the revolution and how to safeguard it and never of himself or of taking revenge on his enemies; this he said, was what Indonesians should do now.\* The cabinet meeting ended with a moment of silence for Indonesia's dead heroes.

In public, Sukarno did not condemn the killing of the generals, as he had at least done in private at the cabinet meeting. In connection with the matter of the killings, he sought by every means he could to discredit the official Army version of just how the generals had been killed. The following incident is a good illustration of his persistent efforts after the coup to tone down the atrocity stories that were being told about the death of the generals. Major General Sutjipto claimed to have been shocked by a conversation he had with the President two weeks after the coup. According to Sutjipto, Sukarno complained about the exaggerated press coverage

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\*President Sukarno made his concern for the revolution the primary subject of his public remarks after the coup, in an obvious effort to direct attention away from the events of 1 October to the ongoing revolution, which required the unified efforts of all Indonesians under his leadership. Thus, in his speech of 23 October 1965, he said: "It is not a matter of myself! It is not the matter of the generals! It is not the matter of the hundreds of Pemuda Rakjat members who have been killed! It is none of these things! It is the matter of the revolution! The revolution must go on!"

of the generals' murders. He said that the three generals still alive when they reached Lubang Buaja had been executed "in an orderly and graceful manner by the decision of a kind of people's court." According to Sukarno, the generals were blindfolded before being shot and the executioners "apologized first" before killing them. It was almost as if Sukarno was trying to give a certain legality to the proceedings at Lubang Buaja that morning. General Sutjipto would probably have accused Sukarno of telling a deliberate lie about the circumstances of the generals' deaths, since he (Sutjipto) was probably convinced of the truth of some of the wilder stories of atrocities at Lubang Buaja. Actually, as suggested earlier, Sukarno's version of what happened at Lubang Buaja may have been a rather accurate description of events--though his purpose in insisting on his version was obviously not just to establish the truth. The incident definitely suggests that Sukarno had his own sources of information on events at Lubang Buaja (presumably, the coup leaders themselves) and was not convinced by the army version of events. After Sukarno told General Sutjipto that the reports of PKI cruelties published in the newspapers were untrue and that General Suprpto, Sutojo, and Parman were shot "at the decision of a kind of people's court at Lubang Buaja," General Sutjipto asked the President where he got this information. Sukarno is reported to have tried to avoid the question, saying that General Sutjipto should not be so emotional.

On other occasions Sukarno tried to belittle the fact of the generals' murder. In the course of an interview in early 1966, he was asked about the coup. He passed off the question with the comment that he didn't know why there was so much interest in the coup, since it only involved the murder of six generals, compared to the slaughter of thousands of Communists in the horrible aftermath of the coup. He went on to say that he thought that "those people instigating the anti-PKI massacres, namely, the Army and the CIA, ought to be brought to trial." On this and other occasions, Sukarno never showed any particular sympathy for the martyred generals.



Moreover, in the three years since the coup, Sukarno has never sought to change the initial impression he gave of his attitude towards the 30 September Movement. He has never said that the coup was counter-revolutionary; in fact, he has never suggested that the 30 September Movement was carrying out a coup at all. Although the guilt of the PKI in planning the coup has long since been established, he has refused to place the blame on the PKI. His speeches have continued to favor the PKI, which he has praised as the party that has suffered the most casualties and displayed the most merit in the Indonesian revolution. For months after the coup he resisted mounting pressure in favor of banning the PKI; since its dissolution by Suharto, he has regretted the action.

In the months following the coup, Sukarno made several brave, but as it turned out, futile attempts to restore the balance of power to its pre-coup status quo. Perhaps the most striking thing about his major political moves after the coup was their demonstration of his utter contempt for Nasution and his basic hostility toward the army. If it was not completely clear before the coup, his post-coup politics certainly made it unmistakably clear that he was quite prepared to take the most obvious and drastic steps--without any pretense whatsoever--to eliminate the army as a serious contender for power. That he might have been involved in an attempt to eliminate the top leadership of the army in the way of the 30 September Movement is not at all out of keeping with the trend of his politics before the coup and especially after the coup. Sukarno acted absolutely contrary to Nasution's recommendations on the matter of a Presidential Order re-establishing law and order and upholding justice after the coup. His Presidential Order of 21 October was modeled closely after the six-point recommendation of Aidit for a political settlement of the coup; it altogether ignored Nasution's five main proposals, including one for establishing a special tribunal to hear testimony on the events of the coup and the activities of those involved in it. When in February 1966 Sukarno finally announced his long-awaited "political solution" to the coup, it was nothing less than a direct challenge to Nasution and the Army. In a bold move to restore the pre-coup Nasakom cabinet

(in which all major political parties including the Communist Party were represented), Sukarno announced the formation of a new cabinet on 21 February, which was almost identical to the old cabinet except for the absence of four names: Aidit and Njoto of the PKI (who were dead), Admiral Martadinata, a strong supporter of Nasution and Suharto, and--Nasution. If the President would dare to dismiss Nasution in February 1966, when the latter had the sympathy and respect of a whole nation after the tragic events that had befallen his family and his associates as a result of the 30 September Movement, how much more likely would he have been to eliminate him from the scene four months earlier?

As is well known, Sukarno's challenge to the Army and to Nasution did not go unanswered.\* This time, realizing full well that it was Sukarno or the Army--since

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\*Many people thought that Nasution would react to his dismissal from the cabinet by taking power forcibly. But if they did, they were sadly disappointed; for he did not react in any such way. He seemed almost not to react at all; he just seemed to accept his dismissal, without one word of protest. As he confided to friends later, All I could think about at the time was my daughter and the sadness of my wife."

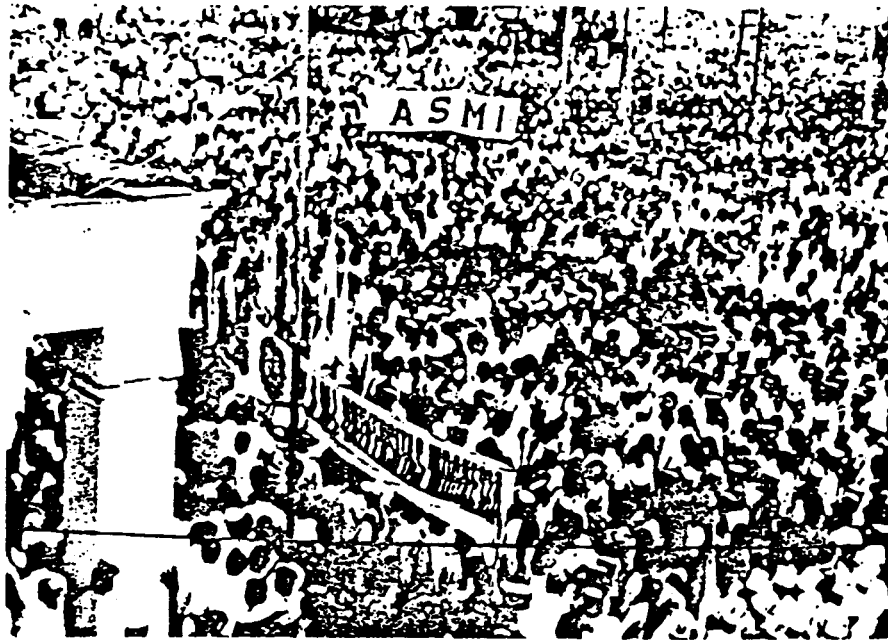
But if he was still in a state of shock and unable to react to the momentous events on the political scene, there were other leaders in the Army and other people in Indonesia--namely, the students--who reacted strongly to Nasution's dismissal. A new force in Indonesian politics had been born in January 1966 with the first of many student demonstrations against Sukarno; in March, there were more demonstrations against the dropping of Nasution and Martadinata from the cabinet and the inclusion of Subandrio and Dani in it. It is difficult to say who led whom, whether it was a case of the Army leading the students or vice versa. It is a fact that elements of the RPKAD, dressed in civilian clothes, took the lead in many of the student demonstrations. On the other hand, the Army would probably not have moved against Sukarno with the courage that it did if the students had not provided support and encouragement. It was clearly a case of the Army and the students reinforcing one another.



Student demonstrations against Sukarno after the coup



Students demanding the trial of Sukarno



Students demonstrating against Sukarno at the Medical Faculty grounds

Sukarno was now obviously the sworn enemy of the Army-- the Army leadership decided to do what it had never really done before--fight back against Sukarno. The outcome of that struggle is now well known. In March 1967, one year after Sukarno defied the Army by dropping Nasution from the cabinet, the Army finally won the battle, when Sukarno was forced to surrender all his powers as President of Indonesia.\*

\*In March 1966, there was a dramatic confrontation between Sukarno and the Army. At the first meeting of the newly appointed cabinet on 11 March, Sukarno and Subandrio received word that it looked as though the Army was about to move against the Palace. At the time, the Palace, which was where the cabinet was meeting, was under a virtual state of seige. The Army had surrounded the place to block the entry of the cabinet members into the Palace for the cabinet meeting. The meeting had gone on as scheduled only because Sukarno arranged to have the cabinet members flown in by helicopter. In the midst of the meeting, Sukarno and Subandrio received a message that prompted them to leave the meeting at that very moment, so promptly, in fact, that Subandrio is reported to have left his shoes behind. As they drove out of Djakarta on their way to Bogor, there was a dramatic confrontation between the RPKAD and the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard. For a moment, it looked as though there would be an armed clash, but this was averted when the RPKAD allowed Sukarno to pass.

A week later, the Army took force into its own hands. On 18 March, a number of cabinet members, including Subandrio, were arrested on Army orders. Sukarno held out another whole year. Considering the odds that were against him, it was a remarkable performance. But, in the end, he was finally forced to surrender his powers as President of Indonesia in March 1967.

For a good account of the Army-Sukarno struggle for power after the coup, see Indonesian Upheaval by John Hughes, David McKay Company, Inc., 1967.



Former President Sukarno

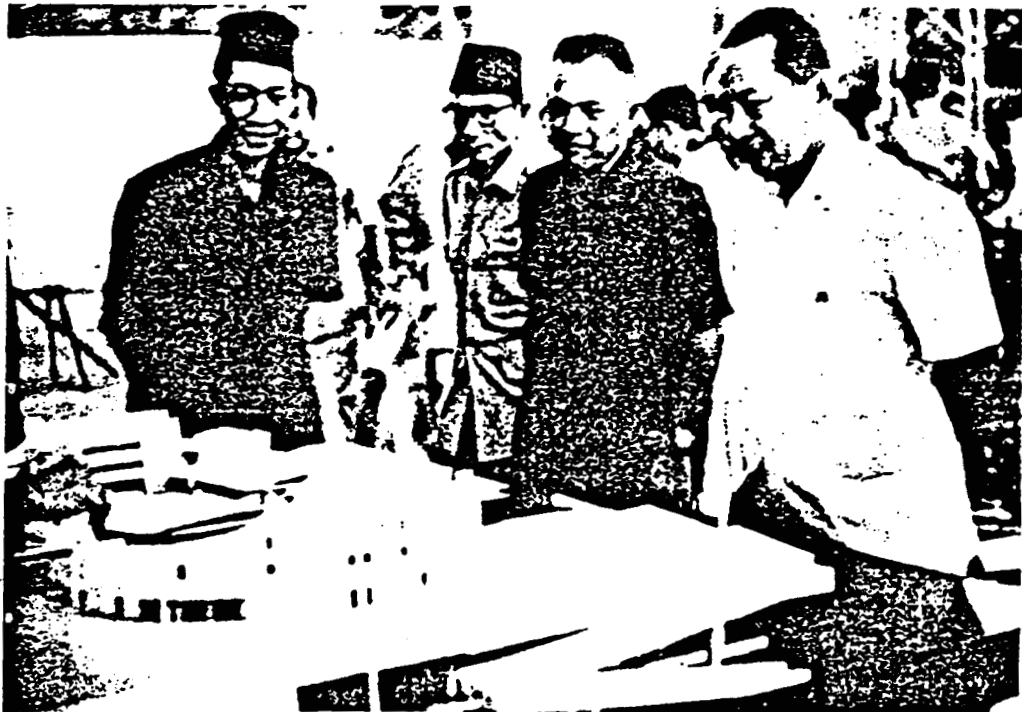


President Suharto





General Nasution (center) and Suharto (right) after the latter became Acting President of Indonesia



Acting President Suharto (right) and Chairman of the MPRS Nasution (center) inspect a model of the new Indonesian Parliament Building

## The Conspiracy

Two years after the coup, only two of the twenty-or-so persons who figured most prominently in the coup and probably together knew the whole story of the coup are still alive today and have not been interrogated by the Indonesian Army. Those two are Sukarno and Pono, the latter of whom is still at large, having managed to escape capture by the Army longer than any of the others. Aidit, Lukman, and Njoto of the PKI were killed resisting capture or soon afterward, before they could be interrogated. The principal military figures in the coup --Untung, Latief, Sujono, Supardjo, and Dani--and the following PKI officials--Njono, Sudisman, Peris Pardede, and Sjam--plus former foreign minister Subandrio were arrested and interrogated at length before being tried for treason and sentenced to death.\*

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\*In September 1968, President Suharto admitted for the first time that Untung and three other military leaders of the coup had been executed in December 1967. It seems certain that Sujono was one of the three besides Untung, as there were reports at the time that he and Untung had been executed together. Probably, Latief was one of the other two who were executed.

On 2 October 1968 President Suharto turned down the clemency appeals of nine other accused conspirators in the coup. Among those denied clemency were Sudisman, Njono, Supardjo, and Sjam, all of whom were under sentence of death. Njono and Sudisman were promptly executed on 29 October. As of mid-November, Sjam and Supardjo were not known for sure to have been executed, but it is expected that they will be soon, if they have not been already.

If it is true that Sujono and Latief were two of the three military leaders of the coup executed at the same time as Untung, that would leave only Dani and Pono (who has not yet been captured) alive of the principal figures (footnote continued on page 98)



In addition to these principals in the coup, hundreds of other persons have been arrested and interrogated in connection with the coup. Some, like Lt. Dul Arief, who was in command of the troops sent to kidnap the generals, and Major Bambang Supeno and Major Sukirno, the Commanding Officers of the 530th and 454th Battalions, who were held responsible for their actions in the coup, have received prison sentences. Others, like Sgt. Sujatno, whose home on Halim Air Force Base was used by the Central Command, and other of the military officers and men who fought on the side of the coup but who did so under false impressions created by their superior officers, have been relieved of any responsibility in the matter; they have provided valuable information about the leaders of the coup, their activities before the coup; and their actions on 1 October. In addition, there were witnesses to the scene--such as the family members of the generals at home on the night of 30 September-1 October and the witnesses to the murder scene at Lubang Buaja later that morning and witnesses to the later travels of Aidit and others. All these and countless other people who might have known something about PKI planning and activities before the coup or something about the thinking and/or actions of men like Untung or Sujono before the coup have also been exhaustively interrogated by the Army. Probably, by now the Indonesian Army knows everything that it will ever know about the 30 September Movement. It is not likely that Sukarno will ever tell what he knows. Certain things

(footnote continued from page 97)

in the coup. There is good reason for Suharto to want to keep Dani alive so long as there is any chance of Sukarno's ever being tried for his role in the coup. (According to the latest reports, Suharto has ordered an interrogation of Sukarno to begin in early 1969.) Dani and Subandrio are probably the only two people who know the full story of Sukarno's involvement in the coup, except, of course, for Aidit, who is dead. As mentioned previously, Dani is reported to have implicated the President in the planning of the coup in secret testimony he gave the Army after he turned himself in to the Army. Both Dani and Subandrio are under sentence of death; both have appealed to President Suharto for clemency. So far as we know, Suharto has taken no action on their clemency pleas.

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about the coup--such as Sukarno's and Aidit's precise roles in the coup and Dani's relations with both of them-- will probably never be known for sure. But it has been the history of conspiracies, especially those involving persons in high office, that certain facts have remained unproven and thus always open to some doubt.

As good a history of the Indonesian coup of 30 September 1965 as could ever be written could probably be written at this time, some three years after the event--if one had access to all the information that the Indonesian Army has. Obviously, no one outside of a few persons in the Indonesian Army has seen all the evidence; but enough has become available during the past three years that we can feel reasonably sure that we have not only the main facts about the coup as it occurred on 1 October, but also most, if not all, of what is known about the conspiracy behind the events of that day. Of course, the information about the conspiracy is based entirely on the interrogation of the people involved in the conspiracy, in contrast to our knowledge of the events of the coup itself and the days immediately following, which comes from a great variety of sources. Naturally, this kind of evidence must be considered in a slightly different light than the evidence that was presented in the first two sections of this paper dealing with the coup and the events afterward. For a fuller discussion of the validity of the evidence that is presented in this third section of the paper, we refer the reader to the discussion of the interrogation reports that is included in the Appendix.\*

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\*See the Appendix on pp. 311-316: "Some Comments on the Interrogation Reports".

### The Role of the PKI Special Bureau

The actual planning for the coup was started and finished in the one month of September 1965 in the course of seven or eight meetings, which were held late in the evening either at the homes of Capt. Wahjudi, Col. Latief, or Sjam, or at Lubang Buaja. Altogether, eleven persons were involved in these meetings: Sjam, Pono, Untung, Latief, Sujono, Capt. Wahjudi, Major Agus Sigit, Gen. Supardjo, Walujo, and two unidentified women. Not all were present at every meeting; the last four persons named attended only one meeting, that of 29 September. Only Sjam, Untung, and Latief attended every meeting.

As of the beginning of September 1965, Untung, the Commander of the 1st Battalion of the Tjakarabirawa Presidential Guard, Latief, the Commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade of the Djakarta Command, and Sujono, Regimental Commander of the Halim Air Force Base Defense Troops, all stationed in Djakarta, had never met one another. They had something very much in common, however, which was soon to bring them into a fateful alliance. They each had for some time been having regular contacts with highly-placed PKI agents, who were none other than the second and third men in charge of the PKI's super-secret Special Bureau, charged with infiltrating the military organization. In the case of Latief and Sujono, their PKI contact man--or "pembina" as they called him--was a man called Pono; in the case of Untung, it was a certain Walujo.

These two men are now known to have been the close associates of a third man--a man called Sjam--another deep-cover PKI agent, who was a close friend and trusted associate of Aidit in the inner circle of the PKI leadership. Sjam had joined the PKI in 1948, having known Aidit for several years before that. When Aidit was arrested in 1948 upon his return from China, Sjam is supposed to have "assisted him greatly" while he was in prison. For a number of years, he was head of the Ship and Dock Workers Union, an affiliate of the PKI national front organization for trade unions. It is not clear when he was elected to the Central Committee of the party, but about 1960 he became

a member of the Organization Department of the Central Committee which was headed by Aidit himself.\* In November 1964, Sjam was given the special assignment of heading a new covert organization that was set up directly under Aidit and charged with carrying out special duties (mainly covert operations) such as infiltrating the armed services. Even the existence of the Special Bureau was a secret within the PKI; it is not exactly clear who, besides Aidit, knew anything about it. One would think that the four other members of the Standing Council of the Politburo (Lukman, Njoto, Sudisman, and Sakirman) must have known, but, judging from his interrogation report, Sudisman did not. Neither Njono, a member of the Politburo, nor Peris Pardede, a member of the central committee and a candidate member of the Politburo, appears to have had specific knowledge of the Special Bureau.\*\*

\*Before the Special Bureau was set up as an autonomous organization that was completely free of the control of the central committee or the politburo, with absolute authority over its own organization, administration, personnel, logistics, etc., the Organization Department of the Central Committee directed all illegal activities of the PKI. After the formation of the Special Bureau, infiltration of the armed forces which had been carried on by the Organization Department was transferred to the Special Bureau. Infiltration of government organs, political parties, and mass organizations was still conducted by the Organization Department, which Hutapea headed after 1965.

\*\*Actually, it is not too surprising that Njono and Peris Pardede and even Sudisman, a member of the Standing Council of the Politburo, did not know about the Special Bureau. According to Communist Chinese doctrine on the "Coordination of the Legal and Illegal Struggle":

The very existence of a secret or covert communist organization must be unknown, its personnel must be unknown as Communists, its work carried on in complete anonymity. It is unknown not only to hostile security (footnote continued on page 102)

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Sjam himself has provided the fullest account of the organization and functions of the PKI Special Bureau. Under interrogation by the Army in mid-1967, he stated the following:

The Special Bureau was the Party's special apparatus which handled special affairs, namely work which could not be accomplished through the other overt apparatus, primarily in the military field and other fields which had to be undertaken clandestinely.

The Central Special Bureau was the special apparatus of Comrade Chairman of the CC/PKI, Aidit. The regional Special Bureaus were branches of the Central Special Bureau. They executed activities in the regions and were responsible to the Central Special Bureau. Horizontal relations among the Regional Special Bureaus were not permitted.

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(footnote continued from page 101)

forces and the general public--it is unknown even to all except a few of the overt party, if there is one. Only the topmost leadership of the legal party knows of even the existence of the secret party much less the identities of its members, and even this topmost leadership knows the identity only of the secret center....

Only the center of the secret party has any contact whatever with any element of the legal party. The cadres of the secret party are not in hiding--on the contrary, they are living open, normal lives in the community. It is their status as members of a secret, revolutionary organization, dedicated to the violent overthrow of the regime, which is illegal.

The leadership of the Central Special Bureau consisted of the following: [the names of persons involved in the coup have been underlined for emphasis]

1. Kamarusaman (Sjam)-whose duty was to coordinate the work of the entire bureau, both central and regional offices; in addition, to assist in the management of Special Bureau contacts within and outside the Armed Forces. [In this connection, Sjam stated: 'I directly handled (cultivated, managed) the following Armed Forces members: Gen. Supardjo, Major Suganda, Col. Sidik, Capt. Sumedi, Col. Mustofa, Col. Pasha (who never executed the Party tasks given him), and others whom I cannot remember. I also directly managed non-military government officials, among them Djunta Suwardi of the Customs and Excises Office, who was a sympathizer but not a party member.']
2. Marsudidjojo (Pono)-the second in command whose job was to manage PKI cells\* within

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\*"Cells" may not be the best translation of the word used by Sjam. These were not Communist party cells in the ordinary sense of the word. The way the word is used in connection with the operations of the Special Bureau, it refers to the officers in a particular military unit who were being "managed" by the same "manager" or "organizer" from the Special Bureau; most often, they were not Communist party members but Communist sympathizers. In this sense, Col. Latief, Major Sigit, Captain Suradi and Captain Wahjudi composed a "cell" within the First Infantry Brigade; in other words, they were the men from the First Infantry Brigade with whom Pono had succeeded in establishing regular contact. In theory, at least, there was supposed to be no horizontal contact between (footnote continued on page 104)

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the First Infantry Brigade of KODAM V, consisting of Col. Latief, Major Sigit, Capt. Suradi, and Capt. Wahjudi; the Air Force Defense Troops, consisting of Major Sujono, Capt. Gatot and others; the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard, consisting of Marj. Slamet among others; the Army Department, including Gen. Pranoto among others; KODAM V Military Police; and the police force (not yet set up).

3. Sübono (Walujo)-the third man in command whose assignment concerned finances as well as the cultivation of party cells in the Air Force, consisting of Air Marshal Omar Dani, Air Commodore Siswadi, Col. Heru Atmodjo, and others; and the

(footnote continued from page 103)  
members of the same cell. They did not meet together, as a group, with their "manager", as members of the same Communist party cell in any Communist party organization attend regular meetings of the cell. There was only a vertical relationship between these men and their manager. In short, it was more of an intelligence organization than an extension of the Communist party organization.

Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard, consisting of Col. Untung, Lt. Col. Ali Ebram, 1st Lt. Dul Arief, and others.

4. Two other members of the Central Special Bureau worked in the field of management training within the special bureau and also managed Party members within the Navy. A sixth was assigned to the secretariat of the Special Bureau (admin, documentation, etc.) as his basic task while he also managed party members and sympathizers in private business and government in Djakarta. The seventh member of the Central Special Bureau worked in the general field of providing information on youth, worker, peasant movements, etc.
5. There were also five staff members assisting the Central Special Bureau as medical officers, messengers, etc.

Under the Central Bureau, there were 10 regional Special Bureaus, one for: the Djakarta Raya area, West Java, Central Java, Bali, South Kalimantan, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, South Sumatra, Riau, and the South Celebes.

According to Sjam, the Special Bureau was "charged with the task of preparing for armed struggle," which was not the official policy of the PKI at the time. Aidit seems definitely to have been opposed to the adoption of a militant line on revolutionary armed struggle in Indonesia; as long as things were going so well for the PKI under Sukarno's protection, he believed that the best policy for the PKI was one of strong support for Sukarno, the renunciation of force as the way to gain power in Indonesia, and the espousal of the peaceful, parliamentary road to "socialism." Sjam himself may have favored a more militant domestic policy. After the coup, he is known to have argued in favor of armed struggle by the PKI against the Army. His position as chief of the Special Bureau in charge of



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covert activities (including preparations for armed struggle) also suggests a natural inclination in that direction.\*

Despite Aidit's preference for legal struggle over armed struggle--at least, so long as Sukarno lived--he might be considered to have made one concession to the argument for armed struggle in late 1964, when he set up the Special Bureau as the special covert apparatus of the party charged with the task of preparing for armed struggle, in addition to its other covert duties. He was looking ahead to the time when Sukarno would no longer be around to balance the PKI against the Army; some kind of a showdown with the Army seemed almost inevitable after Sukarno's death.

It does not seem to have been Aidit's policy to arm PKI party members (which would have involved the covert shipment of relatively large quantities of arms to the PKI from abroad); instead, he seems to have settled on a policy of PKI infiltration and subversion of the Armed Forces. Rather than train and arm his own armed force, pretty much from the beginning, he seems to have concentrated his efforts on subverting the Indonesian military. To this end, his main targets within the military seem to have been middle-grade officers in positions of command. If the PKI could win the loyalty of these officers, he figured that he could count on the men under their command to follow their orders; in a showdown with the army, these units would defect to the side of the PKI.

The extent of PKI penetration of the military was certainly never realized by the army leadership before the coup; it clearly came as a surprise and a shock to Nasution and Suharto and the other army generals after the coup

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\*In 1962 Sjam visited Communist China, North Vietnam, and North Korea for the purpose of studying "people's revolutionary warfare." He received special intelligence training in the preparation and activation of armed rebellion.

when they learned about the operations of the PKI and the Special Bureau from the confessions of Untung, Latief, Sjam, and others. The extent of the penetration was shockingly evident in one fact that was revealed--that Sjam himself had acted as a double agent in pretending to be an informer for the Djakarta Military Command. From 1955 until the outbreak of the 30 September Movement, he had passed reports on the PKI and other political parties to the Army, in the process of which he had gained information on such things as the organizational structure and personnel of the Djakarta Command and other Army offices, the political views of Army officers, and the political analysis of the Army. Sjam claims that he learned about the Generals' Council in this way.

#### PKI Recruitment of the Military Officers

As noted above and also made clear from the dates of Sjam's early activities as a double agent, the PKI program of infiltration in the armed services pre-dated the formation of the Special Bureau. We have good evidence that the party was active along these lines in the early 1950's and thereafter, although its activities were no doubt very much stepped up after 1964, when all illegal operations of the PKI in the Armed Forces were transferred from the Organizational Department of the Central Committee to the Special Bureau under Sjam. Untung, for instance, was first recruited by the PKI sometime around 1950. At the time he was stationed in Solo, and it was there that he met two PKI cadres named Sudarmo and Slamet. Prior to that, he had had no direct contact with the party, although he was known to have Communist sympathies and to have fought on the side of the Communists in the Madiun uprising of 1948. From 1950 until January 1965, when he was transferred to Djakarta, Untung had regular meetings with Sudarmo and Slamet. Very shortly after he arrived in Djakarta, he was contacted by another PKI member--named Walujo--in very much the same way that he had first met Sudarmo and Slamet in Solo. Since he had moved to Djakarta, he now came under the direct management of

the Central Special Bureau of the PKI; his new contact man, Walujo, was none other than the #3 man in charge of PKI illegal activities in the Armed Services.

Under interrogation by the Army, Untung later described his meetings with Walujo in Djakarta. He said that they usually took place at the Officers' Mess during his off-duty hours "in an atmosphere of secrecy." The subjects discussed were normally the political situation and the concepts and speeches of Sukarno. As Walujo described the political situation to Untung, the "implementation of Sukarno's concepts--such as Nasakom and the 5th force--was impossible because of the Armed Forces, which were against these concepts." In their discussions, Walujo repeatedly referred to the high standard of living of the senior Army generals who were "against Sukarno." Untung has said:

All the time I was in Djakarta and meeting with Walujo, my promoter in ideology, he always provided me with indoctrination regarding the economic difficulties of soldiers nowadays and the fact that there was no longer any loyalty to the Generals from their subordinates, which in my view was true; he also provided me with information on the existence of the Generals' Council, which was also mentioned to us later during our meetings with Sjam.

There can be no doubt that these meetings had a profound effect on Untung. He has been described by one source who knew him well as "a simple man, dedicated to Sukarno but politically naive. He could easily be influenced by others." Another has described him as being of "unimpressive intellect, fanatically devoted to Sukarno." He was a rigid Moslem who "deplored luxury and depravity and resented the high life and immorality of some of the senior generals. He was not a clever man." "He was physically but not intellectually impressive" according to another. The PKI had obviously picked their man well. Untung would be amenable to their control; and now, with

his transfer to Djakarta and his new assignment as battalion commander of the Tjakrabirawa Presidential Guard, he was particularly well-placed, from the point of view of the PKI.\*

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\*After the Madiun uprising of 1948, in which Untung fought on the side of the Communists, his military career was in eclipse for a period of years. In the West Irian Campaign of May 1962, however, he distinguished himself as commander of one of the two companies of the 454th Battalion that were air-dropped into Irian. As the hero of the campaign, he was soon promoted from captain to major, and from then on, his career was on the upgrade. He was appointed commander of the 454th Battalion and, a few months before the coup, was given the prestigious assignment of battalion commander in the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard. Only 40 years old in 1965, Untung had a promising future in the Army at the time of the coup.

On 19 February 1963, on his return from Irian, Untung was presented with a medal by President Sukarno. The scene was the lawn of Merdeka Palace in the presence of the diplomatic corps and high government officials. The major was clad for the occasion in battle dress; behind him in similar array stood five companies from the guerrilla force. Following Untung's report, Sukarno pinned medals on his chest and those of his associate guerrilla leaders, amidst applause from the assembled public. A few days later, Sukarno entertained the heroes with "an evening of merriment."

An Indonesian reporter who interviewed Untung shortly after his return from West Irian was struck by Untung's "display of sincere emotion." Asked to comment on his memories of his service as an Irian paracommando, Untung "assumed a sad expression and replied, his voice choked with emotion":

Yes, the name Gunung Ginopa (a town in West Irian) has been a beacon flashing to our souls every second. Gunung Ginopa is the symbol of our sacrifice, the symbol of extreme loyalty and of suffering not easily  
(footnote continued on page 110)

## The Planning of the Coup

Untung's activities on behalf of the coup began on 4 September 1965--less than a month before the event. On that day, in the course of a regular meeting with Untung, Walujo mentioned that he wanted Untung to meet a certain Col. Latief, Major Sujono, and Captain Wahjudi. He said that he would make arrangements to introduce Untung to them.

(footnote continued from page 109)

forgotten. We have immortalized Gunung Ginopa as the name of the Heroes' Cemetery there. Thirty-five of our people lie there, forever... our comrades from the same unit...our comrades who dropped from the same airplane.

A quite different picture of Untung was given by a lieutenant who served under him in the Irian campaign. According to the lieutenant, Untung was very ambitious. When he was about to be dropped into Irian he was still a captain but was given the local rank of major for the occasion; he refused to jump until he had been given the insignia of his new rank, and so another major gave his up for Untung. According to Untung's fellow officer, Untung was known as an atheist, a loner, and cruel. On landing in Irian he abandoned one of his men in the jungle because he was disabled, on the argument that it was better one should die than that all should be placed in difficulty. Although he prevented his men from picking up transistor radios while in Irian, he himself brought back several, which he got by blackmailing some Chinese.

Presumably, the truth about Untung's character lies somewhere between these two extremes. One thing that seems clear is that he tended to be rather puritanical and strict with his men.

On the same day, Col. Latief--who had been having regular meetings with another deep-cover PKI agent who was Walujo's immediate superior as the #2 man in the Special Bureau, a man whom Latief knew only as Pono--was approached by his contact man on the same matter. As Latief has described it:

Around the beginning of September on a day and date which I have forgotten,\* Pono (whom I had already met) arrived at my house with another person, whom he identified only as Sjam. During this meeting, Pono told me that within a few days there would be a meeting of several comrades from the military at the house of Captain Wahjudi. During this meeting, Pono did not talk much but said that in two days I would be picked up and brought to the house of Capt. Wahjudi, while Sjam at that time did not say a word.

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\*Although Latief says that Sjam and Pono came to his home "around the beginning of September on a day and date which I have forgotten," he then goes on to describe what happened "two days later." The events that he describes are known to have occurred on 6 September, which would date his first meeting with Sjam on 4 September.

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### The First Meeting: The Participants Meet

Two days later, the first "get-acquainted" meeting of the men who were to plan and lead the 30 September Movement was held at Capt. Wahjudi's home late on the evening of 6 September 1965.\* Presumably, the other men had been informed of the meeting in much the same way that Untung and Latief had been told. Around 2000 hours, Pono arrived at Latief's house and invited him to go with him to Wahjudi's home. Latief recalled that

we arrived at Capt. Wahjudi's home together, around 2030. There I found Lt. Col. Untung, Air Force Major Sujono, Infantry Major Agus Sigit, Wahjudi, Pono, and Sjam. All seven of us entered the dining room, and after we sat down all the doors were closed. Then Pono introduced Sjam to us all; he said: 'Comrades, Mr. Sjam is a comrade of ours who will join us and lead further discussions.'

Then Sjam took over the meeting, and the first thing that he mentioned was the Generals' Council. Perhaps he did this to attract our attention. He spoke as follows: 'At the present time the existing Generals' Council is sabotaging the concepts of the great leader of the revolution...If the President should become ill, there is a great possibility that the generals will take over the government. If this happens, of course, the situation would become worse and they would destroy the PKI and other progressive parties. Thus at the present time we must as quickly as possible to set up or plan a new government through establishing a revolutionary council

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\*At his trial, Untung was asked why the first meeting was held at Wahjudi's house and not at his house. Untung replied: "the reason for that was that the appointed place for the meeting had to guarantee a maximum of security and could not be a place where there were a lot of people around."

which will be supported by the progressive and revolutionary parties and mass organizations.'

After having heard the remarks of Sjam, there was a reaction on our part and because the meeting was not very well regulated, questions arose all at once which more or less centered on the revolutionary council and how it would be set up. Sjam answered: 'you need not know that. Everything will be regulated.' Then we asked who the leaders of this council would be and Sjam said we would find out later.

Because it was very late and we began chatting among ourselves, it was planned for us to meet again three days later.

Wahjudi, Untung, and Sujono have given their own accounts of the first meeting of the coup group on 6 September, which all tend to confirm the essential truth of Latief's recollection of the event. Only Wahjudi fails to note the presence there of one of the other six men (he forgets Sujono); otherwise, there is complete agreement as to who was there. Wahjudi's account is the most amusing of all in his profession of great surprise when these men suddenly arrived at his home for a meeting he claims he knew nothing about in advance:

At the time I did not actually know that a meeting was to be held, but then Col. Latief arrived with two men, and then some other persons arrived, and then they began to discuss things in the house. Untung and Major Sigit, Col. Latief and Sjam and Pono were there. I did not know who they were, but I only recognized that they were civilians.

As far as the meeting at my home was concerned, I did not consider it a meeting because there was no leader, and hence it



only seemed to be a kind of get-together. It was then explained by Sjam that the meeting was taking place at a critical and important time in view of the fact that there was conflict among the different groups in the country. He said that we should safeguard the revolution and protect Sukarno.

But if Wahjudi's protests seem a bit disingenuous, they may not be altogether misleading. For some reason that is not altogether clear, Wahjudi does seem to have disappointed Sjam and Pono in their plans for him to play an active role in the coup. After the first two meetings that were held at his home, he did not attend any of the later meetings; needless to say, the meetings were held elsewhere. According to Sujono, Sjam brought up the subject of Wahjudi at the meeting on 23 September when he informed the group that Wahjudi would no longer be coming to the meetings.

We heard a discussion between Latief and Sjam to the effect that we should simply do without Captain Wahjudi. Later on I asked about Capt. Wahjudi, and Latief replied that he had failed to show up at several meetings and so we would no longer count on his attendance at the meetings. Sjam offered the explanation that Capt. Wahjudi could possibly have been detained because of family affairs. After that, we didn't ask any more questions about it.

In the meantime, Major Sigit also said that he would not be able to participate in this action. He only said that 'circumstances' did not permit his taking part.

Wahjudi has had only the following to say about his withdrawal from the coup group:

One day Untung approached me at my home to invite me to another meeting, but I was busy with the affairs of the battalion and I never attended a meeting after that.

It may be that family problems or the pressure of work made it difficult or impossible for Wahjudi to attend the meetings without arousing suspicion. (At least, on one occasion, Untung was unable to attend a scheduled meeting because his duties in the Palace Guard kept him elsewhere, so the meeting was postponed.) It is more likely, however, that Wahjudi had reservations about becoming involved in any such plot as Sjam and the others were contemplating. He may not have been as convinced as Untung and Latief and the others of the existence of the Generals' Council and its plans for a coup and, thus, the need for a countercoup or, if he was, not so willing to assume the risks of being a part of it. It is interesting that he took no steps to notify the authorities of the plotting under way, however. We just do not know enough about Wahjudi or his political views to explain all his actions; and the same is true for Major Sigit, who also withdrew from the coup group before the planning for the coup was well underway. Both men were subordinates of Col. Latief in the First Infantry Brigade and both were members of the same "PKI cell" as Latief, which meant that they all had Pono as their "manager" from the PKI. Obviously, Sjam and Pono thought they could be persuaded to play an active role in the coup or they would not have brought them together with the others at the first meeting on 6 September; but in this case, they seem to have been wrong in thinking they had that much control over Wahjudi and Sigit.

After the first meeting on 6 September, Untung seems to have been totally convinced that the Army leadership was planning a coup, though Sjam had presented him no factual proof of this; he was also persuaded that Sukarno's health was failing. At his trial, he said that "it was on the basis of these considerations that I swiftly organized meetings with other officers in order to effect an offensive to block the Generals' Council... Naturally I did not report this to my Commander." On 7 September he is known to have summoned one of his company commanders in the 1st Battalion of the Tjakrabirawa Regiment--Lt. Dul Arief, who was later to be given command of the troops charged with the kidnapping of the generals--to his bedroom in the Army barracks, where the following conversation is purported to have taken place:

Untung: How many men, who can be put in action, have you?

Dul Arief: Approximately, one company.

Untung: Have you understood my question?

Dul Arief: Yes, I have. I know something about this, as I have already been told by my organiser.

Until we had the full picture of the organization and operation of the Special Bureau that Sjam provided after his capture, we could not have appreciated the relationship between Untung and Dul Arief. Of the 9 men whom Sjam named as among those whom Walujo "managed" in the Air Force and the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard, Untung and Dul Arief were two of the three men he listed from the Tjakrabirawa Guard. In other words, they were members of the same "cell", in the sense that the Special Bureau used this word to refer to the various individuals who had been recruited from a particular unit of the Indonesian military; all the members of a "cell" would have the same "manager" from the PKI, in this case, Walujo. If Dul Arief referred to Walujo as "my organizer" in the above conversation with Untung (as Untung claims he did), this would suggest that they both must have had some knowledge of the other one's contacts with the PKI, even if they did not realize that they both had the same PKI "manager." Although there was supposed to be no contact between the members of a Special Bureau "cell" within a certain military unit, the individuals concerned may at least have had some idea who the other PKI contacts were. Or it may be that Walujo had gotten in touch with Dul Arief shortly before 7 September, as he had with Untung on 4 September, and that he had told Dul Arief that he would soon be contacted by Untung on a matter of utmost importance on which Dul Arief should cooperate fully with Untung. Dul Arief's answer to Untung's question, above, that he understood exactly what Untung meant because "I have already been told something about this by my organizer" strongly suggests that Walujo had recently contacted him for this purpose. Since it is clear that Sjam and Pono and Walujo were responsible for bringing

together the military officers who were involved in the highest level of military planning for the coup, beginning with the meeting on 6 September, it is perfectly reasonable to assume that they set up most, if not all, of the contacts between these military leaders and the men under them who would play a subordinate role in the coup. If one compares a list of the military officers involved in the coup with the list of PKI contacts in the military who were being "managed" by the Special Bureau, the similarity is striking. Obviously, the Special Bureau was behind the planning for the coup; for the most part, the people involved in the coup were "assets" of the Special Bureau in the military whom the PKI had been "cultivating" for years for just such a military operation.

#### The Second Meeting: Sjam Takes Charge

The meeting of the coup group that was held on 6 September was a prototype of those that followed throughout the month. The same five people--Sjam, Pono, Untung, Latief, and Sujono--were almost always present; Sjam presided at every meeting and was always in charge. He pronounced the party's political analysis of every political matter and handed down its decisions as directives to the officers, brusquely overriding all questions and objections. As the month passed and the discussions concentrated more on military planning, he retreated somewhat from the center of the stage in allowing the military officers to make more of the purely military decisions in preparation for the final moment, when the shooting was about to begin, when he would withdraw altogether to the sidelines and leave them to face the shock of the day. In the last days, the meetings were transferred to Lubang Buaja and Col. Latief was in control for all practical purposes, as it became a matter of assembling and organizing troops into units, checking equipment, etc.

After the first meeting on 6 September, a second meeting was held in Capt. Wahjudi's home on 9 September. Again, it was held late in the evening--around 2200 hours--and was attended by the same seven people who were present at the

first meeting. As Latief remembered it, the discussion centered on the Revolutionary Council. The officers wanted to know exactly who would be on the Council, but Sjam brushed aside their questions with the persistent reply: "You comrades need not get excited; every thing has already been taken care of, so we can all be quiet now." Latief's answer to an interrogator's question about his attitude toward Sjam's authoritative way of handling everything at this meeting is of interest:

Question: Why did you and your comrades in that second meeting not show any reaction in hearing Sjam say that everything would be taken care of, as though his words were unchangeable? Who did you think was deciding things as stated by Sjam? Were they decided by Aidit himself through Sjam or by Sjam himself?

Latief: Sjam was not speaking at this meeting on his own authority but in behalf of his superior, and in this regard Sjam was a delegate from the PKI Central Committee (CC/PKI). Although Sjam did not say who issued these instructions to him, I, as a sympathizer of the PKI, am convinced that the one who regulated the words of Sjam was comrade Aidit.\*

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\*Whether or not Sjam referred to Aidit by name or otherwise indicated that he got his orders from Aidit is a point on which there seems to be some disagreement in the interrogation reports of Latief, Sujono, and Untung. Latief indicates that Sjam never said anything about the orders coming from Aidit though he (Latief) was sure that they did. Sujono remembered one time when Sjam referred to "the Chairman;" it was then that Sujono realized that Sjam represented the PKI (at first, he thought he was a member of the military). At his trial, Untung testified that Sjam stated that he was a friend of Aidit and on another occasion, a messenger from Aidit. Untung was not (footnote continued on page 119)

Question: (Although you believed that Aidit was the one making the decisions), did you hesitate regarding the setting up of the Revolutionary Council?

Latief: Indeed so. I hesitated regarding the setting up of the Revolutionary Council because each time I asked Sjam about this I never got a definite answer as though this thing were top secret.

Question: If this is so, from the first and second meetings you could tell that this was a very grave plan and you were hesitant on every matter put before you. Why did you not

(footnote continued from page 118)

necessarily concerned to quote Sjam's precise words, however; he was simply answering a question as to whether or not Sjam indicated that he spoke for Aidit. Sjam himself might have referred to Aidit as "the Chairman".

In his official report on the Indonesian coup, General Suharto indicated that Sjam was explicit in telling the military officers that all the planning for the coup was being done by Aidit:

At every meeting Untung and his comrades always inquired from Sjam whether the entire plan for the coup was known and approved by Aidit. Sjam replied: 'Every plan connected with the coup has already been approved; moreover Aidit always inquires about the attitudes of each individual at the meetings.'

Suharto was making explicit what was undoubtedly true--that Sjam did report to Aidit on the meetings and did receive his orders directly from Aidit. But it is doubtful that Sjam made the statement attributed to him by Suharto; he would have been more discreet than that; furthermore, none of the interrogation reports (that we have seen) mention any such statement.

withdraw from this plan? Was there no desire on your part to destroy this plan by reporting it to the Commander in Chief of KODAM V?

Latief: For the sake of the interests of the PKI to which I am sympathetic, I did not report this matter to the Commander in Chief.

The interrogator asked Untung a similar question about his uncritical acceptance of everything Sjam said:

Question: You act as though all the provisions were issued by Sjam and were swallowed without any reaction or questioning as to why they were so, despite the fact that what Sjam issued was not acceptable to your thinking. Why was this?

Untung: I can reply to this as follows: In fact we as military members, both I myself, Col. Latief and Maj. Sujono, who attended that meeting, had placed our complete confidence in Sjam as a representative of the Party with which we were tied in closely in ideology, namely, the Indonesian Communist Party.

#### The Third Meeting: The Question of Troops and the Role of Sukarno

After the meeting on 9 September, the third meeting of the coup group was held on 13 September at 2130 hours at Col. Latief's home. Latief explained the change in the meeting place, as follows:

At first, it was proposed to hold this meeting at Capt. Wahjudi's house again, but because there had been several meetings there, it was requested that the next meeting be held in my house, although in fact this was not too tactical because I usually have many guests and I have a large family. But Sjam instructed that it be held at my house.

The major topic of discussion at the third meeting was the question of troops. Apparently, each man, in turn, gave his estimate of the number of men from his respective unit that he could make available to the coup. Sujono's pledge of a trained force of some 3-4,000 people was particularly noteworthy. He was referring to 3-4,000 Communist volunteers--young men and women from the Communist youth and women's organizations--who had just completed a short course of a week's duration in military training at Lubang Buaja conducted in great secrecy by Sujono himself. [We will have more to say about this particular force and the secret training program at Lubang Buaja later.] After Sujono, Latief and Untung gave their estimates of the number of troops available from their units. Thereupon, a heated exchange between Sjam and Major Sigit is reported to have taken place as to whether or not a force of this size was sufficient to start a movement.\* The incident was another good illustration of Sjam's absolute unwillingness to tolerate disagreement or doubt. He is reported to have become very angry and to have ended the exchange with the retort: "Bung, we also are military people and we can decide military matters." According to Latief, "the meeting then skipped to other matters to calm everyone down." At this point, the crucial matter of the role of Sukarno in the coup was raised for the first time, in a question by one of the military officers. Sjam reportedly replied that "the great leader of the revolution has his own role also. The Bung will later on obtain a separate settlement."

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\*This incident underscores some of the doubts that Major Sigit apparently felt about the coup plans. We know of another occasion, too, when he expressed doubts about certain other features of the coup planning. After the second meeting of the group on 9 September, he is reported to have approached Col. Latief at the Infantry Brigade headquarters and to have asked Latief what he thought about the whole idea of the Revolutionary Council and specifically the idea of making Untung the chairman. He asked Latief: "Do you think he is willing and capable of leading the Revolutionary Council and facing the major parties and mass organizations? Do you know why he was selected to be chairman?" Latief said that he had brought up this matter with Sjam but had never obtained an answer.



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Latief says that everyone present concluded from that "that no matter what happens, the President must play a role. With this view, which we all had, Sjam was silent and gave no reaction at all and owing to the fact that it was very late, the meeting was closed at this point."

The Fourth Meeting: The Question of the Generals and the Choice of a Leader

Sjam and Pono had requested that the next meeting be held at Latief's home again, and so six days later, on 19 September, Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, and Pono met there at 1700 hours for their fourth meeting together. The group was now down to five people, with the defection of Major Sigit and Capt. Wahjudi from the group; from now on, these five men would meet together every other day until just before the coup, when they would bring other people into their discussions at the last moment to brief them on their respective assignments in the coup. In the interval of six days before the last meeting and this one on the 19th, Untung had been in touch with Maj. Sukirno, the Commander of the 454th Battalion of the Central Java Division, stationed in Semarang. Apparently, Untung had gone to Central Java for the express purpose of meeting Sukirno; the two men had met in Untung's home in Tjidurian on the morning of 15 September. Untung must have explained something of his plans to Sukirno, for he obtained Sukirno's assurance that he could use the troops of the 454th Battalion, which would be in Djakarta towards the end of the month for the Armed Forces Day parade on 5 October. Maj. Sukirno informed Untung that the 530th Battalion of the East Java Division was also scheduled to take part in the parade and presumably would be arriving in Djakarta about the same time as the 454th Battalion, around the 25th or 26th of September. Untung reported his conversation with Sukirno to Sjam and the others at Latief's home on the evening of the 19th. He also informed the group of the preparations that Lt. Dul Arief of the Tjakrabirawa was making to have the troops of the Tjakrabirawa ready for their kidnapping assignments. This led into a discussion of the target of these raids; namely, the specific generals on the list to be kidnapped.

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As Untung explained it, Sjam made the initial suggestion of each name and then there was a general discussion of that particular general; in every case, the group agreed with Sjam on the seven names he proposed.

Untung: As to the suggestion of the names of the generals who had to be 'secured,' this was done jointly but preceded by a proposal of Sjam. For instance, as to Gen. Nasution, in general, we were all of the same idea. But the proposal came from Sjam. The same for Gen. Yani, Parman, Harjono, Sutojo, Pandjaitan, and Suprpto. Altogether, there were seven people included.

Question: What was the opinion of the planners of the 30 September Movement as to other generals in the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Police Force?

Untung: In this case, everything was based on the information that the seven generals belonged to the Council of Generals who were to stage a coup. At the meeting on 19 September Sjam said that according to the last information he had, Gen. Yani had urged Gen. Nasution to immediately realize the coup, but Gen. Nasution could not approve of this action. He said that Gen. Yani was already making preparations.\* Thus, based

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\*Untung explained that Sjam said that "Gen. Yani had made ready two Saracen armored cars on Djalan Daksa as part of his preparations for a coup." After an investigation, it turned out that the two Saracens were made ready by Gen. Yani, Gen. Muskita, and Gen. Ginting "in order to escape should something happen."

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on the information Sjam had, it was considered necessary to immediately 'secure' the generals.

Untung's testimony reinforces the observation made earlier on the basis of the military raids on the various generals' homes on 1 October that General Suharto was not a target of the 30 September Movement. Contrary to widespread belief, he did not escape capture in some near-miraculous way as Nasution did; no effort was ever made to get him. The other interesting point in Untung's testimony is his explanation of Sjam's way of obtaining agreement from the military officers on various points that he obviously had already decided--such as precisely which generals would be eliminated.

It is of interest to look into the matter of just what Sjam and the others intended with respect to the generals--whether they intended from the beginning to kill the generals or to arrest them (on charges of plotting against the government) and hold them incommunicado until the coup was a fait accompli, or whether they had no clear idea what they would do with them since it depended on whether they were captured dead or alive.\* At his trial, Sjam insisted that it was not the plan of the PKI to kill the generals. When asked why it was that the generals were killed, he responded: "We simply lost our senses."

Untung has said that Sjam always used the Indonesian word "mengamankan"--which means "to secure or render harmless"--in speaking of the action to be taken against the

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\*Just what the PKI intended and what Sukarno may have intended to be done with the generals are two different questions. There is a good deal more ambiguity about what Sukarno intended and what he may have thought the PKI intended than there is about what the PKI intended itself. Sukarno's thinking in the matter is discussed later in the paper.

generals. Apparently, he never spelled out exactly what he meant by this and the military officers never questioned him closely. They must have felt reasonably sure that they knew what he meant, and the indications are that they accepted the fact that he meant that the generals would be killed.\* During their interrogation, none of the military officers involved in the coup claimed that they were shocked or even surprised by the murder of the generals, although Sujono, in the process of disclaiming any responsibility for the decision to kill the generals, does make it look as though he was not exactly sure what was to be done with them. After Lt. Dul Arief turned the generals over to Air Force Major Gatot Sukrisno at Lubang Buaja, Sukrisno immediately reported to Sujono; Sujono claims that he sent a courier to the Central Command, which was still at the Aerial Survey Office in Djakarta, to request orders, which he insisted be in writing. The order came back, signed by Latief, that the generals who were still alive should be "disposed of" immediately.\*\*

If Sujono's story is true, it suggests that he did not have standing orders to kill the generals as soon as they were brought to Lubang Buaja; but this would probably have been the case even if the coup leaders had planned to kill the generals from the beginning. On such an-

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\*During his interrogation, Latief was asked if he approved the murder/kidnapping of the generals. He answered: "We approved of the murder of the generals because we were forced to do so by the PKI."

\*\*It is interesting to note that Latief did not use the word "kill" or something like it--like "shoot" or "execute"--but instead said that the generals should be "disposed of." It was really no more direct a way of saying that the generals should be killed than to say that the generals should be "rendered harmless" as Sjam had explained the action to be taken against the generals. Yet, Sujono was obviously in no doubt what "to dispose of" meant.

important matter, Sujono would probably have been instructed to report to the Central Command when the various raiding parties arrived back at Lubang Buaja with the generals; the final order to kill the generals would not be given until the Central Command knew for sure whether or not all the generals had been captured and whether dead or alive. It is interesting to speculate just what Sjam and the others would have ordered Sujono to do with the generals had they realized at that moment that Nasution had not been captured. Actually, at that point, they were committed to killing the generals who were still alive, since three of the generals had already been killed resisting capture. No matter what they intended with respect to the generals, they obviously had to be prepared for the eventuality that some of the generals would be killed in the process of capturing them. As mentioned earlier, the order to the officers in charge of the kidnapping missions had been to bring back the generals "dead or alive." Gatot Sukrisno, the commander of the volunteer forces at Lubang Buaja, testified at Untung's trial that Latief told him and the other officers involved in the raid on the generals' homes that "it was advisable that the generals not be shot in their homes but rather gotten rid of at some other place."

The other main topic--besides the generals who were to be eliminated in the coup--that was discussed at the secret meeting of 19 September was the choice of a leader for the 30 September Movement, which was still unnamed at this point (as we shall see later, Sjam gave the movement its official name of 'the 30 September Movement' at a later meeting of the group on 29 September). In response to a question about the need for a leader when the movement announced itself later on, Sjam broke the news that Untung would be the leader of the over-all movement." Apparently, no one was more surprised than Untung. He says that he immediately questioned Sjam as to why he had been selected. Sjam replied: "because you are not known here and are relatively new and because you are the personal bodyguard of the President." Apparently, both Sujono and Latief--as well as Untung--had reservations about this decision. Later,

Untung and Sujono are reported to have approached Sjam together to ask if it would be better if "a higher ranking officer and a more appropriate officer be selected to head this movement." Sjam closed the subject--as he was wont to close all matters of controversy--with the firm opinion that "it is better if Untung heads the movement for the reasons I have mentioned."\*

At the end of the meeting, the military officers asked Sjam about the political support for the coup. He replied that there should be no anxiety on that score:

What is of primary importance is whether the plans for the kidnapping of the generals are successfully carried out. Should they succeed, then automatically all the political and mass organizations and the parties will support us, that is the PKI and all its political and mass organizations and sympathizers, the PNI and its political and mass organizations and sympathizers and other parties which presently join us in activities in all fields.

In regard to political preparations in areas outside Djakarta:

The Regions have made preparations earlier than we and the Regions are merely waiting

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\*The fact that Untung was a battalion commander in the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard was doubtlessly a consideration in the PKI's selection of him as the leader of the 30 September Movement. It would naturally be assumed that any action he would take would be in defense of the President; thus the fact that he was leading the 30 September Movement would be taken as an indication that at least the coup was pro-Sukarno. This was obviously not the main reason why the PKI chose Untung as the leader of the coup, however; a much more important consideration was the fact that Untung could be trusted completely to follow PKI orders. Sjam would never have admitted this to the other military officers involved in the coup, of course.

for the results of our movement in Djakarta.  
The areas already prepared are Bandung,  
Central and East Java.

Sjam's comments on the mobilization of political support for the coup are of special interest as an indication of the preparations that the PKI was making along this line in advance of the coup. With the premature collapse of the coup, nothing of this sort ever materialized; the lack of any observable response from the PKI (except its editorial in Harian Rakjat on the morning of 2 October) to events in Djakarta on 1 October was particularly mystifying at the time. If the PKI had engineered the coup or was in any way involved in it or merely sympathetic to it, why had it failed to mount an all-out propaganda campaign in support of it? Certainly, it was not because it was unable to do so. In comparison with other parties, the PKI was unique in its ability to mobilize public opinion in Indonesia; within a matter of hours, it could mount a propaganda campaign in support of any policy, complete with mass demonstrations of support involving thousands of people, public statements of support from leaders in all fields, and all kinds of editorial comment in the PKI-controlled mass media. The absence of all these normal signs of PKI support for the coup prompted some observers to conclude that the PKI obviously was not involved in the coup; they could not reconcile the party's willingness to risk an action like the 30 September Movement with its failure to undertake an all-out push, especially when the missing element was support in the propaganda field. We now know, of course, that the fact that the PKI did not stage an impressive show of public support for the coup was not because it was not involved in the coup or somehow caught off-guard by the timing of the coup or not sympathetic to it--indeed just the opposite was true. At the same time, the fact that it had been very much involved in the planning for the coup and yet had failed to follow through with a propaganda offensive was not because it had not considered this in its over-all planning for the coup. The fact of the matter was that the PKI had made the most careful plans for the mobilization of political support after the coup, but had called off these plans at the last moment when the coup ran afoul and the party realized that

it would not have Sukarno's support for an action that had been badly bungled.

We still do not know much about the PKI preparations in the political field. Sjam never discussed them with the military officers, who are our main source of information on the planning of the coup. We do know, however, that it was Aidit's plan to send the top leaders of the PKI to various cities throughout the country a day or so before the coup; they would personally coordinate political activities in the various areas. (Lukman and Sakirman were sent to Semarang in Central Java and Peris Pardede to Medan in Sumatra, for instance.) Aidit had obviously given much thought to the matter of political support for the coup. This was one matter that could not be arranged for completely ahead of time, because of the need for secrecy. Too many people would be involved to bring them into the coup planning. Aidit had done everything that he could in the way of planning the PKI political response and still keeping it a secret. He had briefed his key lieutenants in detail on what should be done; they would have the responsibility of coordinating PKI activities after the coup. Obviously, he considered it a matter of the utmost importance or he would not have assigned his key men to the job.

Having sought to reassure the military officers that the matter of political support for the coup had been taken care of by others and they should have no worries along this line, Sjam pressed one final point on the meeting of 19 September--namely, the need to implement the coup as soon as possible. Untung agreed but said that it would be necessary to wait at least until the end of the month, when the troops of the 454th and 530th Battalions would arrive in Djakarta. From this point on, Sjam's pressure on the military for haste and Untung's concern for adequate military preparations would be the underlying currents at every meeting of the coup planners.



The Fifth Meeting: The Question of Arms and An Important  
Newcomer to the Group

It was decided that the next meeting would be held on 21 September at Sjam's house; however, due to a misunderstanding regarding transportation, the meeting was postponed until 23 September. According to Untung, the fifth meeting on the 23rd was not really an official meeting of the group but more of an "informal discussion," because Sujono was unable to be there. This was the first meeting of the coup group that began as early as 1630 hours, and Sujono had been called to a meeting with the Minister of the Air Force (Dani) at the same hour. Nothing more is known about the alleged meeting between Sujono and Dani, but Untung's mention of it is very interesting; if true, it could be of some significance. Only four days earlier, Dani had returned to Indonesia from a secret mission he had made to Communist China on the direct orders of President Sukarno. Besides Dani and Sukarno, only two other persons knew of Dani's mission--Subandrio and Aidit. The Indonesian army was not informed of the trip and was not to learn anything about it until after the coup.

The whole story behind Dani's trip to China will probably never be known; but the following facts have been established with reasonable certainty. Dani arrived in Peking on 16 September aboard an Indonesian Air Force jet and stayed there three days, returning to Indonesia on the same plane on 19 September. Upon his return, he reported on the results of his mission, first, to Subandrio and, then, to President Sukarno. (He reported to the President while they were attending the wedding of Dr. Ruslan Abdulgani's daughter on 21 September.) He never submitted a report to the armed forces leadership or to the Minister Coordinator for Defense and Security (Nasution), who would normally have been informed about such a matter. The trip was kept a secret from Nasution and the Army leadership until well after the coup, and presumably Sukarno intended that it always be kept a secret. At Dani's and Subandrio's trials, however, it

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was revealed that Sukarno had sent Dani to Peking in mid-September to make the final arrangements for a shipment of Chinese arms to Indonesia that Chou En-lai had first mentioned to the Indonesians some nine months earlier.\* In Peking, Dani is known to have had a private meeting with Chou, with whom, among other things, he is reported to have discussed the shipment of 100,000 small arms to Indonesia.

Thus, it would seem that a deal between Sukarno and the Chinese involving the shipment of 100,000 small arms from Communist China to Indonesia was in the process of being negotiated, if it had not already been concluded, at the time of the Indonesian coup. It had been negotiated at the very highest levels, by Sukarno and his personal representative, Dani, on the Indonesian side and by Chou En-lai himself on the Chinese side. It was obviously intended to be kept very secret; as we have seen, only four persons in the Indonesian government knew anything about it. (It is interesting in this regard that Dani was one of the four persons. It shows the closeness of his relationship with Sukarno, which would seem to be a very important factor in understanding his role in the coup. In this case, he was in the select company of Aidit and Subandrio; on this basis, the three of them might well be considered to have been Sukarno's most trusted confidants.)

The precise connection, if there was any, between Sukarno's arms deal with the Chinese and the coup is not so easily established. It seems that Chou's offer of

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\*According to Subandrio's interrogation report, Chou En-lai offered to provide Indonesia "with 100,000 pieces of light arms free of charge for the purpose of equipping the fifth force" in January 1965, when Subandrio was in Peking for talks with the Chinese leaders.

weapons to Sukarno--an offer that was first made in January 1965--was in connection with Sukarno's plans for a "fifth force" in Indonesia.\* The issue of the "fifth force" was one of the most controversial issues of the day. The military, that is all the leaders of the armed services with the exception of Dani, were strongly opposed to the idea. The PKI was very much in favor of it for the obvious reason that it provided an excuse for arming peasants and workers sympathetic to the PKI. They always presented the idea in different forms, of course. In public, they spoke of the "fifth force" only in terms of national defense in combatting the raids on Indonesia from Malaysia; they would hardly have mentioned the other reason they had for wanting a "fifth force."

So anxious were the Chinese for Sukarno to provide the PKI with an excuse for developing an armed capability that they were quite likely to have offered to supply the arms that would be required--as an added inducement for Sukarno to agree to the idea of a "fifth force." It would seem to have been the case that the Chinese had agreed to supply arms to Sukarno on a covert basis with the "fifth force" in mind; there is nothing to indicate that they knew of the coup planning and were sending arms to Indonesia with that specific purpose in mind. On the other hand, it can not be ruled out.

As far as Sukarno was concerned, he could have sent Dani to Peking to arrange for the shipment of Chinese arms to Indonesia, also with the thought that they would be used to train and equip a "fifth force." Or he could have sent Dani there to arrange for an immediate shipment

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\*By "fifth force" Sukarno meant a kind of militia along the lines of the Chinese "people's militia." It would be a trained and armed body of citizens--both peasants and workers--who would constitute a fifth force in addition to the army, navy, air force, and police; in times of national emergency, it would serve as a special defense force in support of the other four services.

of arms, with the thought that they would be used in the coup (assuming of course, that he knew of the coup plans). The timing of Dani's secret trip, less than two weeks before the coup, does suggest that it was somehow connected with the coup. Assuming that Sukarno did know of the coup planning and was trying to arrange for an immediate shipment of arms to Indonesia, it does not necessarily follow that he informed the Chinese of his reasons for wanting the arms immediately.

To get back to Sujono and the others who were actively planning for the coup, it is possible that Dani called Sujono to a meeting on the afternoon of 23 September to inform him of the availability of Chinese arms for the coup--although this is pure speculation. However, it will be remembered that it was Sujono who made the arrangements to get the Air Force arms that were stored in the Mampong ammunition depot on the night of the coup; it will also be remembered that these were Chinese arms. It is not at all clear when these arms were received in Indonesia. It is possible that some of them were received just before the coup, in other words, after Dani's trip to China; on the other hand, covert shipments of Chinese arms to Indonesia are known to have been received in Indonesia before then.\* So it is impossible to tie the Chinese arms used in the coup to Dani's trip to China conclusively, though the presupposition is strong that they were somehow linked. Similarly, it is impossible to say for sure that Dani's meeting with Sujono on 23 September was in connection with the coup, though there is reason to suspect that it was.

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\*The covert shipment of Communist Chinese arms to Indonesia before the coup is discussed in much greater detail in Section IV, pp. 171-173. Suffice it to say at this point that the Chinese are known to have been shipping arms to Indonesia. All of the arms in question appear to have entered Indonesia through the harbor at Djakarta: they were stored in nearby Air Force depots. There is no evidence that any of the arms were turned over to the PKI before the coup. Apparently, it was Sukarno, rather than the PKI, who had negotiated a secret arms deal with the Chinese. There is no good evidence that the PKI was receiving secret deliveries of Chinese arms at all, certainly not in any sizeable quantity.

With Sujono absent, the meeting of the coup group at Sjam's house on 23 September was attended only by Sjam, Pono, Untung, and Latief. As Untung remembered it, the main topic of discussion was the troops that would be available to the coup forces. Pono informed the group that there was no longer any doubt about the 530th battalion; the troops of that battalion, as well as the 454th, had definitely been committed to the side of the coup. Pono also indicated that armored support, consisting of about 30 armored cars from the Cavalry, would be coming from Bandung, although the commander of the cavalry unit was still uncertain. Untung pressed him for a more definite answer as to who would lead the unit and how many tanks would be involved. With his good commanding sense, Untung had immediately sensed the importance of an armored unit; his concern that it should be definitely committed to the coup forces was to run like a thread through all the later meetings of the coup group. Again and again he would press for news of it and a pledge that he could count on it. His uneasiness was to prove very well-founded; the vital tank unit that Sjam and Pono had talked so much about never did show up on the day of the coup.

Besides his report on the troops and armored units that would be available, Pono had some other interesting news to tell Untung and Latief at their meeting on 23 September. He informed them that a new member would soon be joining their discussions--no less a figure than General Supardjo, who would be coming from West Borneo, where he was serving as Commander of the 4th Combat Command engaged in "confrontation with Malaysia. It was no accident or chance that Supardjo just happened to be coming to Djakarta at this time. It was all part of Sjam's planning from the beginning. The reason that Supardjo was involved in the coup was precisely the same reason that Untung, Latief, Sujono, and the others became involved; he was a PKI sympathizer who was being "managed" by the Special Bureau of the PKI and could be counted on to serve the will of the party. Supardjo was actually the prize "asset" of the PKI in the Indonesian military. Probably because of his rank,

he was personally "managed" by the chief of the PKI Special Bureau--Sjam himself. How far back his secret contacts with the PKI went is not clear. We only know that for a matter of months, perhaps a year or more, he was in regular contact with Sjam. (Presumably, he was in and out of Djakarta often enough, in connection with his assignment as Commander of the 4th Combat Command, that he could have managed to see Sjam fairly regularly.) We do not know anything about Supardjo's actual recruitment for the coup, not even whether he was contacted in West Borneo or when he was in Djakarta for a visit. Presumably, he was kept informed of the coup planning during those last weeks before the coup when he was still in West Borneo. Although he was to play an important part in the last minute preparations for the coup and a major role in the actual events of the coup on 1 October, he could not have come to Djakarta much ahead of the event without arousing suspicion. (His arrival in Djakarta on 28 September was kept secret until the day of the coup). Apparently, it was arranged between Supardjo and the PKI that he would receive an emergency telegram in West Borneo to come to Djakarta because his daughter was sick; this would be the signal that the coup was about to begin. Supardjo received the telegram on 28 September; he flew to Djakarta that same day. Had his daughter really been sick, he would have had no reason not to notify the authorities of this fact and request leave to visit her in Djakarta; on the contrary, he left his post in West Borneo without even notifying the Army leadership that he was leaving. He was in Djakarta a full two days before Suharto or Nasution learned--by chance--that he was there. (It will be remembered that Gen. Umar reported to Suharto that he had seen Gen. Supardjo at the Palace on the morning of the coup.) Had he had proper reasons for being there--either official or nonofficial--he would not have made such an obvious effort to keep his presence there a secret. In short, there can be no doubt that he came to Djakarta for reasons connected with the coup; and no other reason. The fact that Pono mentioned that Supardjo would be coming to Djakarta soon during the meeting of the coup group on 23 September makes it clear that the PKI arranged everything connected with his arrival in Djakarta to take part in the coup.

The Sixth Meeting: The Training of the Volunteers and  
A Promise from the Cavalry

After meeting on 23 September, the next time that Sjam, Pono, Untung, Latief, and Sujono met together was on the 25th, once again at Sjam's house, around 1700 hours. Sjam was obviously getting impatient to move; he announced that the movement would have to be touched off within the next few days, sometime before the end of the month, or it would be too late. (Although he always attributed his sense of urgency to the likelihood of a coup by the Generals' Council, he was probably more concerned about the possibility of his own coup plans becoming known than the possibility of the Generals seizing the initiative.) Under pressure from Sjam to begin the movement, Untung was still concerned about the two things that had all along been the big question marks as far as the military planning for the coup was concerned: the armored troops and the volunteer troops that were receiving a short course in military training at Lubang Buaja in preparation for the coup. At this point, it would probably be well to clarify certain facts about these volunteer troops about which there has been a good deal of confusion.

On 11 September 1965, a small staff of Air Force officers, with Major Sujono in charge, began a secret military training course for Communist volunteers at Lubang Buaja. In the three weeks before the coup, some 4,000 members of the Communist youth (Pemuda Rakjat) and women's (Gerwani) organizations received a week's military training and political indoctrination. It would have been most improbable that such a training program could or would have been conducted at Lubang Buaja, so close to Halim Air Force Base, which Dani visited regularly, without his knowledge and/or approval. For one thing, Sujono would have to have accounted for his time, since apparently he was involved full-time in the instruction of the volunteers. Actually, Dani had admitted that he knew that the training was going on though he has denied that he gave the order for it. In a rather tortured and obviously insincere explanation, he has said:

I never issued an order to Major Sujono to train the people at Lubang Buaja. At one point I heard that the training was not going too well so I ordered Commodore Dewanto to correct it. ...When the first class (of volunteers) was almost over, I was asked to speak at the closing ceremony.

Sujono's testimony contradicts Dani's on this point; he has said that he was acting on the direct orders of Dani.

As for Sukarno, he never expressed the least surprise after the coup when it was discovered that Communist party members and sympathizers had received secret military training at Lubang Buaja during the month of September. Dani's obvious knowledge of the fact that Lubang Buaja was being used as a secret training base would also seem to implicate Sukarno. Dani is not likely to have become involved in the training, as he obviously was if he spoke at the closing ceremony, unless he was sure that Sukarno knew and approved of it. In short, both Dani and Sukarno must have known what was going on. Whether they actually ordered the training as part of a long-range plan to create a "fifth force" or the more immediate purpose of the coup or whether it was more a question of their being informed of the coup preparations that were underway by other people is not so clear.

There is no doubt that the training itself was part of the preparations for the coup. The timing of the training is convincing evidence in itself. The first course began within a few days of the first meeting of the coup group on 6 September. The fact that Sujono was put in charge of the training program is further evidence; he was, of course, deeply involved in the planning for the coup at the time. At the meetings with Sjam, he regularly reported on the progress of the training of the volunteer forces as part of the military planning for the coup. Finally, there is the fact that the volunteer forces were involved in the events of the coup on 1 October. For these reasons, it seems to us that the training of Communist party members and sympathizers at Lubang Buaja during the three-week period before



the coup when all the other preparations for the coup were underway must have been part of the coup preparations.\* All the talk about a "fifth force" by those involved in the coup may have been intended, in part, as a cover for the training of troops for the coup. If the training had been discovered before the coup, it would almost certainly have been represented as training for the "fifth force." After the coup, Dani seems to have resorted to the same cover story in his explanation of the training that was underway at Lubang Buaja.

The nature of the training given to the PKI volunteers, the selection of the volunteers themselves, and the choice of the training site all tend to support the conclusion that the training was a crash training program of auxiliary troops for the coup. The site of the training was the place where the murder of the generals took place on 1 October (although it was within the five-kilometer zone of responsibility of Halim Air Force Base, it was generally considered to be part of the town of Lubang Buaja. The tent in which the generals were kept was within a few yards of the public kitchen which the volunteers used.)

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\*The testimony of Peris Pardede, the PKI leader, is interesting in this regard. Although he was a member of the Politburo, he was apparently not privy to the plans that were being made for the coup. During his interrogation, he stated:

Lightning [fast] training was being given to the Pemuda Rakjat (PKI youth organization) and the Gerwani (PKI women's organization) by Air Force officers. When I asked one member of the Pemuda Rakjat, because I wanted to know, he replied in an unconcerned way that the training was for the defense of the airbase. But I at that time presumed that the Pemuda Rakjat and the Gerwani were being trained in connection with the coming coup.

The PKI had managed the whole business of recruiting the volunteers. According to his own confession, Njono, the Chief of the Greater Djakarta Committee of the PKI, was put in charge of all the "operational-technical preparations for the coup, including the contacting, coordinating and then activating of the PKI reserve forces for a rush training course at Lubang Buaja." On 8 September secret instructions issued in the name of the party central leadership were received by the various party organizations in the Greater Djakarta area, explaining that a special military training course would begin on 11 September. The training would be conducted by the Indonesian Air Force. Each subsection committee of the party was to select 10 trainees, each branch committee of the PKI youth organization, 6 trainees, and each branch committee of the women's organization, 2 trainees.\* The volunteers were ordered to report to the air force camp at Halim at 1430 hours on 11 September; they would be housed in the barracks at the camp.

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\*The greater Djakarta area committee of the PKI comprised about 50 subsection committees, so there should have been about 500 volunteers from the party, if each subsection committee had been successful in getting 10 volunteers. The volunteers from the Communist women's and youth organizations were in addition to these 500. The first group of volunteers, which included both PKI party members and members of the Communist youth and women's organization, who received a seven-day military training course from 11-18 September, is reported to have included 1,200 volunteers.

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Various sources have reported that the PKI had plans for the military training of approximately 4,000 men and women. Apparently, these plans were largely fulfilled, although it meant that there was only time for "lightning training" since the training course had to be kept to a week if 2-3 training courses were to be scheduled before the coup. The first group of 1,200 volunteers completed a week's training course on 18 September, a second class of 1,500 trainees finished on 25 September; and another class of 1,500 arrived at Lubang Buaja on the afternoon of 28 September for a third training course that was interrupted by the coup itself.\* As we shall see later, the final decision of the coup leaders to start their movement on the 30th was made on the 28th, the day that the third training course began. In the two days remaining before the coup, Sujono gave the third group of volunteers an even more accelerated course in basic military training than the other volunteers had received. Even with two days' training, it was thought that they would--in Sujono's words--"give a push to the movement against the Generals' Council."

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\*The number of volunteers involved in the program seems fairly well established. Several sources have reported the same figures given above as the attendance at the various courses. In his interrogation, Latief said that Sujono reported to the coup group at one of their meetings that he had trained between 3-4,000 Communist youth and women and other PKI sympathizers at Lubang Buaja.

The military exercises at Lubang Buaja were conducted in the strictest secrecy. According to one participant, the volunteers were told that anyone daring to betray the secret would be shot. The Air Force officers who conducted the training--who were all officers of the Air Force defense command that was assigned to guard Halim Air Force Base (Sujono's regiment), not officers of the so-called Air Force Quick Action Command or regular Air Force as we think of it--obviously did not reveal their true identities. Major Sujono was known as Major Djojo and Major Katuk used the name of Lt. Col. Imam. Virtually all of the volunteers interrogated after the coup mention these two names as the names of the officers in charge of the training. Besides the small staff of officers, there were perhaps an equal number of enlisted men who led the drill exercises. Training was given in weapons, defense, and guerrilla warfare, and there was political indoctrination in PKI ideology, Marxism, et. alia.

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At the meeting on 25 September, Sujono reported on the preparations that were going on at Lubang Buaja. While those preparations were progressing nicely, he was less reassuring about the matter of the armored troops. It was still not clear how many troops would be available and who the cavalry commander would be. The same tensions that had been discernible at earlier meetings were even clearer at this one. Untung was obviously growing more and more nervous about the matter of armored support; he indicated that he was not prepared to proceed with the plans for the coup until he was absolutely certain about the cavalry. Sjam, on the other hand, was getting more and more impatient. He informed Untung and the other military officers that there could not be any question of a delay past the end of the month; the movement would have to be touched off before 30 September. At this meeting on the 25th, he tentatively set the date for the coup for 29 September. According to Untung, however, this was not definitely agreed upon by everyone at the meeting, because "we had not met the troops of the 454th and 530th battalions and were not assured of armored support." But although Untung may not have felt definitely committed to a deadline of 30 September or 29 September and may still have felt that the

timing of the coup would have to be determined by the military officers who were responsible for the military success of the coup, he was being overtaken by the rush of events that was taking place on a schedule which called for a coup on the 29th or 30th. It could almost have been foreseen at this point that in the end he would be swept up in the momentum of events and plunged into a venture that he had grave misgivings about--at least, from the military point of view.

After the meeting on 25 September, Untung was able to satisfy some of his doubts about the 454th and the 530th battalions. He went straight from the meeting to Gambir Station in Djakarta to check on the arrival of the two battalions. They had not arrived then; but later in the evening after he had returned to the barracks, he happened to see the 454th arriving at the barracks. He immediately made contact with the battalion commander, Major Sukirno; and arranged for someone from the battalion to meet with him in the morning. Capt. Kuntjoro, the deputy commander, kept the appointment; but since the 530th had not yet arrived in Djakarta, Untung and Kuntjoro decided to meet again at 1400 hours the next afternoon (27 September) with the commander of the 530th. After that meeting on the 27th, Untung was assured of the participation of the two battalions in the coup. His subordinate in the Tjakrabirawa Guard, Lt. Dul Arief, who had been put in charge of the operation to seize the generals, was present at the meeting to discuss the involvement of one company from each battalion in the PASOPATI troops under his command.\* After their

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\*PASOPATI was the codeword for the troops under Dul Arief's command that composed the raiding parties on the generals' homes; BIMASAKTI was the codeword for the troops under Capt. Suradi's command that were to secure the Presidential Palace, radio station, and communications building; and PRINGGODANI was the codeword for the troops under Major Gatot Sukrisno's command that were to defend Halim Air Force Base.

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meeting with Untung, Dul Arief took Capt. Kuntjoro and Lt. Ngadino of the 454th and Capt. Suradi of the 530th for a review tour of Lubang Buaja.

The Seventh Meeting: The Decision on D Day

After the tour, there was a meeting at Sjam's house at 1900 hours that evening; it was the seventh time that Sjam and Pono had met together with the military officers who would soon be left alone to shoulder the responsibility for the coup as its nominal leaders. At the meeting, Untung discussed the review that the officers mentioned above had made of the base at Lubang Buaja that afternoon. It was decided that the PASOPATI troops which would be involved in the raids on the generals' homes would start those raids from Lubang Buaja. There was another discussion of the matter of the cavalry, which was still not settled. Apparently, it was the feeling of the meeting that D Day could not possibly be set for the 29th, which was then only two days away. It was decided that the group would meet again on that date for one last review of the plan before it was put into effect.

Just when the decision was made to start the movement on the night of 30 September-1 October is one of the most crucial questions about the Indonesian coup. It has a major bearing on one's whole explanation of the coup. For instance, the thesis that the coup was a contingency plan of the PKI in the event of Sukarno's death or incapacitation that was put into effect prematurely because the PKI thought that Sukarno was seriously ill, perhaps dying, after word was received that he had faltered during his speech to the 3rd Congress of the CGMI on the evening of 29 September, hinges largely on the question of whether the decision to go was or was not taken before the 29th. Since the evidence is that the decision was made on the 28th, it would seem that the theory that the coup was

triggered by something that occurred on the 29th, namely, the fact that Sukarno seemed to falter and need assistance in the midst of delivering a speech, must be discounted.

On the afternoon of the 28th, Untung is reported to have informed Lt. Dul Arief that D Day was still not known but that he should await orders after the 29th. It would seem from this and other evidence that the military leaders of the coup were informed of the decision on D Day on the 29th. There is general agreement between the interrogation reports of Untung, Sujono, Latief, and Supardjo that Sjam "issued the order that D Day would be the following evening" at the last meeting of the coup group, which took place at Sjam's house on 29 September around 2400 hours. The next morning, Untung informed Dul Arief that "the event would take place that evening."

Though the military leaders were informed of the decision on the timing of the coup on the 29th, the decision seems to have been made on the 28th, by Aidit himself. That afternoon Aidit is known to have had a very long session of almost 5 hours with Lukman, the number 2 man in the party, and Sakirman, a member of the CC/PKI; immediately afterward, Lukman and Sakirman left Djakarta by car for Semarang, where they waited for two days for the coup to begin.\* Presumably, Aidit was giving them their last instructions before the coup.

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\*Lukman and Sakirman left Djakarta in Lukman's official car; they arrived in Semarang on the morning of 29 September and went straight to the house of an important PKI leader. According to several sources, they were visibly in a high state of nervousness. Apparently, they spent most of the day sitting around a transistor radio in the living room. The next morning they got up early to listen to the first news broadcast of the day. As the day went by, they grew more and more nervous. Lukman ordered his chauffeur to change the registration plates on his car and to take away the flag pole placed in the middle of the bumper. They stayed up late that night listening to the radio, but the (footnote continued on page 145)

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Within a short time of Lukman and Sakirman's departure from Djakarta, Anwar Sanusi and Nursukud of the CC/PKI were also on their way to different parts of the country; by the time of the coup, they would be in the Celebes and Sumber, respectively. The fact that these PKI leaders whom

(footnote continued from page 144)

news they were waiting to hear never was announced; finally, they went to bed. The next morning they heard Untung's announcement on the radio while they were having breakfast; reportedly, everyone in the house was ecstatic. Soon afterward, Lukman and Sakirman moved to another house in Semarang where they spent the day and night of 1 October.

The next morning Aidit came to that house and together they all left for Solo. Apparently, Lukman and Sakirman were quite surprised to see Aidit in Semarang. (This would seem to indicate that Aidit planned to remain in Djakarta if all had gone well with the coup. No doubt, he would have wanted to be close to Sukarno, especially if the President had made some kind of formal statement endorsing the coup.) Apparently, Lukman and Sakirman were confused about what had happened in Djakarta. Aidit reported everything that had occurred, including Nasution's escape, and explained his purpose in coming to Central Java as that of preparing things for the arrival of Sukarno in Jogjakarta.

An interesting sidelight to the story of the coup is the fact that Sakirman and General Parman, one of the victims of the coup, were brothers--one, a high-level official in the Communist party, and the other, a senior general in the Indonesian army and a staunch anti-Communist. Whether or not Sakirman realized ahead of time that his brother would be one of the generals killed in the coup is not clear; he may not have. After the coup, he seems to have been very much affected by his brother's death and full of regret about the coup. When Aidit saw him for the first time after the coup, that morning in Semarang, he is reported to have immediately offered Sakirman his "apologies and regret" on the death of his brother.



Aidit had designated to coordinate party activities in crucial areas of the country after the coup left Djakarta on the evening of 28 September and/or the morning of 29 September is not in itself conclusive evidence that the decision to start the movement on the night of 30 September-1 October had necessarily been taken by then; Aidit could have ordered Lukman and Sakirman and the others to Semarang and the other cities on the 28th with no definite idea of when the coup would begin other than that it would be within the next 2-3 days or so. However, it strongly suggests that Aidit had in fact decided on a definite date. According to Njono's confession, it was definitely Aidit who fixed D-Day for 1 October at 0400. All we can say for certain is that the decision was made sometime before the evening of 29 September, when it was communicated to the military leaders, that is, sometime between the evening of 27 September and the evening of 29 September. That leaves 28 September as the most likely time, especially since what we know of Aidit's own activities that last week in September also seems to suggest that the final decision was made on the 28th, when he is known to have had lengthy consultations with Lukman, the number 2 man in the party. After their meeting, there was a flurry of activity on the part of Aidit and the other PKI leaders that is suggestive of the last minute preparations that would follow a definite decision to go ahead with the coup on the 30th.\*

Supardjo's arrival in Djakarta on 28 September at the PKI's call would seem to be another indication that the date for the coup had been decided by the 28th. As

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\*As a sidelight to Aidit's activities the last two or three days before the coup, there is the fact that his wife returned to Indonesia from a year's study in North Korea on 27 September. Aidit and the children are reported to have met her at the airport in Djakarta on the evening of the 27th. Thus, she was out of the country until three days before the coup. It seems most unlikely that she would have known about the coup planning before she returned (footnote continued on page 146a)

noted earlier, Supardjo was summoned from West Borneo by a prearranged signal that the coup was about to begin --namely, a telegram that his daughter was sick and he should come to Djakarta immediately; presumably, either Aidit or Sjam sent the telegram. In any case, Supardjo received it in the early afternoon of 28 September and left immediately for Djakarta. Arriving there later that same afternoon, he went first to his own home in Sunter and then directly to Sjam's house. In his own words:

That afternoon I checked first at Sjam's house. I met him there and talked with him. Evidence regarding a council of generals obviously

(footnote continued from page 146)

to Indonesia. She claims not to have known about the coup at all. After her arrest by the Army after the coup, she told the Army interrogators that "prior to the coup I had not heard anything about the coup, nor were any insinuations made." She said that she went to bed at 2000 hours on the night of 30 September and "heard about the coup the following morning over the radio and was shocked."

Some people have argued that Aidit would not have had his wife return to Indonesia if he had known that there was going to be a coup and, thus, he must not have known or been involved in the coup planning. This seems a ridiculous argument. Obviously, Aidit was confident of success and would have seen no danger in Mrs. Aidit's returning to Indonesia just before the coup. Secondly, he would not have wanted to change her travel plans lest it arouse suspicion. It is an open question whether he told her about the coup after she got home. The very next day after her return, he made the final decision on the timing of the coup.

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existed, for example, the troop concentrations in Senajan and also the extraordinary activity that was taking place with the arrival of Army personnel in Djakarta.

On the morning of the 29th I saw Dani. I gave him news from Sjam...I asked him what would happen if there was a coup and then I suggested that we go first with a counter coup.

Supardjo's meeting with Dani on the morning of 29 September is obviously a very significant meeting in connection with the coup. There is no evidence that Dani and Supardjo were more than acquainted with one another; certainly, they were not good friends and had had no regular contacts with one another. Thus, there was absolutely no reason for Supardjo to have reported to Dani as Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, except in connection with the coup. It must be remembered that he did not report to General Yani or Suharto or General Umar or any other of his commanding officers in the Army who should normally have been informed of his presence in Djakarta; indeed, he made every effort to keep his presence in Djakarta a secret from the Army.

What Dani and Supardjo actually discussed at their meeting on 29 September is one of those things we will probably never know for sure about the Indonesian coup--just as we will probably never know for sure what Dani and Sukarno talked about when they met together privately that same morning. Obviously, it would tell us a lot about the coup, particularly about Sukarno's and Dani's roles in it, if we knew. It can only be presumed that Supardjo was informing Dani that the coup was about to take place; Sjam may well have told Supardjo the exact date that was set and Supardjo may have informed Dani of this, so that Dani could check it out with Sukarno. It is a well established fact that Dani was with the President early on the morning of the 29th, and the circumstances of their meeting leave no

doubt that it was a matter of great urgency and secrecy. Sukarno received Dani in his bedroom in the palace ahead of the other people who were waiting outside for their scheduled appointments with the President. This fact alone shows the access which Dani had to the President; it also suggests that Sukarno probably knew what Dani had to discuss. In his interrogation, Dani explained the subject of their conversation as follows:

I reported to the President that there was a group within the army which was dissatisfied with the Army leadership and which intended to make some changes. I said that I had heard about this from Gen. Supardjo. The President ordered me to meet him in Bogor on 3 October at 1000 hours together with General Supardjo. Upon reaching home, I sent a communication to Air Commodore Wattimena to summon General Supardjo because he had been summoned by the President to appear on 3 October. At that moment General Supardjo arrived and so I submitted to him the President's summons....The next time I met Gen. Supardjo was at Halim on 1 October.

As noted before, Dani was often evasive in his testimony after the coup. One has the feeling that he was certainly not telling the whole truth about his conversation with Sukarno on the 29th. He was not too likely to come right out and admit that his purpose in seeing Sukarno that morning was to convey a message to him from Aidit and Sjam, via Supardjo, that the coup would take place on the night of the 30th. Instead, he would certainly try to phrase it in such a way that it would look as though he had been concerned to warn the President about something that he had just learned from General Supardjo, that the troops under his command were restless and seemed about to take some kind of action. Actually, it would not have been too far from the truth to say that he reported to the President "that there was a group within the army which was dissatisfied with the Army leadership and intended to make some changes;" it would just not have been the whole truth.

The matter of Dani's and Supardjo's scheduled appointment with Sukarno on 3 October is ambiguous. If Sukarno did in fact ask Dani and Supardjo to come to Bogor at 1000 hours on the 3rd, it could have been for one of several different reasons. On the one hand, it could have been to receive the congratulations of the President for the part they were to play in the coup. On the other hand, it could have been for further discussions of the matter that Dani had raised with the President--namely, the likelihood of a coup or some other action against the top Army command from within the Army. If Sukarno had really been concerned about this possibility, however, it does not seem that he would have waited five days to explore the matter further with Dani and Supardjo. It is interesting that the President apparently just assumed that Supardjo would still be in Djakarta on the 3rd, although he must have known that Supardjo was away from his command in West Borneo without the knowledge or permission of his superiors in the Army. In the Army's eyes, Sukarno was definitely guilty of conspiring to keep Supardjo's presence in Djakarta a secret. In his speech of 12 February 1967 indicting Sukarno for his role in the coup, General Nasution made quite a point of the fact that Sukarno was one of the few people who knew that Supardjo was in Djakarta for reasons connected with the coup and yet he did not report this to the army. If the President expected to meet Supardjo on 3 October, as he told Dani, he either expected Supardjo's presence in Djakarta to have become known and justified (as it would have been if the coup had been a success) or he expected to meet with him secretly. As it is highly unlikely that Supardjo could have come to the Palace in Bogor without being noticed, the fact that Sukarno made plans to receive him there on 3 October would seem to indicate that Sukarno definitely thought that the coup would be a fait accompli by then.

There were, of course, many ways that Aidit and Sjam could have communicated their decision on the timing of the coup to Sukarno. Dani's meeting with Sukarno on the morning of the 29th was just one possibility. According to one unconfirmed source, Aidit met with Subandrio that same morning; there is no information as to what was discussed, but Subandrio could certainly have been trusted

to relay a message to the President.\* Aidit was in the company of Sukarno himself later in the evening of 29 September. They both addressed a meeting of university students in Djakarta. Although Aidit was not scheduled to speak, Sukarno is reported to have closed his speech with the words "Now we must hear from Aidit." In a short extemporaneous speech, the PKI chairman explained that "the

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\*The subject of Subandrio's involvement in the coup is discussed in the following section of the paper, which is concerned with events leading up to the decision on the part of the coup leaders to take violent action against the army leadership. Suffice it to say here that whereas Subandrio obviously knew about the plans for the coup, he was not actually involved in the planning and he did not participate in any way in the events of the coup itself. He was not even in Djakarta at the time; he had left town on the 29th in the company of Njoto of the PKI and several other cabinet ministers on a speaking tour of North Sumatra. They had just arrived in Medan on the morning of 1 October when news of the coup was received there. On the eve of his departure, Subandrio is known to have conferred at length with Sukarno; the next morning he became very active, meeting with various cabinet ministers, including Aidit. Whether or not the coup was discussed at any of these meetings is unknown, but it probably was. On the night of 28 September, Sukarno would not yet seem to have known that the coup was definitely planned for the night of 30 September-1 October, so he could hardly have forewarned Subandrio of the precise time. However, they both must have known that it would be soon, most probably before Subandrio returned to Djakarta from his tour. Under the circumstances, they probably discussed what Subandrio should do when he received word of the coup. On the morning of 29 September, Aidit would have known that the coup would take place the following night, so he could have told Subandrio then. Subandrio was obviously not surprised when he received the news of the coup on the morning of 1 October.

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PKI had become great, precisely because it dared to do and to act; it was always prepared to act to implement its conclusions arrived at creatively." These words take on special meaning, in hindsight, when one realizes that they were spoken by a man who had the night before taken the fateful decision to alter the balance of power in Indonesia by violent means and that at that very moment preparations were well underway for the movement to start about the same time the following night. We will probably never know whether Aidit and Sukarno had the occasion for any private communication that evening.

The Eighth Meeting: The Order To Go

At about the same time, however, the people who were responsible for the actual details of the coup were meeting at another place in secret. It was the eighth--and last--meeting of the coup group. Once again, they met at Sjam's house; but this time there were four newcomers to the group, two whom Untung knew and two whom he did not, the first two being Gen. Supardjo and Walujo, Untung's PKI "contact" man from the Special Bureau, and the other two being two women whose identity remains unknown to this day. (Presumably, they were members of the Communist women's organization, the Gerwani, which was involved in the training exercises at Lubang Buaja, but this is not at all certain.)

At this late date, the matter of the armored troops was still not solved and Untung was still worrying about it; it was the first subject raised at the meeting. Apparently, Latief had checked the armored troops that had arrived in Djakarta for the Armed Forces Day celebration on 5 October, and a certain Lt. Susilo whom Sjam and Pono had said would be among the troops was not there. It was hard to convince Pono that this could be so; he kept insisting that the lieutenant just "had to be there" because it had been "arranged by a comrade in Bandung." (From this, it would appear that it was the fault of the PKI official in Bandung that the armor that Sjam and Pono kept promising Untung never materialized; they too had been misled in

believing that everything had been taken care of.)\* According to Untung, he asked Pono how they could possibly proceed with such vague assurances of armored support and no definite information that it was available.\*\* Sjam was obviously not prepared to let the matter of the armor interfere with the orders he had from Aidit to begin the movement the next night. Under the circumstances, he was forced to overrule Untung on the one military question that had been of prime importance to Untung and the other military leaders--the need for armored support. Sjam answered Untung that "as long as the PASOPATI troops were successful in their mission, the movement could go ahead without the cavalry."

\*Although it would seem that Sjam and Pono really believed that the Special Bureau in Bandung had made the necessary arrangements to have armored support for the coup, it is possible that they were deceiving Untung on this point. They knew that he considered the Cavalry essential to the coup plans. They may have let him think that everything had been taken care of, right up to the last moment, when it was too late for him to back out of the coup or argue for a delay. He did not realize that the Cavalry would not be committed to the coup until late on the 29th, less than 24 hours before the coup was scheduled to begin.

\*\*In his interrogation report, Latief also indicated that he had serious reservations about going ahead with the movement when it became "obvious that there were no tanks." He said: "In view of this situation I became hesitant regarding the movement and I said to Sjam that this was no game, this was a big thing."



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At this point, Latief is reported to have asked Sjam about the plans after the generals had been "disposed of." Sjam replied that "after Phase I is completed, then we will send a delegation to the President."\* In answer to Latief's question 'Who would be in the delegation?'

\*Sjam's comments about the delegation that would go to Sukarno are interesting, first of all, because that is precisely the plan that was followed. [It will be remembered that Supardjo was the head of the delegation that went to the palace around 0600 hours on the 1st.] Nothing else was ever mentioned by Sjam or the other people at the September meetings as a follow-up plan to the kidnapping missions; apparently, nothing else was planned. This is one of the best indications we have that the action that was planned as 'The 30 September Movement' consisted of the arrest and murder of the seven Army generals and a certain planned response from Sukarno; other than that, the only thing that was planned was the mass political support that, together with Sukarno's blessing, would have seemed almost certain to carry the day for the coup.

Sjam replied "You will know this later." Thereupon, he issued the order that D day would be the following evening and the movement would be called the '30 September Movement.'\*

It is of interest why the night of 30 September-1 October was chosen as the time for the coup and why the movement was called "The 30 September Movement," when actually it got underway in the early morning hours of 1 October and was proclaimed to the world on 1 October.\*\* The most commonly heard explanation of the timing of the coup--that the 30th of September was not really chosen by the coup leaders as the ideal time for their coup but was thrust upon them by outside events, namely, the sudden turn for the worse (or what seemed like a sudden turn for the worse) in Sukarno's condition--has already been discussed and dismissed as the likely explanation. Some of the other explanations that have been offered include the following:

It is possible that the reason the 30th of September was chosen is simply that it happened to be the night when Untung himself was on night-duty at the palace and could act with maximum freedom. Or because it was a Thursday night, a time when, in universal Javanese belief, magical forces are abroad

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\*Later, when he was questioned about Sjam's announcement of this decision, Latief told his army interrogators: "I asked Sjam if this was the decision of the CC/PKI and Aidit; if this was the case, we would accept it because it was the party speaking, despite the fact that we had a great many questions."

\*\*Sukarno was the only person to refer to the coup as the 1 October Movement. He used the Indonesian word "Gestok," meaning 1 October. The Army had invented an ingenious acronym--Gestapu--from the Indonesian words for "30 September Movement"--"Gerakan September Tiga Puluh." They were using the word, with all its Nazi connotations, as the official name of the coup. Sukarno obviously was hoping to have "Gestok" accepted in place of "Gestapu". It never was. The word "Gestapu" will be forever associated with the Indonesian coup.

and spiritual strength and support are most readily obtained. Malam Djumat begins at sundown on 30 September and continues until the new day breaks on 1 October. It is a night for melekan, the practice of staying up all night in prayer and meditation. We know that the night of the coup Mrs. Yani and General and Mrs. Parman were engaged in melekan. Thus, the 30th of September would have its own esoteric significance, indicating the moment of inspiration.

Actually, none of these explanations is particularly convincing. Untung was not on duty at the palace during the night of 30 September-1 October; he was expected to report for duty sometime around 0700-0800 the next morning. A little while before he was due to report, he simply called up and said that he would be late that morning. Thus, it really made no difference whether he was or was not on duty with the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard at the time of the coup. The particular associations which the 30th of September might have had for Untung and some of the other military leaders who were inclined toward mysticism would certainly not have been a major consideration with Aidit or Sjam or any of the other PKI leaders; and, if one thing is clear, it is that it was Aidit and the PKI who were responsible for the timing of the coup, certainly not Untung, who had reasons for wanting to delay.

There was probably no special reason why the 30th of September was chosen as the date for the coup. As we have seen, Sjam had originally set the 29th as the date but had relaxed the deadline when Untung and the others convinced him that preparations could not possibly be completed by then. Apparently, Aidit and Sjam were determined that there should be no delay past the end of the month, however. September 30th was the last day they would consider. Exactly why they felt that it was a matter of such urgency is not completely clear--whether it was because they genuinely feared some action by the Generals' Council on or before Armed Forces Day on 5 October or because they

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were concerned about the security of their own plans, which by then involved a larger number of persons than could be counted on to keep the secret.\*

As for the decision to call the movement "The 30 September Movement," Sjam probably thought of the movement as beginning on the 30th, even though the actual raids on the generals' homes were not made until the early morning hours of the 1st. The troops were assembled at Halim that evening, and by midnight everything was ready to go. Aidit and Sjam may have had one definite reason for not wanting to call the movement "The 1 October Movement;" that is the association of the date with Communist China's National Day. It would have been assumed that the PKI was behind a coup in Indonesia that was named after the Great October Revolution in China. As it was, the timing of the coup on 1 October was probably an unfortunate thing for the PKI; it suggested a certain connection between the Chinese and the coup in Indonesia which, regardless of whether it was true or not, was used to discredit both the CCP and the PKI in Indonesia after the coup. The idea that "The 30 September Movement" was named for the day that the decision was actually taken to go ahead with the coup, as some observers have suggested, is not supported by the evidence, which leaves no doubt that the final decision was made at least a day or two before that.

#### The Last-Minute PKI Preparations

After the military leaders of the coup received the order from Sjam at the last meeting of the coup group on 29 September that the movement, now officially called the

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\*In the following section of the paper, which centers around the decision to stage the coup and the events leading up to that decision, Aidit's thinking with respect to the Generals' Council is examined in much greater detail.

30 September Movement, would begin the following evening, the word was quickly passed around town to the various people involved in the plot. For the next twenty-four hours, they would be engaged in frantic, last-minute preparations that were somehow kept secret despite the flurry of activity. Njono, the Chief of the Greater Djakarta Committee of the PKI who was the PKI man in charge of the "operational-technical preparations" for the coup, including the organizing of a reserve force of PKI volunteers, who had been staying at Lubang Buaja with the volunteers, was notified of the decision about D-Day sometime around 1700 hours on 29 September, via a PKI courier who was sent out to Halim. He immediately alerted the PKI organization for the Djakarta area. Sometime around midnight, the 5 PKI command posts in the city were issued orders to contact the party's "special security force" (TIK) members, which was what the volunteers who had received military training at Lubang Buaja were called; they were told to report to the command post headquarters "immediately." According to one source, the TIK troops were told that they might be away from home for a long period; they were instructed to bring only the clothing they had on, as they would be issued uniforms and weapons when they arrived at Lubang Buaja.\* Several Air Force trucks were seen at one of the command headquarters that night, and it is believed that they were used to transport the troops to Lubang Buaja. At Lubang Buaja,

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\*The volunteers who were interrogated by the Army after the coup gave very much the same story as to when and where they received the arms they used in the coup. Around noon on the 30th they were gathered together at Lubang Buaja and given firearms with the strict instructions "to protect the region, to suspect even their friends, and to shoot anyone attempting to flee." One volunteer recalled that "he and other youths were taken by bus to Lubang Buaja during the night of the 29th-30th and at 1400 hours the next day they received weapons and military clothing with the instruction to be on their guard against military activities in the area."

the volunteer troops joined the 1,500 volunteers who had arrived there the day before to begin their week of military training in the 3rd training course to be conducted by the Air Force since 11 September.

At Njono's order, the Djakarta PKI command posts advised the various field posts under their jurisdiction to be alert for action within the next 24 hours. Party members were instructed to give no assistance to military units unless the units were accompanied by known Party officials; if the military personnel were vouched for by PKI officials, the local field posts were to feed, shelter, and assist them in any way that was needed.

Apparently, the party leaders received special briefings, conducted by Sudisman himself, at the central committee office in Djakarta on the 29th. According to the interrogation of PKI/CC member Suwardiningsih, Sudisman explained that senior officers in the Army would soon preempt the coup of the Generals' Council and would establish a Revolutionary Council which the PKI would support. Suwardiningsih was instructed to repeat the oral briefing to the Palembang Greater Regional Committee in South Sumatra;\*

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\*On 1 October, Suwardiningsih heard Untung's radio announcement. Using the name of Mrs. Sukono, she left Djakarta by plane at 1100 hours that morning and arrived in Palembang at 1230 hours. Her task was to deliver the oral instructions given her by Sudisman to the Palembang Regional Committee (CDB). At the Palembang CDB office, she met and discussed the situation with the CDB leadership. After she had delivered the instructions from Sudisman, she discussed the means for delivering these instructions downward, how to muster broad support for the coup from the mass organizations, political parties, and important officials in Palembang, and how to undertake a broad campaign in the form of wall writing, pasting of placards, posters, etc. In the hope of getting the national front regional executive board to support the movement, she got the Palembang CDB to issue a statement in support of the coup in (footnote continued on page 158)

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presumably, she was one of several envoys of the CC/PKI sent by Sudisman to the various regional committees of the PKI for the purpose of mobilizing and leading the PKI program in support of the coup.

Some of the more important PKI leaders, like Peris Pardede, who were members of the Central Committee and Secretariat, had been briefed on the coup several days earlier. On 26 September, the members of the Secretariat, which Sudisman headed, were informed that a coup would take place sometime before 5-6 October, but no definite date was set. Sudisman explained that "since this action is to be purely a military one, our workers must carry out their work as normal. However, it is possible that the action may not succeed and therefore our personnel must be scattered, some in Djakarta and the rest in the regions." He asked Peris Pardede, who was present at the meeting, if he had any preference as to where he would like to go; at his own request, Pardede was assigned to Medan. He was told to await later instructions when he would be informed of the exact date of the coup; he should be prepared to leave immediately after receiving that information. Apparently, Pardede was informed of the decision on the timing of the coup on the 29th; he left Djakarta about 24 hours later, in the early morning hours of the 1st, when the coup was just getting underway. Apparently he was surprised to discover, upon stopping by the CC/PKI headquarters on the morning of the 30th, that the word about the coup had filtered down to the level of the ordinary

(footnote continued from page 157)

its name. Altogether, Suwardiningsih held 4 meetings with the Palembang CDB leadership, on 1 October, 3 October, 5 October, and 6 October. At the latter meetings they discussed the security measures taken by the state against the CDB office following the collapse of the coup; these included the seizure of all the CDB office equipment. At the last meeting, Suwardiningsih warned her comrades to exercise great care and not to be disheartened by the wave of terror that was being organized against the PKI.

party workers, so quick had been the operation to inform party members of the secret undertaking in the offing. In Pardede's own words:

On 30 September at about 1100 I went to the office of the CC/PKI in Djakarta to pick up a handbag in order to leave on my "go-to-the-people" trip. Upon arriving at the office the comrade who gave me the pouch by the name of Nurali, the deputy chief of staff of the CC/PKI secretariat, said to me 'When are you leaving?' I replied 'tomorrow, very early.' Then he said 'perhaps you will not be able to leave, because later on tonight the anti-generals people will play their game.' He meant that they would stage a coup. I then asked 'Where did you hear this from?' He replied 'from Ngatman, whom I know as a member of the Djakarta veterans executive board. I then said 'Report this to Sudisman.' He said 'Ahn, Bung Disman certainly already knows.' 'Even so, let him know,' I said further. I didn't quite believe hearing this from a staff member, who in my thinking would not know anything about this....I continued to make preparations for the party's assignment to go to Medan; I left my house at 0200 on 1 October.

#### The Last-Minute Military Preparations

With the PKI organization in Djakarta alerted to a coup within the next 24 hours and with envoys of the PKI/CC on their way to the regions to explain the coup, when it happened, to the people in the areas, a special briefing of the military commanders of the various units involved in the coup was held at Lubang Buaja around mid-day on the 30th. Apparently, Latief was originally scheduled to give the briefing but for some reason he was unable to be there and so Dul Arief, the commander of the PASOPATI troops which were charged with the kidnapping of the Army



generals, gave the briefing; neither Untung nor Sujono was present. Dul Arief explained the organization of the coup forces into three commands: The Kidnapping and Attacking Command (PASOPATI) under his leadership, the City Control Command (BIMASAKTI) under Capt. Suradi, and the Base Command (PRINGGODANI) under Major Gatot Sukrisno; the three commands would be responsible to a Central Command. He then explained the respective assignments of the commanders at the briefing. Lubang Buaja was to be "the main center of preparation, meaning that the troops participating in the coup would depart from there and return there." According to Ngadimo, one of the Company commanders from the 530th battalion, who was at the briefing, Dul Arief "essentially told the commanders to carry out their duties effectively and, if there was any opposition, to meet it with force." At the end of the briefing, he asked Ngadimo to explain the tactics to be used in the capture of the generals; Ngadimo elaborated the plan of attack that was used at each of the generals' homes: that of having one contingent of troops surround the house and another patrol the streets outside, while the third contingent went inside the house to bring the general out.

We know very little about the activities of the coup leaders during the day of the 30th. Presumably, the military officers were engaged in their regular military duties. Their activities in connection with the coup during the whole month of September had been pretty much limited to the evening hours, so as not to arouse suspicion by their being absent from work. No doubt, they would have been particularly careful the day before the coup to do nothing that was out of the ordinary and likely to attract any attention. Sujono spent the day as he had spent the last three weeks--training the Communist volunteers at Halim. As far as is known, Untung and Latief were performing their normal duties with the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard and the 1st Infantry Brigade, respectively. We have no reports on what Aidit, Sjam, Supardjo--or Sukarno and Dani--did during the day. There may well have been some kind of communication between them, perhaps even a meeting between certain of them, which would be of considerable interest in connection with the coup; but there is no evidence of any.

In the late afternoon, Sujono is known to have attended to one matter of considerable importance to the coup: arranging for a safe place for the VIPs who were to be safeguarded at Halim. The duty was referred to as the VIP Security Command, and Sujono had been appointed commander of the VIP Security Command. Apparently, his orders were that the following persons were to be safeguarded at Halim: Sukarno, Subandrio, Aidit, Ali Sastroamidjojo, and Njoto.\* On the afternoon of the 30th, Sujono is reported to have asked his aide, Sgt. Sujatno, "to look for a place where certain officials could be safeguarded." According to his own testimony, the officials he had in mind were Subandrio, Aidit, Ali Sastroamidjojo, and Njoto; he intended to find a place for Sukarno himself.\*\*

Apparently, Sujono was also in charge of the arrangements for the use of the Aerial Survey Office in Djakarta as the Central Command headquarters of the coup. He went

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\*Obviously, these plans were made before it was known that Subandrio would be out of town at the time of the coup. If he had been in Djakarta, he would almost certainly have gone to Halim, as both Sukarno and Aidit did.

\*\*Apparently, Sujono did not decide on a place for Sukarno until the morning of the 1st. At 0530 hours on the 1st, he is reported to have gone to the home of Commodore Susanto which was located at Halim Air Force Base. It was decided then that Sukarno would come to Susanto's home when he arrived at the airbase later that morning. At 0600 hours, Sujono is reported to have stopped at the Operations Command Center at Halim to tell Dani, via his adjutant, that the President would arrive at Halim between 0800 and 0900 hours and would be brought to Susanto's house. At 0630 hours, Sujono went back to the Aerial Survey Office building in Djakarta where Untung, Latief, Sjam, and Pono had established the Central Command.

to the Aerial Survey Office himself, sometime around 1730 hours on the 30th, but apparently he was not successful in negotiating its use by the coup group the following day. He then asked Air Force Col. Heru, who must have had better connections with the office, to arrange the matter. After Heru made the arrangements, he went to the Aerial Survey Office to prepare the building to serve as the coup headquarters.

Sujono was occupied with a number of other important errands during the evening and night of the 30th, such as checking on the supply of Air Force weapons for the volunteers and transporting Aidit to Halim. But somehow, he managed to squeeze in a review of the troops at Lubang Buaja. The review had been scheduled for around midnight, and we know that Untung, Latief, Sjam, Pono, and General Supardjo arrived there about 2230 hours;\* Sujono and Major Sukirno, the Commander of the 454th Battalion, got there an hour or so later. The troops themselves had been assembling at Lubang Buaja since early evening. Several of the units had been in a drill that afternoon in rehearsal of the military parade that was planned for Armed Forces Day on 5 October; Suharto himself had reviewed the drill only a matter of hours before these same troops were involved in the coup action.\*\* The troops had only just

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\*Untung had gone to Sjam's house around 2100 hours. Apparently, it was arranged that the coup group would meet there because according to Untung, "the leadership party consisting of myself, Gen. Supardjo, Col. Latief, Sjam, and Pono went out to the Base in a civilian Toyota Jeep which belonged to Col. Latief and a Mazda which belonged to Sjam. Lubang Buaja was quite busy with troop preparations."

\*\*Somehow, the fact that he had reviewed the troops of the 454th the afternoon before the coup made it come as an even greater surprise to Suharto that they could have been involved in a coup against the Army Command that very night.

returned to the barracks from the day's duty when they were ordered to Lubang Buaja.\* Thus, there had been no suspicious movement of troops during the daylight hours, just as there had been no unusual activity on the part of the military officers involved in the coup during the day.

After their review of the troops at Lubang Buaja, the leaders of the coup were apparently satisfied that everything was ready for the operation to begin--although they were not totally happy with the preparations that had been made. At Lubang Buaja, they had received a last-minute disappointment in discovering that "the preparations promised by Sujono--namely, the arranging for a unit of the Air Force Quick Action (PGT) troops--had not been made." It was suggested that the PGT troops be replaced "by a platoon of troops from the masses (i.e. the Communist volunteers) under the leadership of Capt. Gatot." However, Col. Latief and Untung rejected this because "the troops could not be guaranteed"--in Untung's words. (This is another indication that the coup leaders never intended the Communist volunteers to play a role in the operation to seize the generals or surround the palace and radio station; they thought of them as a reserve force in the

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\*Apparently, the staging ground for the regular military troops involved in the coup was a little removed from the training site of the Communist volunteers, even though they were both at Lubang Buaja; so the two groups were never in close proximity. This would seem to be the explanation for the vagueness of many of the regular military men involved in the coup on the question of the part played by the Communist volunteers in the coup. It will be remembered that the volunteers were not involved in any of the raids on the generals' homes or the operation to neutralize the palace and the radio station; they appeared on the scene in Djakarta much later in the day, when the silent struggle for Djakarta was almost over and the city back in the hands of Suharto and the Army.

defense of Halim only--and possibly, later, as a spearhead for the political mass action program that was planned in support of the coup, if all had gone according to plan.) According to Untung:

it was rather disappointing that the preparations of Maj. Sujono were not too good. When Lt. Dul Arief reported to me that the PGT troops were not there, I told him to regulate the PASOPATI assignments with less personnel since one target was missing, namely, General Sukendro.\* Then, Lt. Dul Arief gave a final briefing. After the briefing was over, at 0130 hours on 1 October, the PASOPATI troops pulled out towards their targets, with the stipulation that D hour was 0500 hours. The leaders, namely I myself, Gen. Supardjo, Col. Latief, Sjam, and Pono went to the first headquarters in the Aerial Survey Office Building. We arrived there about 0200 hours.

As mentioned earlier, the great majority of the troops involved in the coup action seem to have had no real understanding of the drama in which they played a part. They were given only the one briefing by Dul Arief shortly before they departed on their mission into Djakarta. As he explained it, the Generals' Council was going to stage a coup against Sukarno; as members of the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard and other units loyal to Sukarno, they had been called upon "to effect the personal security and safety of the President." Sukarno was reported to be in "great danger" and the palace about to be "attacked." Dul Arief may have mentioned something about some kidnappings that were planned; if not, some of the troops must have learned about them from some other source. After the coup, a

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\*As noted earlier, Gen. Sukendro was in Chiga at the time of the coup. Had he been in Djakarta, there would have been eight generals--rather than seven--as the targets of the 30 September Movement.

number of them confessed to having known that "some people were to be kidnapped although it was not known who." It is doubtful that the commanders could have gotten the men to follow them, if they had known who the victims of the kidnappings would be. This was kept a secret--until the very moment when the trucks carrying the PASOPATI troops stopped in front of the generals' homes. The troops sent to surround the palace were similarly tricked into believing that they were going to guard the President, who was supposed to be in the palace. Just as Aidit and the PKI had calculated, the men had simply followed the orders of the commanders; the PKI had been right in thinking that all the party had to do was to win the loyalty of the commanders.

At the very moment when his strategy for the coup seemed about to be vindicated, Aidit was being escorted to Halim by one of the military commanders whose loyalty he had won. According to Sujono, Supardjo ordered him to pick up Aidit around 0130 hours on the 1st. It is not clear whether Sujono met Aidit at Sjam's house or the house of a certain Soegito; there are conflicting stories. Aidit definitely was accompanied by two bodyguards, who stayed with him the whole day of the 1st while he was at Halim and who accompanied him on the plane on his flight from Halim to Jogjakarta on the morning of the 2nd. According to Sujono again, Supardjo asked him to report to Aidit that there had been no change as far as D-hour was concerned; it was still planned for 0500 hours.

I recall that at the time Aidit asked: 'Where will I be taken?' I told him that he would be taken to Halim directly, and then he questioned me further, asking about 'whose place,' and I replied that it would be the home of one of my subordinates. He then asked me if the house was very far from the air base and I answered that it was two-and-a-half kilometers. Then he asked if Supardjo, Latief,

and Untung were at the Command Center. I said that as far as I could tell they had not yet had time to arrive at the Aerial Survey Office....Then we went to Halim. After we arrived there, I reported to Supardjo that Aidit had arrived at the designated security location..

Soon after he reported to Supardjo at the Aerial Survey Office, Sujono was off again to Halim, again on the orders of Supardjo, to make arrangements for Sukarno's stay at Halim.

I got in touch with Commodore Susanto, who indicated his readiness and willingness (to have Sukarno spend the day at his home). I reported this to Dani, who was at the Operations Command Center at Halim. Dani ordered me to be sure that effective securities were taken with regard to the protection of the President. I then returned to the Aerial Survey office, at a little past 0630 hours. As I arrived, I noticed Gen. Supardjo, Major Bambang of the 530th and Major Sukirno of the 454th, and Lt. Col. Heru, all dressed in full military attire. When I asked them where they were going, they said they were going to the President's Palace.

It was not long after this that I received a report from Major Gatot Sukrisno, the commander of the troops guarding Halim, verifying that the generals had been turned over to him and asking what should be done with the ones who were still alive. Latief ordered me to answer the inquiry in writing, with the words 'By the order of the Chief of Staff of the Command Center, the ones remaining alive should be done away with.'

The order had been given. The 30 September Movement was a fact.

## The Prelude

The evidence is overwhelming that the PKI planned the 30 September Movement in every detail. It decided who would lead the movement, what military units would be involved in the operation, which generals of the Army would be killed, when the coup would take place, what VIPs would be safeguarded at Halim, and how the political campaign in support of the coup would be managed afterwards. That it got others to execute the deed does not change the fact that it was primarily responsible for the whole affair. If we accept this as a fact, proven beyond any reasonable doubt, we have still to explain it, in the light of certain other things we know to be true about the Indonesian scene at the time of the coup. For instance, why should the PKI, a party which for fifteen years had adhered consistently to a policy of peaceful, constitutional struggle and which by that struggle had advanced to a position closer to the seat of power than any other free world Communist party, suddenly have decided to risk everything on a military coup?

Probably the first thing to be established in seeking the answer to that question is whether or not there had been any change--which might not have been recognized at the time--in the PKI's thinking on the matter of proper tactics for the party to follow on the domestic scene. It would seem that there either had to be some basic change in the thinking of the leadership, particularly Aidit, or else there had to be extenuating circumstances that suddenly made the PKI act contrary to its own established policy.

### PKI Domestic Policy

Ever since D.N. Aidit, in the aftermath of the Madiun Rebellion of 1948, began picking up the pieces of a shattered PKI, the party's policy had been one of peaceful, constitutional activity and close cooperation with those political groups and forces in the new republic which might acquiesce in such collaboration. At the time, such a policy had seemed essential to the bare survival of the party,



The Standing Council of the PKI Politburo in September 1965



Aidit



Lukman



Njoto



Sudisman



Sakirman

to say nothing of its regrowth. As the years passed, it proved a remarkably successful policy in terms of the advances made in PKI membership, mass following, and political influence.\* As Sukarno found the party an increasingly useful balancing force to the Army, which represented the most serious threat to his leadership, the PKI reaped the greatest advantage of all from its policy of collaborating with the "nationalist-bourgeoisie" in its winning of the President as its great benefactor. With Sukarno's protection and encouragement, the PKI actually became the predominant party in Indonesia; by 1960 it could be said it was "directing the whole course of Indonesian politics." Adam Malik, the present Foreign Minister of Indonesia has analyzed its success; "it was due not so much to any majority that it possessed or might possibly gain, but to the protective hand of Sukarno. Mainly because of this, the PKI, a minority, assumed the quality of a majority."

In the situation of Indonesia's headlong slide towards the left, with Sukarno and the PKI in the lead, the time seemed near at hand when the Communists would take over control of the country--either with the passing of Sukarno from the scene, or possibly before that. Most observers in the West conceded this.\*\* The Soviets and the Chinese seem

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\*Aidit built the PKI from a party of less than 10,000 members in 1951 into the third largest Communist party in the world (behind the CCP and the CPSU) and the largest party outside the bloc. Party membership was over 2,000,000 in 1963 and over 3,000,000 in 1965. On the Indonesian scene, the PKI was not only the largest party in terms of membership, but it was the best organized and most dynamic political entity in the country.

\*\*By 1964, it was the reasonable conclusion of all Indonesian experts that Indonesia would soon become a Communist state. Guy Pauker, writing in November 1964, was of the opinion that "even if the Communists should lose Sukarno as a protector, it seems doubtful that other national leaders would emerge in the near future capable of rallying Indonesia's dispersed and demoralized anti-Communist forces. Furthermore, these forces would lack the ruthlessness that made it possible for the Nazis to suppress the Communist Party of Germany a few weeks after the elections of 5 March 1933, in which the latter won 5 million votes or almost 13 percent of the total."

to have been reasonably confident of it. Indonesians seemed resigned to it.\* Certainly, the PKI had good reason to believe it.

On the basis of these accomplishments, the domestic policies of the PKI could only have been judged an unqualified success. Aidit himself was probably more confident than ever of the correctness of the PKI line, which was closely associated with him personally. He had been the one to formulate the strategy of the "united front and the party's growth" which had been the party strategy since 1951; before that, the party had been engaged in an underground struggle (1926-45) and then the struggle against the Dutch (1945-51); it had no history or experience in the kind of "peaceful tactics" that Aidit mapped out for the party as the road to power in an Indonesia under Sukarno.

Although Aidit seems to have enjoyed considerable support within the PKI leadership on domestic policy, presumably some of the leaders felt more strongly in favor of these policies than others. While there was no public airing of the differences within the party and all the PKI leaders gave the same party line in any public discussion of an issue, domestic or international, there does seem to have been some differences in emphasis between the speeches of Aidit and Njoto. For instance, on the theme of "armed struggle" versus "peaceful transition to socialism" as the correct road for the PKI in Indonesia, Njoto's speeches emphasized the armed struggle going on in other places, such as Cuba, and Algeria. (See Njoto's speech of 6 February 1963.) While Aidit could be expected to support these revolutionary movements, his speeches concentrated on the struggle in Indonesia and the particular tactics of the PKI in that struggle. As the success of these tactics became more and more obvious, Aidit spoke with greater and greater conviction and an increasing note of authority about the PKI's contribution (and implicitly, his own contribution) to Marxist theory on the assumption of power; it became a predominant theme in his speeches. On 12 October 1964 he answered a series of questions on the PKI and the Indonesian revolution with the unprecedented claim that:

\*In Indonesia, just before the coup, overt anti-communism had become virtually a crime; even the military paid lip service to the huge PKI-sponsored rallies. Everything reinforced the idea that the PKI would take over after Sukarno died.

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Among the world communist parties the PKI is the one that has the most authority to talk about the 'peaceful transition' toward socialism, because the PKI takes part in both the central and local governments and it has the actual potential to carry out its policies.

The rapid development of the PKI is a result of its correct policy, a policy of resolute opposition to imperialism and the establishment of a National Front in Indonesia....It is because of this correct political and organizational line that the PKI has now become a party with a membership of over 3 million, while in 1951 it had only 8,000 members. (Emphasis added)

As long as Aidit had been Chairman of the PKI, the party had rejected the Chinese model of violent agrarian revolution as impractical in Indonesian conditions. Right up to the time of the coup, there was no sign that it had changed its views on the subject.

It hardly seems necessary to point out that Aidit obviously considered his policy of "peaceful transition to socialism" only as a means to an end. As a Communist, he was certainly not opposed to armed struggle or violence;\* he just did not consider it the best policy for the PKI at that time. That he admitted the possibility of the PKI's resorting to armed struggle sometime in the future was made clear in a private conversation he had with Phillip Abbott Luce, a member of the U.S. Progressive Labor Party and a Castro sympathizer, who met Aidit in Cuba in July 1963 when they were both attending Cuba's 26 July National Day celebrations. In his book The New Left (1966) Luce writes:

One evening I spent nearly two hours in a private conversation with Aidit, who told me that the PKI was contemptuous of the CPUSA. The PKI was only using the democratic process in Indonesia to the advantage of the Communists. He assured me that as soon as it appeared as if the Communists were beginning to lose in the bid for power, they would institute a guerrilla war and topple the government.

No doubt, if Aidit had ever become convinced that the Communists were losing out in the struggle for power, he would have opted for armed struggle. However, the possibility of this happening must have seemed very remote to him in 1963.

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\*Indonesian Ambassador Ratnam, who knew Aidit well, described (footnote continued on page 173.)

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when he made the above statement to Phillip Abbott Luce; and in 1964 and 1965 it would have seemed remoter still. With each passing day, it looked more and more as though Indonesia was about to fall into the hands of the Communists.

### The PKI's Armed Capability

If Aidit had been seriously concerned about the possibility of the PKI having to resort to armed force, it seems that he would have done more to develop an armed capability for the PKI. Just what capability the PKI actually had for armed struggle is still open to some question. There are a number of reports that the Chinese were shipping arms to the PKI. According to these reports, the arms were being off-loaded at several different places along the coast of Java and Sumatra and were being stored in PKI "safe" places nearby. Despite the persistence of such reports, there is no convincing evidence that they were true. No great store of PKI arms has ever been found, before or after the coup. (The few caches of arms that the Indonesian Army is reported to have discovered at various outlying locations along the coast, which are probably the basis for the reports of Chinese arms being shipped to the PKI, have never been definitely linked to the PKI.) It is almost unbelievable that PKI stores of arms could have remained a secret after the coup, when thousands of party members were interrogated by the Army. Nor is it likely that hidden supplies of arms would not have been used by the PKI against the Army during those days of the Army's mass repression of the party, but the fact is that the Communists did not fight back and were not armed to resist the Army. So, in conclusion, the PKI does not seem to have brought a supply of arms and ammunition into Indonesia over the years or over a period of several months before the coup, as has been reported again and again in connection with the coup. The charge has been made and repeated so often that it is sometimes difficult to establish the source of the reports; but they would all seem to be without foundation.

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(footnote continued from page 172)  
him as "a dedicated Communist, a witty conversationalist, and absolutely ruthless"; "he would have sacrificed any friend on the spot."

In part, the explanation for the persistent but apparently erroneous reports of Chinese arms being shipped to the PKI is that these reports have been confused with other reports, which do seem to be true, of Chinese arms being included in shipments of Chinese materials for Sukarno's CONEFO complex in Djakarta. Apparently, some Chinese arms were definitely discovered in crates marked "Construction materials--CONEFO"; all of the crates in question came into Indonesia through the Djakarta harbor. According to several reliable sources, Sukarno had issued an order that the shipments of materials for CONEFO be moved directly from the harbor to the CONEFO construction site; they were not to go through the usual customs inspection and processing. It was explained that this was to avoid unnecessary delay, and it was known that Sukarno was in a great hurry to finish the CONEFO project. With the revelation that covert shipments of arms were included in the shipment of building materials, however, it seems clear, in hindsight, that Sukarno was actually making the necessary arrangements to protect the delivery of Chinese arms that were being shipped to Indonesia secretly. Obviously, he had negotiated a secret arms deal with the Chinese. As we have already seen, the Chinese arms that were being received in Djakarta were being stored in Air Force depots in and around the city. So, the reports that Chinese arms were being shipped into Indonesia were true. But it was Sukarno, not the PKI, who was receiving the arms. They might or might not have been used by the PKI and others in training for the "fifth force," if that program had gotten underway. Before it did, they were used in the coup--by the PKI volunteer troops that had received a quick course in military training for the specific purposes of the coup. It was the Air Force, not the PKI, that made the arms available to the volunteer troops.

Besides the matter of arms, there is the question of military training that the PKI might have been giving party members. Prior to the start of the special military training course at Lubang Buaja, which was given to some 4,000 volunteers from the PKI for the particular purposes of the coup, the last three weeks before the coup, party members are not known to have received military training in Indonesia. Apparently, lectures in military theory and strategy were given at the higher party school, but only the leadership levels of the party attended these courses and

actual military training was not involved. The only military training that ordinary party members are known to have received was a course in "military tactics and the art of revolution" that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) gave selected foreign Communists at a school near Kunming, China. We have inadequate information as to the number of Indonesians who might have attended this school but it was certainly a very small number in relation to the membership of the PKI.\*

In conclusion, then, the PKI had no significant capability of its own for armed action as late as November 1964, when Aidit founded the Special Bureau "to prepare for armed struggle;" certainly, any armed capability that it had was far less than was generally thought at the time, when there were constant rumors of Chinese shipments of arms to the PKI and military training that was supposedly being given to PKI party members. Probably the main reason why Aidit had decided against a policy of training and arming the PKI (which would have involved the covert shipment of relatively large quantities of arms from Communist China) was that he was unwilling to take the risks involved in such a program. If it became known (and it would have been very hard to keep it a secret) that the PKI was actively preparing for armed struggle, it would have vitiated his whole effort over the past 15 years to create just the opposite image of the PKI--as a party that operated entirely within the legal political system of the country. He was obviously concerned not to risk anything that would seriously compromise the PKI's policy of peaceful transition to socialism," which he considered the key to the PKI's success during the past 15 years and its best hope of winning power in the future.

#### The PKI's Covert Apparatus

With this reason for not wanting to get the PKI involved in the illegal business of secreting arms into

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\*According to one member of the PKI youth organization who admitted to having received para-military training in China, approximately 300 Indonesians were at the same military training school near Kunming in October 1965.

Indonesia or in a military training program on a mass scale, Aidit had made no effort to provide the PKI with its own armed force. Yet, because he could not definitely rule out the possibility of the PKI's having to resort to armed force sometime in the future, if things suddenly changed for the worse, he seems to have been concerned to develop some kind of covert apparatus, distinct from the overt apparatus of the party, which could be assigned the task of preparing for armed struggle, should that ever become necessary.

In late 1964, he seems to have followed the Chinese Communist prescription for an "illegal shadow organization" separate from the legal, overt Communist party in setting up a new covert organization within the PKI, whose special purpose it would be to prepare for armed struggle. It was a "secret, revolutionary organization," in the sense that the Chinese use the term to refer to the illegal, secret party organization that directs the illegal struggle that is carried out independently of the legal struggle:

Illegal struggle refers to the status of the strugglers, not to the nature of the techniques employed. The illegal, secret party is not simply a party which has been banned by the law or which has made the decision to engage in armed insurrection. Such a party is a known party--its leaders and members are identified even though they may be in hiding or in a jungle insurgent camp. The very existence of the secret party is unknown, its personnel are unknown as Communists, its work is carried on in complete anonymity. It is unknown not only to hostile security forces and the general public--it is unknown even to all except a few of the overt party. The cadres of this party are not in hiding--on the contrary they are living open, normal lives in the community. It is their status as members of a secret, revolutionary organization, dedicated to the violent overthrow of the regime, which is illegal.



The new organization--called the Special Bureau--was a completely autonomous organization within the PKI, answerable only to Aidit. It had absolute authority over its own organization, administration, personnel, logistics, and everything else. Not only was it completely free of the control of the central committee and the politburo, but the members of the central committee and the politburo were not even informed of its existence, much less of the identity of its members. This was in keeping with Chinese Communist doctrine:

Only the center of the secret party had any contact whatever with any element of the legal party. Only the topmost leadership of the legal party knows of even the existence of the secret party, much less the identities of its members, and even this topmost leadership knows the identity only of the secret center.

It is not clear who, besides Aidit, knew anything about the Special Bureau. PKI leader Njono insisted in his interrogation that "knowledge of the party's secret organization was held exclusively by Party Chairman Aidit." It seems fairly clear that neither Njono nor Peris Pardede, both of them politburo members, had any specific knowledge of the Special Bureau; apparently, Sudisman and Sakirman, members of the five-man Standing Council of the Politburo, were not informed either. Lukman and Njoto, the other two members of the Standing Council along with Aidit, would seem to be the only ones who might have known, though there is nothing to indicate that even they did. This is one of those points that we may never know for sure; there may be only one man alive today who knows the answer--Sjam.\*

In its organization, as well as its discipline, the Special Bureau followed the Chinese prescription. There was a Central Special Bureau and 10 regional Special Bureaus; horizontal relations among the regions bureaus were not permitted. Again, this was in keeping with Chinese doctrine that:

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\*As noted previously, President Suharto has denied Sjam's appeal for clemency, and it is expected that his death sentence will be executed shortly. There are unconfirmed reports that he has already been executed.

there must be no lateral communication between parallel units of the secret party, not only at the cell level, but all the way to the top. Only one person in a subordinate unit is to be known to the next higher unit. Any coordination of activity must be done by vertical communication up to and down from the center.

The following Chinese discussion of the role of the individual member of an illegal Communist party could almost have been written about Sjam, Pono, Walujo, and the other members of the Special Bureau and the work they were doing to subvert the Indonesian Army:

The illegal party member must make friends on a wide scale--people who respect him, have faith in him and in the end will follow his leadership . . . He must also be a diligent student of his surroundings, both physical and social. He must be aware of the contradictions in society. He must seek out those elements in the community who have grievances against the regime, such as army officers who resent political control, waste of money and military inefficiency, or religious leaders who find the society increasingly immoral and profligate, or peasants who suffer from neglect of their needs. (Emphasis added)

The illegal party worker is obviously primarily concerned to establish himself in his profession and in the community at large as a person whom others admire and respect and whose lead they will follow. He is not necessarily concerned to convert others to Communism; in fact, he may not even reveal himself as a Communist. He is simply interested in establishing some sort of control over certain key people, who, for one reason or another, are in a position to influence events in a way favorable to the communists.

From a variety of sources, we now have a fairly clear picture of the operations of the Special Bureau. The most striking thing about those Bureau operations is that, with few exceptions, they were all concentrated in the military

field--which was not exactly according to Chinese Communist doctrine on the subject. The Chinese model calls for infiltration of the entire fabric of society; the illegal party organization is not usually so totally directed toward the military. Obviously, Aidit and Sjam felt no great concern about the PKI's strength vis-a-vis- the other political parties or in the mass organizations or among the peasants or in the government, et alia. In concentrating their covert activities so completely on the military, they were obviously concerned about just one thing: the threat to the PKI from the military.

In the case of the military, priority would obviously be given to winning the loyalty of the men in command positions. If the PKI could win their loyalty, it could count on the men under their command to follow their orders; in a showdown with the army these units would defect to the side of the PKI. There can be no doubt that the whole operation of the Special Bureau was aimed at the officers in just such key positions. One can go down the list of military officials "managed" by the PKI Special Bureau, and almost without exception, they held some command post, either a company command or command of a battalion or a special unit like the Special Defense Force at Halim Air Force Base or, even, a command like the 4th Combat Command of KOSTRAD in West Borneo, which General Supardjo held. Dani was almost a special case as Commander of the entire Air Force; with him, the PKI had penetrated right to the top of the Indonesian military command!

It must be remembered that the Special Bureau had been organized less than a year before it was given the job of planning the military operation of the '30 September Movement.' By the time of the coup, the Central Bureau, which managed contacts in Djakarta only, had established a pattern of regular contacts with over 40 officials, most of them military officials but a few of them non-military government officials, in Djakarta. We have no way of estimating the number of people who were being "managed" by the ten regional bureaus. Sjam himself did not know them all, since "it was the right of each regional bureau to conceal this information;" he could remember the names

of only 12 of the regional "contacts" but he indicated that there were "many others."\*

\*New information indicates that PKI contacts in the military may have been even more widespread than we first thought on the basis of Sjam's testimony. From the interrogation of Sjam, Untung, Latief, and the other military officers involved in the planning for the coup in Djakarta, we have a fairly good picture of the operations of the Central Special Bureau in Djakarta, but we are just beginning to get some picture of the extent of the Special Bureau operations in Central and West Java, where there were regional bureaus of the Special Bureau. We still have no information on the role of the Special Bureau in events in Semarang, Jogjakarta, and Solo on the day of the coup, but presumably Col. Suherman, Major Muljono, and Major Iskandar, who followed Untung's lead in establishing Revolutionary Councils in these three cities, were "contacts" of the Special Bureau, just like Untung, Latief, Sujono, Dani, and Supardjo. It seems that the Special Bureau must have been responsible for coordinating events in these cities with those in Djakarta.

In late July 1968, the Indonesian Army was shocked to learn the extent of PKI penetration in the KODAM VI Military Region Command of the Siliwangi (West Java) Division of the Army, which was believed to be one of the Army's most reliable units. The deputy commander of KODAM VI (Col. Djukardi Sastradiwiria) was arrested in July on suspicion of involvement with the PKI. His testimony is a good example of recent information we have received on PKI operations in West Java. Djukardi told of being introduced to Sjam around 1953-54. He said that Sjam explained to him that he was a member of the PKI Malam (Night) and that, in contrast to the PKI Siang (Day) whose members were overt, PKI Malam members were secret and compartmented from each other. Djukardi was in regular contact with Sjam until 1958 or 1959. After this he was visited by a man named Rachmat, who had a letter of introduction from Sjam. According to Djukardi, Rachmat contacted him in August 1965 and told him about Sukarno's (footnote continued on page 181)

By late 1965, the PKI had made a good beginning in subverting crucial elements in the military, and it had plans for extending its operations in this field and in supporting fields, such as the police field. Given a few more years, it might well have managed to subvert enough military officers to make it a real contest between the anti-Communists and the pro-Communists in the military. As it was, by late 1965, even though it was not in a position where it would have wanted to risk a general test of strength with the military, it was in a position where it could at least contemplate carrying out a limited military operation--such as the kidnapping of a number of Army generals and the seizure of a few key installations in Djakarta. A practical measure of the military strength

(footnote continued from page 180)

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illness and about the plan of the Council of Generals to seize political power. Rachmat asked him to make military preparations within the KODAM VI Area Command to anticipate the generals' coup. In early September 1965, Rachmat and Djukardi are supposed to have met with Sjam and Supardjo in Bandung to discuss the plans for the coup. Later in September, they met with other military officers in KODAM VI to discuss the kidnapping or killing of senior Siliwangi Division officers. When, according to Djukardi, he declined to take command of the KODAM VI coup forces, Rachmat said he would take command himself. Djukardi gave the names of at least 16 other officers in KODAM VI whom he knew to be contacts of Rachmat.

This is about the best evidence we have that the Special Bureau planned kidnapping/murders of senior Army officers in other cities than Djakarta. The similarity between the KODAM VI coup planning and the action taken by Col. Suherman, Major Muljono, and Major Iskandar against senior officers of the Diponegoro (Central Java) Division makes it clear that the Special Bureau organized events in Semarang, Jogjakarta, and Solo just as it planned and organized the kidnapping/murders of the Army generals in Djakarta.

of the PKI in late 1965 would actually be the 30 September Movement. It seems that almost all the resources of the Special Bureau were involved in the coup. We know that Aidit was concerned to commit the maximum number of troops at his disposal to the coup action, even to the extent of rushing the training of some 4,000 volunteer troops as an auxiliary force; most of the known "contacts" of the Special Bureau played some role in the coup. In short, the coup was the supreme military effort that the PKI was capable of at that time. It bespeaks both the success of the Special Bureau's program of subversion in the Armed Forces that the PKI could even bring off such a thing as the kidnapping of the Army's whole top command and also the general state of unpreparedness of the PKI at the time for an all-out challenge from the military.

In summary--Aidit had all along tended to belittle the chance of a military challenge of the PKI. Around 1964, however, he apparently began to take the possibility of a showdown with the army a little more seriously, as Sukarno's death or disability began to seem like a distinct possibility before the PKI could assume power. By the time of the coup, he had made a good beginning in his plan to subvert the Indonesian military as the preferable way for the PKI to acquire some capability for armed struggle, without the risks involved in a program to train and equip PKI party members.

#### PKI Policy Toward Sukarno

There is one other aspect of the PKI domestic policy that should be mentioned before we look at the PKI in the context of the Indonesian political scene in the months just before the coup. That is its general policy toward Sukarno. Aidit's policy toward the President was almost certainly a crucial factor in the PKI's involvement in the coup.

Although there seems to have been no serious disagreement within the party over Aidit's general line on "peaceful transition to socialism," there does seem to

have been some dissension over elements of that policy, such as the degree to which the PKI should subordinate its interests to those of Sukarno. No one, including the militants, would have argued in favor of a major challenge to Sukarno; it was obvious that his policies, both domestically and internationally, for the most part, favored PKI interests; the longer he lasted as President, the better were the party's chances of assuming power without a major struggle. It was generally agreed that the best hope of the PKI lay in the careful and loyal implementation of his policies. According to one reliable and knowledgeable source,

Aidit maintains his position by virtue of his being the party's principal point of contact with Sukarno and the fact that the party's strategy, at this time at least, is to support Sukarno.

As a way of ingratiating the PKI with Sukarno, the Indonesian Communists had adopted a deliberate "tactic of flattery" toward the President. They studied his words and his doctrines and his aspirations for Indonesia with the same diligence that they studied Communist writings. The speeches of Aidit and the other PKI leaders were always generously adorned with quotations from the "Great Leader of the Revolution." In treating Sukarno's formulations with quasi-theological reverence and in making him the object of their "cult of personality," the Communists were not only appealing to Sukarno's boundless vanity but at the same time reinforcing the image of themselves as his true disciples and therefore his most deserving political heirs.\*

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\*Sukarno never stated publicly that he viewed the PKI as his heir, but this image was gradually built up through the subtle interplay between the President and the Communists.

To be sure, Sukarno was not ungrateful. On 23 May 1965, at the 45th anniversary celebrations of the PKI, he acknowledged the party's unswerving support. He participated in the elaborate anniversary ceremony, exchanging compliments with the PKI leaders. In his speech on the occasion, he said that the PKI was truly his "best disciple," that "Indonesia could never emerge as a major power without the help of the Communists."

I embrace the PKI, because it is a revolutionary force. PKI go forward. PKI never retreat. PKI grow. PKI be strong. Onward.

Aidit, in particular, sang the wisdom and glory of President Sukarno louder and more unequivocally than any other Indonesian political leader. In an interview in March 1965, he said:

The President is my teacher, my leader. He is a great patriot. He is fighting against imperialism more than the leaders of socialist countries. The other parties in Indonesia meet him often. But the PKI is mentally closer to the President.

Apparently, some of the more militant leaders of the PKI had certain doubts about the wisdom of the party's supporting the President to the extent that Aidit was carrying the policy. They were reportedly disturbed at the contradiction between party strength and party subservience to Sukarno.

At the time of the coup, Aidit probably had more influence on Sukarno than any other person. More than ever before, he was pushing Sukarno on matters of vital interest to the PKI--like the "fifth force" and the



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"troika" idea and the idea of a NASAKOM cabinet.\* Of the two men, however, Sukarno still had the upper hand. For the time being, Aidit was willing to accept that; he would go along with whatever Sukarno decided, expecting to gain the upper hand that way.

Even if Sukarno's decisions went against the PKI--such as Sukarno's deciding to give only four posts to the Communists in a cabinet of 75 or his refusing to arm 10 million peasants--Aidit took them in great good humor, never

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\*By 1965, the PKI had made a Nasakom cabinet a virtual demand of the party; it was the furthest they had ever gone in pressing their own objectives on the President. In the spring of that year, they began to press other demands--one that would have imposed a "troika" policy on the chiefs of staff of the armed forces and another, the "fifth force" concept, that would have placed small arms in the hands of Communist party members. Aidit's "troika" proposal envisaged a policymaking board composed of nationalist, religious, and, of course, Communist representatives at the various command levels, from the chief of staff to the lowest level of command. When General Yani heard of Aidit's "troika" proposal, he went personally to the President to protest the idea. He is reported to have told Sukarno: "I am a Nasakomist, and my Nasakomism is the same as yours. There is no need to introduce Nasakom into the armed forces. The elements of Nasakom are already present with each member of the armed forces. The Indonesian armed forces have had the Nasakom idea from their beginning." Sukarno and the PKI later made fun of the Army's so-called "Nasakom spirit" in little songs and verses that became rather well known at the time. Everyone knew that the Army was doing what it could to resist the idea of Nasakom councils in the Army although it made a pretense of supporting Sukarno's idea of Nasakom in general.

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openly doubting or criticising Sukarno's verdict...It must have been highly reassuring for Sukarno to hear from Aidit (in his interview in March 1965) that 'many think I can influence the President. He is not influenced by anybody.' These are exactly the words President Sukarno liked to hear.

There were supposedly three people who knew how to flatter Sukarno to get their way. One was Aidit. One was Subandrio. And the third was his wife Dewi.

#### Background to a Coup: September 1964-March 1965

The process of eliminating all effective opposition to Sukarno and his policies, which had been the main political trend in Indonesia over the years, was greatly accelerated during the fall and winter 1964-65. Apparently aware of his declining health and afraid that gradual evolution would not result in the fulfillment of his grand design for Indonesia, Sukarno seems to have decided sometime around the fall of 1964 to speed up the process of neutralizing or liquidating all independent power centers obstructing his purposes. Assisting him in this task was the PKI, first and foremost, but also the Indonesian Air Force under Dani, first Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio, a host of Communist sympathizers, and an increasing number of opportunists who climbed on the bandwagon as soon as it got rolling.

The process of eliminating the opposition proceeded by stages. After a first move by Sukarno to remove or reduce the opposition from a certain quarter, the PKI would immediately move in with a vicious anti-America campaign designed to link the opposition within Indonesia with the "foreign enemy." Sukarno would then accuse the opposition of treason to the Indonesian revolution and have its leaders removed from office and their party organization and publications banned.



President Sukarno with Aidit at Merdeka Palace, Djakarta, 1965

After the rumors about Sukarno's failing kidney became current in the fall of 1964, a movement supported from behind the scenes by Third Deputy Prime Minister Chaerul Saleh and supported openly by Minister of Trade Adam Malik began a major polemic with the PKI. Upon Sukarno's return from overseas in the late fall, he promptly banned the BPS, or the "Body to Support Sukarnism" as the movement was called. This was the start of a series of bannings and purges in 1965, each of which strengthened the status and power of the PKI as well as of Sukarno.

On 8 January, after withdrawing from the United Nations, Sukarno banned the Murba Party, which had obviously been involved with the BPS, although Sukarno had not attempted to link the two when he first moved against the BPS.\* On 24 February, following a dramatically

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\*Apparently, both Subandrio and the PKI were shocked by Sukarno's decision to withdraw Indonesia from the United Nations and his boldness in banning the Murba Party. According to a reliable source, "Sukarno's impulsive decision (re Indonesia's withdrawal from the U.N.) horrified even his friend and straightman Subandrio, who, as Foreign Minister, had to carry out the order. He delayed the formal letter of withdrawal for three weeks before he signed it, hoping that the Bung would change his mind. Subandrio told officials at the Foreign Ministry that the decision had been 'too whimsical.' PKI leader Lukman is reported to have told a group of leaders of PKI-controlled front groups in Solo that the top PKI leadership was 'taken aback' by President Sukarno's daring in pulling out of the U.N.; he said that it was far more daring than the PKI leadership had expected. He said the PKI leadership was also "surprised by Sukarno's show of guts in banning the Murba Party." According to Lukman, the complete eradication of the Murba Party was the top priority task of the PKI throughout Indonesia. He claimed that Sukarno had warned PNI and NU leaders that if they did not purge their parties of counter-revolutionary elements he would also ban their parties. Because of these "progressive policies" of the President, the PKI intended to increase its support of Sukarno, according to Lukman.

heightened anti-American campaign in Djakarta, Sukarno banned the newspapers which had supported the BPS, which he characterized as a CIA plot to "kill Sukarnoism and Sukarno." (The bans of these newspapers gave the PKI complete control of the informational field.) A few days after the banning of these papers, he ordered the retooling of the '45 Generation, another political vehicle of Chaerul Saleh which also had widespread connections among government and military officials. In April, a predominantly PKI governing board was installed in the new board of governors of the '45 Generation organization. Murba Party members Saleh and Malik were effectively "re-tooled" by losing control of most of their operational governmental responsibilities. In September, Sukarno announced that the '45 Generation was completely under his control; Chaerul Saleh publicly begged for forgiveness.

Following the banning of the BPS press, a number of new Moslem newspapers suddenly appeared in Djakarta which, although initially treading gingerly on PKI toes, gave promise of eventually replacing the BPS papers in attacking the PKI. Sukarno moved promptly to neutralize this new threat. In a series of decisions, the Moslem organizations were placed under the supervision of Subandrio. Thus, the Moslem-PKI issue had been dampened down by September, although there were still isolated incidents of violence between the two groups.\* Now Sukarno could concentrate his attack on the two most important citadels of anti-PKI power--the PNI right-wing and the Army leadership.

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\*The Moslem issue was by no means settled. Certain of the more docile Moslem organizations were behaving themselves, but the HMI (the organization of Moslem University students) was still active. As noted above, there were several incidents of violence between the Moslems and the PKI in 1965. If most of the Moslem organizations had been intimidated by Sukarno, some, like the HMI, were far from dead.

For several years the President had been working to convert the PNI into a virtual mirror of the PKI in terms of its espousal of pro-Communist positions and attitudes. Although the party had gone along with the general pro-Communist orientation of the government, there had been considerable foot-dragging on the part of a small group of moderates in the leadership, such as First Chairman Hardi and Central Java Chairman Hadisubeno. Opposing this group of moderates was the pro-Communist PNI Secretary General Surachman, who had the backing of Ali Sastroamidjojo and other central board members. In March 1965, Sukarno stepped up his campaign to "re-tool" the PNI to the point where it was obvious that purges would soon occur. Addressing an extraordinary meeting of the PNI in Djakarta on 25 and 26 March, he claimed that "recent events" had cleared the road for the socialist stage of the Indonesian revolution;\* he called unequivocally for the ouster of "false Marxists" from the PNI, whom he identified implicitly as anti-

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\*It was Sukarno, rather than the PKI, that was pushing the idea that Indonesia was about to enter the socialist stage in the spring of 1965. Apparently, the PKI was not happy with the various statements that Sukarno was making to this effect--such as the speech that he made to the Provisional People's Consultative Congress (MPRS) on 11 April. Apparently, the party had two main objections. According to PKI theory, there should be a "strong, cohesive government-acknowledged force to guide Indonesia into the socialist stage." In the view of the PKI, only the PKI could act as such a force. Yet, in reality, the only strong cohesive force in Indonesia in 1965 was the army; which the PKI obviously considered the wrong vehicle for leading Indonesia into the socialist stage. The second objection was that, according to PKI theory, Indonesia could pass into its socialist stage of development only after the national democratic stage had been completed. According to the PKI, this was not the case in Indonesia in 1965.

Communists. On 4 May, the first "false Marhaenist" was ousted; a special meeting of the PNI central board removed Hadisubeno from control of the Central Java PNI. At the PNI anniversary celebration on 26 July, Sukarno spoke again of Indonesia's entry into the "socialist stage;" this time he implied that the entry might necessarily be a violent one.\* Once again, he called for the ouster of "false Marhaenists" from the PNI. About ten days later, a specially-convened meeting of the PNI leadership council officially purged Hardi and his followers from the party and gradually thereafter replaced them with either pro-Communist or Communist sympathizers.\*\* The PNI had all but collapsed as a political force capable of resisting Sukarno. Only the Army remained.

For a long while, the Army had been experiencing increasing concern over the political situation, especially the situation in Central Java; where the PKI had its greatest strength. Some of the generals, alarmed by the increasing ascendancy of the PKI in Central Java, are known to have felt that the tide was turning against the Army in Indonesia as a whole. In January, General Yani and a group of his most trusted advisers in the Army

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\*In this speech on the occasion of the PNI 38th anniversary celebration, Sukarno publicly identified himself with the 1926 PKI revolt. He said that the PKI had been right to try to seize power violently, even though it had not succeeded at the time. He implied that the entry into the socialist stage in Indonesia might be violent. Apparently, even the PKI was shocked by Sukarno's espousal of the violent entry into socialism. The party had been espousing the peaceful transition to socialism. Actually, as noted before, the PKI had not been pushing the idea of Indonesia's entry into socialism, certainly not the way Sukarno was.

\*\*As an indication of how leftist Sukarno had become in 1965, the "false Marhaenists" who were purged from the PNI for being anti-Communist are among the leftist opposition to President Suharto today.

began to meet together informally to discuss the deteriorating political situation and what the Army should do about it. The group, known as the "brain-trust," included four other generals, besides Yani: Gen. Suprpto, Gen. Harjono, Gen. Parman, and Gen. Sukendro. Contrary to widespread belief, Gen. Sutojo and Gen. Pandjaitan, who were also victims of the Indonesian coup along with Yani, Suprpto, Harjono, and Parman, were not members of the "brain-trust." They were close friends of Yani and were generally considered to be among "Yani's boys" in the Army, but they were not part of the group that began to meet together regularly, in secret, in January to discuss political matters pertaining to the Army.\*

Around the same time that Gen. Yani and a group of his most trusted advisers in the Army began to meet together for secret discussions of the political situation, the Army was presented with a proposal from the PKI which represented the most serious challenge it had yet

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\*This group of five generals which began to meet together regularly in January 1965 to discuss political problems affecting the Army was, almost certainly, the group that the PKI was warning Sukarno about. Aidit referred to the group as the "Generals' Council." There was another organization in the army that was also known as the Generals' Council, which was concerned solely with the matter of promotions and appointments. Gen. Yani and the Army tried to divert attention away from the group of generals who were meeting together informally by bringing up the subject of this other organization that was also called the Generals' Council. It obviously had nothing to do with the group of generals, known within the army as Yani's "braintrust," who were meeting to discuss political matters.

All of the generals who were included in the "brain-trust" or "Generals' Council", as Aidit referred to it, were victims of the 30 September Movement, except for Gen. Sukendro, who was in Communist China on the day of the coup.



faced. In late January, it was revealed that Aidit had requested Sukarno to arm peasants and workers as a special defense force or "people's militia"--the so-called "fifth force."\* The PKI and Communist China were to keep up the pressure on Sukarno on the matter of the "fifth force" all during the spring and summer of 1965; Sukarno himself was to remain uncommitted on this issue. However, in April, he took a definite step in the direction of undermining the Army as an independent political force. At a special meeting of the military commanders that month, he ordered the Army to get into step with the revolution and revise its defense thinking in keeping with his own thinking of Nekolim (Sukarno's word for "imperialist" nations, particularly the U.S. and U.K.), rather than Communist China, as the main enemy of Indonesia.

Many of the Army's senior officers are known to have been deeply concerned about these new orders, which they believed opened the way for the disintegration of the Army's strong anti-Communist posture. They were very much aware of the fact that Air Force Commander Dani had sold out to Sukarno and the PKI and was actively assisting in the campaign against the Army. The Army held a series of conferences to "turn the wheel toward the left" as Sukarno demanded, but behind the scenes Yani and a few other senior generals in the Army were meeting in secret to discuss ways of resisting Sukarno's moves to destroy the Army as a political force opposed to the radical movement to the left. It is clear that the Army was on the defensive and was reacting to initiatives by Sukarno and the PKI. There is no evidence that the Army was planning anything more than countermeasures to resist Sukarno and the PKI's bold new moves to crush it.

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\*Sukarno was actually the first to use the term "fifth force." Aidit had spoken of "arming workers and peasants" in presenting the idea in the first place. After Sukarno originated the name "fifth force," everyone called it that.

In early May, Sukarno ordered the newly created National Defense Institute placed under civilian control and the introduction of a number of pro-Communist courses in the curriculum. A few days later, he made another proposal that would all but have destroyed the Army as a political as well as an anti-Communist force. He proposed that Nasakom advisory councils (in which the PKI would have been represented along with the other parties) should be formed to advise military commanders at all levels, from the top echelon down to the military districts. The PKI obviously had in mind a political commissar system similar to that of Communist China. Sukarno himself cited the example of Communist China in discussing the idea for Nasakom advisory councils in the Army. Probably even more than the "fifth force," the political commissar system as proposed by the PKI would have destroyed the Army as an independent power in Indonesia. The generals were determinedly against the idea. Although they were forced to mouth support for it, they had successfully resisted implementation of any such political commissar system in the Army up to the time of the coup.

As of early August 1965, then, Sukarno's balance sheet showed a mixed picture. On the one hand, he had crushed the Saleh forces and removed the anti-Communist strength in the PNI, and he had neutralized the Moslems, making it possible to crush them at a later date. But the Army had held. He may well have decided that unless there was a change in the Army leadership the Army was not likely to give in on the matter of the "fifth force" and the even more controversial matter of introducing Nasakom councils in the command structure of the Army. In other words, he may have begun to think of purging the Army leadership, as he had purged the PNI leadership.

#### The Gilchrist Letter

In late May 1965, President Sukarno had a dramatic confrontation with Army Commander Yani over two issues; one of them, the Generals' Council and the other, the Gilchrist Letter. Since the story of the Gilchrist Letter

is of interest in connection with the coup, it may be well to discuss it before taking up in detail the Generals' Council.

Sukarno is reported to have called in Gen. Yani and the commanders of the other armed services, as well as Defense Minister Nasution, to discuss the Gilchrist Letter the very same day that Subandrio first showed the letter to the President. That was the 26th of May 1965. According to Subandrio, the letter had been mailed to him at his home address in an envelope bearing a Djakarta postmark but no return address. A covering letter, which was unsigned, explained that the letter had been found in the home of Billy Palmer, an American businessman, whose house had been raided by the PKI. (The raid on Palmer's home had been well publicized in the Indonesian press.) In other words, the covering letter implied that the Gilchrist Letter had been furnished to Subandrio by the PKI.

The Gilchrist Letter purported to be a letter written by Sir Andrew Gilchrist, the British Ambassador to Indonesia, in March 1965. According to Subandrio, it was a letter that Ambassador Gilchrist sent to the British Foreign Office, reporting on a discussion with the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia concerning U.S. and British plans for subversion and overthrow of the Indonesian government in collusion with Indonesian military leaders. In the letter, Gilchrist was alleged to have referred to "our local Army friends."

According to his testimony in court, Subandrio ordered the BPI, Indonesia's intelligence organization which he headed, to check out the authenticity of the document. He was told that both the handwriting and the form of the letter were the same as that of other documents taken from the British Embassy at the time of the burning of the Embassy about eight months earlier. Subandrio claimed that he was convinced by this report of the authenticity of the document and, he gave the letter to the President on 26 May 1965.

Sukarno appeared to be genuinely alarmed by the Gilchrist Letter. His haste in calling in the commanders of the armed services and the Minister of Defense to discuss the document would seem to indicate that he was inclined to accept the letter as authentic; either that, or he was deliberately creating that impression. At the meeting with Sukarno on 26 May, Army Commander Yani is reported to have denied the allegations made in the letter. He told Sukarno that Generals Parman and Sukendro were the only Army generals who maintained close liaison with the British and Americans and only because this was their assignment. Either Sukarno pretended not to be, or he was not, convinced by Yani's explanation. One or two days later, he raised the subject of the Gilchrist Letter again at a meeting of KODAM commanders. Several weeks later, he gave the go-ahead to Subandrio to announce the existence of the document as proof of U.S. and British plotting against Indonesia. The circumstances of the announcement were planned to attract world-wide attention. Apparently, Subandrio planned to announce the discovery of the Gilchrist Letter at the Afro-Asian Conference in Algiers. When the conference was postponed at the last minute, he called a press conference in Cairo, just prior to returning home to Indonesia, to make the dramatic announcement. The fact that the press conference was held in Cairo attracted international attention, much more so than if Subandrio had made the announcement in Indonesia.

No doubt, at that point in time, Sukarno was predisposed to think the worst of both the U.S. and the British. He may really have believed that Britain and the United States were in collusion with the Indonesian military in plotting his overthrow. Ever since the PRRI-Permesta rebellion in the outer islands in 1956-61, in which the U.S. and Britain had been involved, he had been deeply suspicious of the U.S.; and of the C.I.A., in particular. By the summer of 1965, when the West Irian issue had been settled in his favor, Sukarno had transferred the full fury of his anti-Dutch complex to the U.S. and Britain. In the situation of growing tension between him and the Army, he might easily have been persuaded of the danger of a coup by a Generals' Council, probably in foreign pay.

Regardless of what Sukarno really thought--or knew--about the Gilchrist Letter, it is now widely accepted as fact that the Gilchrist Letter was a forgery--and a bad one, at that. Ambassador Gilchrist and the British government have both denied knowing anything about such a letter. British and U.S. officials were never shown a copy of the letter that Subandrio said was the Gilchrist Letter, but Indonesian Army officers examined it carefully and concluded, without any doubt, that it was forged. The handwriting in the margin, supposed to be that of the Ambassador, did not match his handwriting; nor was it his style of writing. Probably the most convincing evidence that the letter was a forgery is the absurdity that Ambassador Gilchrist would discuss such a matter as U.S. and British plans to overthrow the Indonesian Government in an uncoded letter to the Foreign Office. Equally absurd is the idea that the letter would ever find its way into Billy Palmer's house, if it were authentic. (He was an obvious target for the PKI and the BPI, because of his way of life and temperament, to play the role of the "enemy agent.") Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the British would have been involved in anything as out of context with their policy at the time as a plan to overthrow the Indonesian Government; at the time the U.K. was withdrawing from Southeast Asia and reducing drastically its role and commitments in the area. There is still another point--namely, that it was also totally out of character for the Indonesian Army to have been plotting the overthrow of Sukarno at that point in time. The Army was much too divided and on the defensive to have been planning such a move.

The question immediately arises: who forged the Gilchrist Letter? Three prime suspects immediately come to mind: Subandrio, Aidit, and the Chinese. All three would have had the same motive in wanting to convince Sukarno that the generals were plotting against him. The motive, of course, would have been to get Sukarno to take firm action against the generals, who represented the main threat to both Subandrio and the PKI in the struggle for power after Sukarno. The Chinese had a vested interest in promoting the interests, first of all, of the PKI and, secondly, of Subandrio, over the military in Indonesia.

Sukarno must also be considered among the suspects who had both the motive and the capability for forging such a document. (Presumably, Sukarno would have used Subandrio and the BPI to forge any document that he wanted forged.) If Sukarno had any thought of moving against the Army, as he had moved against the BPS and the Murba Party and the PNI, he would have had a definite motive in wanting to establish a case against the Army; the Gilchrist Letter could always be used as evidence of Army plotting against Sukarno and Army intrigue with foreign enemies of the Indonesian state.

In the three years since the coup, no evidence has come to light as to who forged the letter. In the interrogations after the coup, no attempt was ever made --as far as we know--to question people on this particular point. Why the Army did not pursue the matter is not clear. Unless it was not sure that it had convincing proof that the document was a forgery, it seems that the only reason it would have had for not wanting to pursue the matter further would be the possibility of involving Sukarno. Certainly, the Army was interested above all else in establishing that there was no truth to the reports that it was plotting the overthrow of Sukarno in collusion with the U.S. and the U.K. To this end, it had every reason for wanting to discredit the Gilchrist Letter, as evidence to the contrary. Under the circumstances, it is surprising that more of an effort was not made to implicate Aidit, or Subandrio, or the Chinese in the forgery, when a good circumstantial case could have been made against all three.\* At the time (i.e. in 1966), the Army

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\*It is interesting that the Army never tried to make a strong case for the Chinese having forged the Gilchrist Letter, though it tried in every other way to implicate the Chinese in the coup. If it were proved that the Chinese forged the letter, they would have to be judged to have played a significant role in bringing about the events that led to the coup, whether or not they were directly involved in the planning of the coup.

was concentrating on PKI involvement in the coup. For very good reasons, it was being very circumspect on the matter of Sukarno's involvement in the coup. When it did discuss the subject, it was usually in reference to Sukarno's actions on the day of the coup and his actions afterwards in support of the coup. Despite evidence that Sukarno must have had foreknowledge of the coup and must have approved of the coup plans, the Army never went so far as to suggest that Sukarno set the stage for the move against the generals by fabricating evidence against the Army.

If Sukarno was responsible for the Gilchrist Letter, any or all three of the other suspects--Subandrio, Aidit, or the Chinese--could have been involved along with him. They may have suggested the idea to him and then become involved in a plot with him in forging the Gilchrist Letter, or they may have been used by Sukarno in a scheme of his own making.

The evidence as to who forged the Gilchrist Letter is simply not conclusive. It does not support narrowing the alternatives further. However, if we had to say which of the alternatives seems most likely, we would guess Subandrio. At least the weight of the evidence points to Subandrio and the BPI as having been responsible for the actual forging of the document. Whether the BPI had Sukarno's approval for the operation or whether Subandrio was carrying out what was Sukarno's idea to begin with is unclear. We suspect that the operation had Sukarno's approval.

#### The Generals' Council

The first reports concerning a Generals' Council were received about the same time in May that Subandrio claims to have received the Gilchrist letter in the mail at his home. In this instance, Subandrio first received the report--that a Generals' Council existed in the Army and that it was going to stage a coup because of the

generals' dissatisfaction with Sukarno's policies--from the chief of staff of the BPI.\* Apparently, the BPI had

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\*It should be made clear that the reports about a Generals' Council specifically claimed that the generals were planning a coup. As already explained, the reports were true insofar as they referred to a "Generals' Council" that was meeting in secret to discuss political matters. The reports obviously referred to the group of five generals (Yani, Suprpto, Harjono, Parman, and Sukendro) who began to meet together informally in January to discuss the Army's response to Sukarno's new initiatives to crush it. The reports were wrong, however, in suggesting that the generals were planning a coup against Sukarno. At least, there is nothing that makes us think that the Generals had any such plan; the evidence is to the contrary.

Apparently, the first reports about a Generals' Council were vague as to the timing of the coup that the generals were alleged to be planning. In late August and September, however, the date 5 October began to be mentioned. In the last weeks before the coup, this date was mentioned more and more often in connection with the alleged plans for a generals' coup. Apparently, there was no more justification to the reports that the generals were planning a coup on 5 October than the fact that it was Armed Forces Day, which gave the Army an obvious excuse for bringing large numbers of troops to Djakarta for the Armed Forces Day Parade. If the Army had been planning a coup on 5 October, only 5 days later than the coup that actually materialized, the preparations would have to have been well advanced by 1 October, and it seems that it would have been impossible to keep the fact of such preparations a secret so long. Absolutely no evidence has ever come to light, however, of there having been any such preparations. Apparently, Sukarno and the PKI were concerned that the Army might be planning a coup on 5 October, however. That seems to have been a definite factor in Aidit's decision to stage the coup no later (footnote continued on page 200)



received information to this effect from three or four different sources, most of whom seem to have had some affiliation with the PKI. According to Subandrio, neither he nor his chief of staff made an effort to check the validity of the information.

Subandrio himself seems to have been rather dubious about these reports, at least at first. During his trial, the following exchange took place:

Question: What was your logical conclusion, after hearing of the existence of the Council of Generals?

Subandrio: I considered it only as a 'whispering campaign.' Also, it regarded a domestic matter, and the BPI was not concerned with domestic matters.

Question: Did Aidit ever ask you about the Council of Generals?

(footnote continued from page 199)  
than 30 September. Of course, there is the possibility that the coup leaders made up the story that the generals were going to stage a coup on 5 October as a pretext for urging haste on Untung and the other military leaders, who were concerned about certain military details of the coup plot and were offering resistance to Sjam's pressure for immediate action.

Subandrio: Yes, at the meeting about economic affairs in June 1965, and I replied that he must be careful about 'whispering campaigns.' Also Yani, Sukarno, and Aidit discussed the Council of Generals; on this occasion, Aidit only laughed about it.

Question: Did you ever give the BPI any instruction about the Council of Generals?

Subandrio: No, sir.

Question: When the President was ill, after 4th August, you telephoned General Djuhartono and you told him 'Don't join the whispering campaign about the replacement of the President, don't join the Council of Generals'.

Subandrio: Yes, sir. I did so, but that was only a casual joke between Djuhartono and me, as usual.

Subandrio was quite clear on the point that the BPI never had any proof of the existence of the Generals' Council.

The BPI did not forward its reports concerning a Generals' Council to the Defense and Security Staff or to the chiefs of any of the armed forces. Presumably, Subandrio briefed Sukarno, although we have no information as to exactly when and from whom Sukarno first heard about the Generals' Council.\* It is clear, however, that

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\*Since the coup, Nasution has claimed that General Pranoto told Sukarno about the existence of a Generals' Council. It is not clear whether Nasution meant that Gen. Pranoto was the first person to speak to Sukarno about a Generals' Council or whether he was one of the (footnote continued on page 202)

he had already been informed about the reports when Aidit raised the subject of the Generals' Council with him sometime around mid-May. Apparently, Aidit had been briefed by the chief of staff of the BPI, as Subandrio had. At least, he claimed that he had obtained his information from Police Brig. General Sutarto, chief of staff of the BPI, when he mentioned the reports about the Generals' Council to a meeting of the Politburo in May. Aidit told the Politburo that the Gilchrist letter tended to confirm the reports about the Council of Generals.

Aidit is reported to have raised the subject of the Generals' Council with the President sometime in mid-May when he and Njoto were with Sukarno at the Palace. The exact occasion is not known, but it must have been sometime before 26 May, when Sukarno called in the military

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(footnote continued from page 201)

persons who discussed the subject with Sukarno. It would be interesting to know just what Pranoto told the President. He was not a member of Gen. Yani's "brain trust" which was meeting in secret to plan the Army's response to Sukarno's newest initiatives to destroy it as a political force; therefore, he would not have known the details of the Army's thinking. He could well have learned of the secret meetings of Yani and the other generals, however, and it is quite believable that he would have told Sukarno. His appointment by Sukarno as caretaker of the army after the coup may have stemmed from his service to Sukarno in telling him of the meetings of the Generals' Council.

commanders to confront them with the reports about a  
Generals' Council and the discovery of the Gilchrist  
letter.●

At the meeting on 26 May, General Yani is reported  
to have replied to Sukarno's direct questioning on the  
matter of the Generals' Council. He told the President  
that there was an organization within the Army known as  
the Generals' Council but that it was solely concerned  
with the matter of promotions and appointments. Yani  
was referring to the council that had been established  
in 1956 for the purpose of advising the army commander

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\*In a statement given under oath on 16 September 1966  
Sukarno stated that it was not until the beginning of  
September 1965 that he learned about the existence of the  
Council of Generals. "I asked Army Commander Yani about  
this council of generals after hearing of it at the  
beginning of September." As General Nasution has said,  
the President's oath was obviously "spurious." There is  
the report of Aidit's having raised the subject of the  
Generals' Council with Sukarno sometime soon after he  
(Aidit) had received a report on the subject from Police  
Brig. General Sutarto, the chief of the staff of the BPI,  
in early May. Sukarno obviously knew what Aidit was  
referring to; presumably, Subandrio had already informed  
the President about the reports concerning a Generals'  
Council. In any case, Sukarno certainly knew about the  
reports by 26 May 1965, when he called in the military  
commanders and questioned them about both the Generals'  
Council and the Gilchrist Letter. This meeting has been  
described by several sources--including Subandrio, who  
was there. Sukarno's statement, under oath, that it was  
not until the beginning of September that he learned  
about the Generals' Council, is simply not true.

on promotions and assignments.\* Yani was obviously evading the issue by bringing up the subject of the promotions and review board. Sukarno was obviously referring to a completely different group; namely, the group of generals, known within the army as Yani's "brain trust," who had been meeting together regularly in secret since January to discuss political matters.\*\*

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\*There was an organization in the Army that was called the Generals' Council that was responsible for reviewing promotions and assignments in the Army. Originally called the Gatot Commission, it had become known as the Generals' Council by the time its membership was revised in 1962. Originally composed of six officers, it had grown to some 40 members in 1965, only 25 of whom were active at a time. At the time of the coup, the chairman and vice chairman of the council were Gen. Sudirman and Gen. Suharto, respectively. This council had absolutely nothing to do with the other group within the Army that was referred to by the PKI as the "Generals' Council", namely the group of Yani and four of his most senior advisers in the Army, who were meeting together to discuss political matters. None of the generals killed in the coup were on the promotions and review board known as the Generals' Council. All of the generals in the other group were victims of the coup except for Gen. Sukendro.

\*\*In hindsight, it seems that Yani did not handle things as well as he might have. He did little to reassure Sukarno that the Army had absolutely no thought of staging a coup against him. He was obviously evasive on the matter of the Generals' Council, which probably only increased Sukarno's suspicions. It might have been better for him to admit the existence of the "Generals' Council" and simply explain that a group of generals had been meeting together with him to discuss certain problems of concern to the Army but that they certainly had never discussed anything pertaining to a coup. Yani was inclined to laugh off Sukarno's warnings. As we shall see, on a later occasion, Sukarno was to point his finger directly at Yani (footnote continued on page 205)

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As noted earlier, it appears that Sukarno and Aidit reacted with considerably greater alarm to the reports about a Generals' Council than did Subandrio. At least, this is the impression that one gets from Subandrio's testimony at his trial, and there are one or two other facts that tend to support this impression. Although Subandrio obviously knew about the planning for the coup that was started in late August and continued all through the month of September, he does not seem to have been directly involved in any of the planning and was not even in Djakarta to participate in the events

(footnote continued from page 204)

and accuse him in public of "blocking the Revolution of blocking me." He warned Yani that "the people will crush you." Yani is reported to have laughed. Apparently, he made no effort after this and other similar incidents to reassure Sukarno that he was not against the President. Just before the coup, Sukarno is reported to have summoned Nasution and Yani to ask them once again about the reports about a "Generals' Council." He told Yani and Nasution that he had new information that several high-ranking generals were cooperating in an attempt to overthrow the government. Once again, Yani avoided a direct answer on the question of the "Generals' Council." He is reported to have countered with the charge that it was the PKI, not the Army, that seemed to be preparing for a coup. Apparently, he promised Sukarno that he would check into the matter and give him a report within several days. At the time of the coup, however, he had not reported back to the President.

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of the coup on 1 October.\* He certainly was not essential to the coup plans. It may be that he never was convinced about the Generals' Council and its supposed planning for Sukarno's overthrow and that he was, therefore, not as enthusiastic about the idea of the coup or perhaps not as confident of its success as Aidit and presumably Sukarno.\*\*

As for Aidit's reaction to the reports about a Generals' Council in May and June 1965, it is clear that he did not disparage the reports, as Subandrio may have

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\*As has been noted before, Subandrio seems to have deliberately planned to be away from Djakarta at the time of the coup. He left town on the 29th, the same day that he is reported to have met with Aidit in the morning. On the morning of 29 September, Aidit would have known that the coup would take place the following night (he had made the final decision on D-Day the day before), so he could have told Subandrio then. Under the circumstances, it would be surprising if Subandrio had not known when he left town that the coup would be staged the next night.

\*\*Subandrio is by nature a cautious man, certainly much more so than Sukarno. He may well have had some premonition that the coup might fail. Aside from its chances for success, he may also have had some reason to be less than enthusiastic about the whole idea of the coup to begin with. He didn't have the backing of an organized political force the way Sukarno had the PNI, Aidit had the PKI, and Nasution and Yani had the Army. His power derived solely from Sukarno. His personal position was better served by a continuation of the existing domestic power balance than by any attempt to upset the balance between the PKI and the Army, as the coup would have done, in favor of the PKI. Subandrio may well have viewed Aidit as his chief rival for influence with Sukarno and his chief contender for power after Sukarno. Thus, he may not have been altogether happy about the idea of removing the top leadership of the Army, which represented the main balancing force to the PKI.

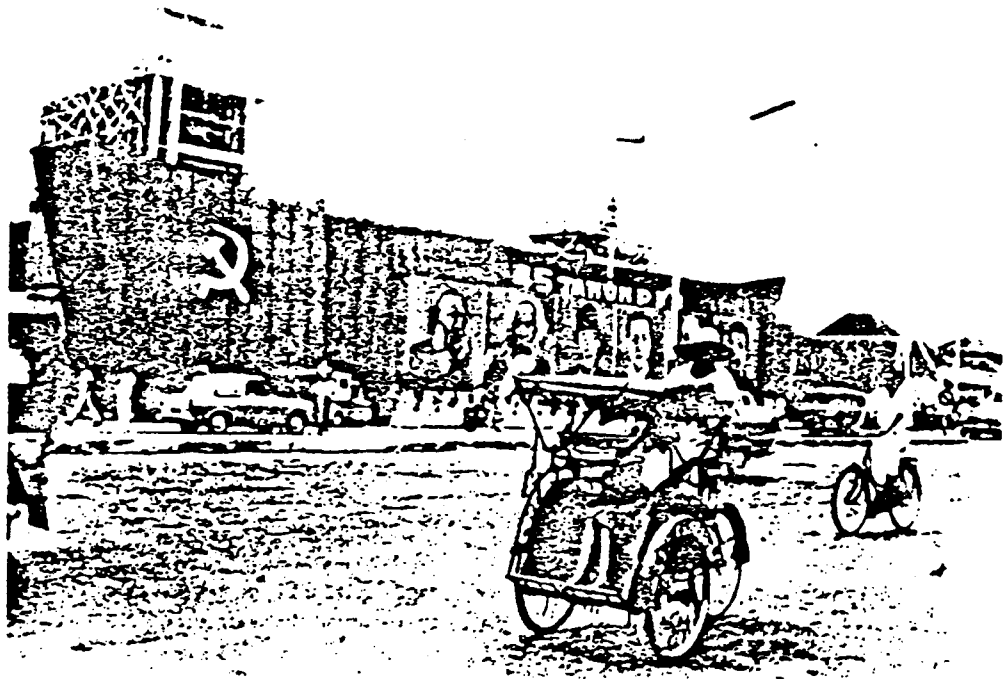
done. Whether he believed them or not, he would have had his own reasons for wanting others, particularly Sukarno, to believe them. His actions were certainly calculated to give the reports maximum exposure. One of the first things he seems to have done was to make sure that Sukarno had heard about the Generals' Council. Soon thereafter, he reported the information that he had obtained from the BPI to the PKI Politburo. Reports about the Generals' Council filtered down through the PKI organization all during the summer. There is no doubt that the PKI as an organization played a major role in spreading the rumor about a Generals' Council and its alleged planning for a coup, whether or not it was responsible for starting the rumor.

There is still the question of whether or not Aidit believed the reports about the Generals' Council --and the related question of whether or not he and the PKI were responsible, in any way, for starting the rumor. Apparently the original reports that the BPI received in early May 1965 about a Generals' Council came from persons associated with the PKI. It is not clear whether (1) these reports were plants of a PKI covert operation or (2) whether the PKI was used by someone else who wanted to spread the rumor that the Generals' Council was plotting the overthrow of Sukarno, or (3) whether the reports were not a deliberate plant by anyone at all but originated with several different sources who may have been PKI party members or Communist sympathizers but who were acting on their own in reporting certain information that they had heard, namely, that a group of generals was meeting in secret to discuss plans to overthrow Sukarno. There is no evidence that the PKI was guilty of a deliberate lie in starting the rumor that the Generals' Council was plotting the overthrow of Sukarno; but, on the other hand, there is nothing that rules this out as a possibility. The PKI party members and the military officers involved in the coup, who were interrogated after the coup, all seem to have believed the reports about the Generals' Council and its alleged planning for a coup; there is no suggestion in any of their testimony that the PKI simply made up the story of the Generals' Council. The military officers received their information on the



Generals' Council from Sjam and other members of the PKI Special Bureau; they accepted his word on this, as on all other matters. In the case of the PKI, the word came down from the top; the reports about the Generals' Council had the authorization of the Politburo, of Aidit himself, who claimed that he had received the information from the BPI. Politburo members like Sudisman and Sakirman and Njono, who were interrogated after the coup, seem to have accepted Aidit's word completely; they do not seem to have suspected him--even in hindsight--of having tricked them into believing something that he knew to be untrue. The one person who might have known if Aidit had not really believed the reports about the Generals' Council--and would almost certainly have known if the story about the Generals' Council had been a PKI covert operation to begin with--was Sjam. As far as we know, he has never given any indication that either was the case.

In general, we are inclined to think that Aidit probably was not responsible for starting the rumor about the Generals' Council--though we would not altogether rule out the possibility that he was. As to whether he believed the reports, we are inclined to think that he probably did. Although Aidit may well have exaggerated his own fears of a Generals' coup, especially to Sukarno, whom he would certainly have wanted to convince of the threat from the Army, it seems that in the end he too was convinced by the reports of military planning for the coup. One reason for thinking that he was not as convinced, at first, as he was later to become, is the fact that he left Indonesia in early July for an extended trip abroad. He almost certainly would not have gone if he had feared an imminent coup. On the other hand, he was apparently concerned enough to ask Sjam before he left Indonesia to develop some kind of a plan of operations against the Generals' Council, which he had decided was the "focus of anti-PKI activities in the army." The fact that Aidit ordered him to develop such a plan in May 1965, within a matter of two or three weeks of learning of the Generals' Council, was revealed by Sjam himself, under interrogation by the Army.



PKI Headquarters covered with photos for the 45th Anniversary celebrations

## The PKI's 45th Anniversary

One of the major political events in Indonesia in 1965 took place in May, soon after Sukarno, Subandrio, and Aidit first heard the reports about a Generals' Council and just a few days before Sukarno summoned the military commanders to the Palace to confront them with the reports about the Council and the discovery of the Gilchrist Letter. The event was the 45th anniversary of the PKI which was celebrated with impressive ceremony over a period of four days, from 23-26 May.\* The importance of the event as far as the coup is concerned is simply what it reveals about Sukarno's relationship with the PKI at the time. At the mass rally on 23 May, President Sukarno extolled the PKI, and Aidit personally, in the most effusive terms that he had ever used in public in praise of any political party in Indonesia:

Do you know what Dipa Nusantara (Aidit's full name was Dipa Nusantara Aidit) means? It means 'the fortress of Indonesia.' Dipa Nusantara Aidit is truly Indonesia's fortress.

Just now Brother Aidit mentioned why the PKI has become a great party and why it has expanded. The PKI has become strong. It is now a party with a membership of 3

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\*At the mass rally in Djakarta on 23 May, huge portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Aidit, and Sukarno--the last being the largest--lined the streets of the capital. The Air Force dropped leaflets over Djakarta extolling the PKI anniversary. Sukarno and Aidit were the principal speakers at the rally. On 26 May, the PKI gave a grand reception as the final event of the anniversary celebrations. On this occasion, Peng Chen, the head of the high-level Chinese delegation which also included Liu Ning-yi, was the principal speaker.

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million persons, with 3 million youths. Why has the PKI become this kind of party? It is because the PKI has consistently been a progressive revolutionary party. There is no doubt, brothers, that the Indonesian revolution cannot be completed if all progressive revolutionary forces are not unified into one force. I embrace the PKI.

At the PKI Congress, I said: 'PKI go onward!' Now I say: PKI, go onward, onward, onward; never retreat! Brothers, this is my message at this 45th anniversary rally of the PKI. I wish the PKI long life. Onward, onward, onward. Should my kinsmen and my brothers (the PKI) ever die, it would be like my own death.

Aidit repaid Sukarno's compliment three days later, in his speech at the PKI reception of 26 May:

At the mass rally on 23 May Bung Karno gave a high evaluation of the work and role of the PKI. We express our profoundest thanks for this evaluation. We are determined to develop the PKI in conformity with Bung Karno's speech which, among other things, said that the PKI was an indispensable element in the effort to complete the revolution and expressed the hope that the PKI will continue to be strong and to flourish.

The PKI's 45th anniversary celebration epitomized Sukarno's almost complete identification with Aidit, and vice versa. Sukarno had not only lent his own prestige to the affair but he had made available the considerable resources of the Indonesian government in providing the facilities at the large Senajan Stadium in Djakarta and free government transportation for the large number of participants; moreover, he had allowed the erection of

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large PKI displays throughout the city. He must also have been responsible for the Air Force planes that participated in the affair by dropping leaflets over the city of Djakarta in honor of the PKI anniversary. The participation of Sukarno and the PKI and the Air Force together in a major political event honoring the PKI was particularly interesting, because four months later, they would be involved together in another event of far greater significance.

#### Aidit's Last Trip Abroad

About a month after the triumph of the PKI 45th anniversary celebration, Aidit left Indonesia on an extended visit to Moscow and Peking. He was out of the country for six of the twelve weeks immediately preceding the Indonesian coup. As it was, his trip was cut short by an urgent summons from Sukarno to return home. Aidit left Djakarta on 26 June as a member of the Indonesian delegation, which also included Subandrio, to the Afro-Asian conference that was scheduled to be held in Algiers beginning on 29 June.\* It will be remembered that Subandrio was in Cairo, on his way home from the stillborn Algiers Conference, when he made the announcement about the Gilchrist letter. Aidit went on to Moscow from Cairo, arriving there on 7 July.

Apparently, Aidit's visit to Moscow was arranged only shortly before he left Indonesia. The new Soviet ambassador to Djakarta, M.D. Sytenko, paid a visit to Aidit on 23 June, at which time he is reported to have

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\*Just a short while before the Afro-Asian Conference was to take place in Algiers, the Algerian army leader Boumedienne overthrew Ben Bella and his government. At the last minute, the conference was postponed from June until November.

extended the invitation to Aidit to head a PKI delegation to the Soviet Union. Aidit seems to have accepted the invitation on the spot. There is some indication that he had been seeking an opportunity to hold talks with the CPSU leaders. The Soviet delegation to the PKI anniversary celebrations in late May may have reported on PKI receptivity to a Soviet initiative. On 16 June Aidit indicated quite clearly that he would accept an invitation to visit Moscow when he received a Pravda journalist in his office and told him that the PKI was considering sending a delegation to the Soviet Union on a long-standing Soviet invitation.\*

The day after it was announced (on the 23rd) that a PKI delegation, headed by Aidit, would be going to Moscow for talks with the Soviet leaders--which came as a surprise to a great many people--Aidit met with the Chinese chargé in Djakarta. Apparently, the Chinese had been taken by surprise by the news of the forthcoming CPSU-PKI talks. They would, of course, have been very much opposed to the idea. If Aidit had decided to have talks with the CPSU leaders against their wishes, they

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\*In December 1964, when Aidit announced the PKI's decision not to attend the Moscow Conference of Communist parties the following March, he made it clear that he was accepting the Soviet invitation to visit Moscow for talks with the Soviet leaders at some later date, but not at the time of the Moscow Conference. Thus, he left the door open to CPSU-PKI talks after the conference. Apparently, Soviet Ambassador Sytenko reiterated the Soviet invitation on 23 June after the Soviets had received a clear indication from Aidit, presumably in May when the Soviet delegation was in Djakarta for the PKI anniversary celebrations, that he was ready to accept an invitation to visit Moscow then. Aidit was referring to the original Soviet invitation in December 1964 when he said that he was accepting a "long-standing Soviet invitation."

would certainly have wanted him to stop over in Peking for talks with them after his consultations in Moscow. The Chinese must have decided to invite Aidit to visit China as soon as they learned that he would be going to the Soviet Union; presumably, that was the purpose of his meeting with the Chinese charge on 24 June. Thus, his trip to Communist China, like his trip to the Soviet Union, was arranged only a day or so before he left Indonesia to attend the ill-fated Afro-Asian Conference.

#### In Moscow

Little is known about Aidit's talks with the CPSU leaders in Moscow and virtually nothing about his talks in China. He is reported to have carried a letter to Kosygin from President Sukarno urging the Soviet premier not to persist in his efforts to have the Soviet Union attend the Afro-Asian conference, now re-scheduled for November. Apparently Aidit indicated his full support of Sukarno's position against Soviet participation in the conference to Kosygin personally. Later, he is reported to have raised the subject again with Suslov, with whom he had an acrimonious exchange on 28 July.

After the coup, PKI party members were briefed on the results of Aidit's visit to Moscow, including his meeting with Suslov. According to the PKI briefing, Suslov requested an immediate appointment with Aidit as soon as he arrived in Moscow on 7 July, but Aidit refused. After he had made several tours of Moscow and Uzbekistan and a side-trip to Bucharest to attend the Ninth Congress of the Rumanian party on 21 July, Aidit finally agreed to meet with Suslov on 28 July. Although the PKI probably provided a somewhat slanted version of their meeting, it is clear from it and other sources that the meeting was far from satisfactory. Aidit is reported to have accused the Soviets of splitting the international Communist movement in seeking a conflict with Albania (and, by implication, China); he called on the Soviets to practice self-criticism in this matter. Suslov blamed Albania for the split and accused the PKI of meddling in internal Soviet

problems. Aidit countered by accusing the Soviets of meddling in PKI affairs, in making secret contact with Murba party leaders who were working to destroy the PKI, and also of meddling in the internal affairs of the Japanese Communist Party (he asked Suslov why the Soviets had supported Shiga's anti-party group that had been expelled from the JCP). Finally, Aidit presented the PKI position that it is impossible to build real Communism while there is still imperialism in the world--an attack on the Soviet program for building Communism in the Soviet Union.

At the conclusion of Aidit's stay in the Soviet Union, the only official notice that the Soviets took of the CPSU-PKI discussions was a terse announcement in Pravda on 1 August that there had been an "exchange of views between Aidit and Brezhnev, Suslov, and Ponomarev on the international situation, on the international Communist movement, and on questions of interparty relations". The fact that Pravda did not choose to characterize either the talks or the atmosphere in which they took place is a good indication that arguments did in fact take place and that relations between the two parties remained cool, although not openly hostile.

It seems that Aidit gave absolutely no indication of the approaching crisis in Indonesia in his talks with the Soviet leaders in July. Even if the PKI had been contemplating a coup, it seems unlikely that he would have trusted the CPSU with the details--even the knowledge--of its planning. Apparently, Aidit did not even discuss the threat posed by the Indonesian army with the Soviet leaders; there is nothing to indicate that he ever mentioned the reports about the Generals' Council. In fact, there is nothing to indicate that he and the Soviet leaders discussed PKI domestic policy at all. All the reports about their talks, including the Pravda comment, mentioned only international matters as having been discussed.



Aidit is reported to have made one statement in Moscow that has--incorrectly, it seems--been interpreted as a reference to the coup or, at least, to PKI domestic policy. He is reported to have said something along the lines that the PKI following of the Soviet line would be tantamount to giving up the struggle in Indonesia." After the coup, the Soviets made quite a point of this particular statement of Aidit, with the obvious intention of implying that as of July Aidit had plans for the violent overthrow of the Indonesian government. However, since the PKI was at the time pursuing a domestic line that was completely consistent with Soviet advice to Communists in "national democratic states," it seems quite clear that Aidit was not referring to PKI domestic tactics. It is much more likely that he was referring to the general Soviet policy towards the West--or the U.S., in particular. It was these policies of the Soviet Union that Aidit considered "revisionist." It would make sense that he would characterize them as "tantamount to giving up the revolutionary struggle." He would not have described the Soviet line on "peaceful transition to socialism," which was the line that the PKI was following domestically, in such terms.

In the official Soviet report on the Indonesian coup that was given to the CPSU Congress in late March 1966, it was claimed that the Soviets had warned Aidit before the coup that the PKI was not putting up a strong enough struggle in the economic field, that should a political crisis arise, the PKI could lose its ties with the people because it had not done more to solve the land problem, correct the labor laws, and improve education. Aidit was criticized for "believing that all that was required was for the PKI to support Sukarno and it would be guaranteed success in taking power." Whether this was an accurate description of what the Soviets told Aidit or a disingenuous ex-post facto reading of the mistake Aidit made in relying too much on Sukarno can not be definitely determined. There are other charges in the Soviet report--such as the explanation given for the coup that "the PKI went over entirely to the Chinese line and Aidit concluded that the PKI had everything necessary to take power in Indonesia"--that would clearly seem to be self-serving distortions of the truth; they

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suggest that the Soviets were probably also distorting the truth on the matter of what they told Aidit before the coup. Even if we accept the Soviet claim that they warned the PKI against placing too much reliance on Sukarno, particularly in the economic field, it is not at all clear from the Soviet report to the CPSU Congress whether this was discussed during Aidit's last visit in Moscow, just before the coup or sometime earlier. In view of the vagueness about the timing and the fact that no other report of Aidit's discussions with the Soviet leaders in July 1965 mentions this subject as having been discussed, we are skeptical of the Soviets having issued any such timely warning to the PKI just before the coup.

#### In Peking

Aidit was in Communist China only a few days, compared with nearly a month in the Soviet Union. As noted earlier, there is no information available on his talks with the Chinese leaders other than the official Chinese announcement of the talks. According to NCNA, CCP-PKI talks were held on 3 and 4 August. Chou En-lai, Teng Hsiao-ping, Peng Chen, and Kang Sheng participated on the Chinese side. The three PKI/CC members--Karel Supit, Ruslan Kamaludin, and Nungtjik--who traveled to Peking with Aidit were present on the Indonesian side, along with Aidit and Adjitorop, the PKI Politburo member who had been staying in Peking for some time. (He is still in Peking, having refused to return to Indonesia after the coup.) NCNA recorded that the talks were held in "a cordial and friendly atmosphere."

The two sides fully exchanged views on the current international situation, questions concerning the international Communist movement, and other matters of common interest to both parties. The two sides had a complete unanimity of position and views on all these questions.



Aidit with Chairman Mao in Peking  
5 August 1965

On the morning of 5 August, Aidit and the other members of the PKI delegation are reported to have had a "cordial conversation" with Mao himself. Later that evening, Mao is reported to have given a banquet in honor of the Indonesian visitors.

Our lack of information about Aidit's visit to China in early August 1965 is probably the most crucial gap in our knowledge of the events leading up to the Indonesian coup. As far as we know, the PKI did not brief party members, either before or after the coup, on Aidit's talks with Chinese leaders, as it did on his talks with the Soviet leaders, in July. It seems that Aidit would have reported on his talks with the Chinese, just as he did on his talks with the Soviets, if the talks had been innocuous. The fact that he apparently did not suggests that the talks were sensitive, that they may even have involved the coup.

Any discussion that Aidit might have had with Mao or the other Chinese leaders about a coup in Indonesia would certainly have been held in the greatest secrecy; only a few persons would have known of it. It is obviously in the Chinese interest to keep anything like this that might be used to prove Chinese involvement in the planning of the coup a secret. It is unlikely that Aidit would have told anyone outside of the Standing Council of the PKI Politburo and Sjam about any conversation that he might have had with the Chinese about PKI planning for a coup. The only member of the Standing Council to be captured alive after the coup and interrogated by the Army before being sentenced to death--Sudisman--threw absolutely no light on the subject, probably because he did not know. To our knowledge, Sjam was never questioned on this particular point.\*

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\*In the only reference to the Chinese at his trial, Sjam was asked about the connection between the PKI Special Bureau and the Chinese intelligence organization. He replied emphatically that there was "absolutely no connection whatsoever," at which point he launched into a lengthy discourse on the independence of the PKI. The implication of his remarks was that the CCP was not informed about the Special Bureau operations in Indonesia, and that he and Aidit were solely responsible for all decisions regarding the Special Bureau and that they were not in the habit of consulting the Chinese or any other foreign Communist party about its operations.

In any case, it seems that Aidit could not have discussed the specifics of the coup as it materialized on 1 October. Although Sjam may have been working on a plan while Aidit was abroad, most of the planning for the coup seems to have been done after Aidit returned home in early August. Aidit almost certainly did not have a definite plan in mind before he left Indonesia. As mentioned earlier, he does not seem to have felt any sense of urgency about the Generals' Council and its planning for a coup at the beginning of the summer--or he would certainly not have stayed away from Indonesia so long. The great sense of urgency that he apparently came to feel in August and September seems to have been present only after his return to Indonesia.

If one thing seems clear, it is that the decision to stage this coup was not made before early August. Something seems to have happened around the beginning of August that drastically changed Aidit's mood and immediately prompted him to begin active preparations for a coup. There would seem to be two main possibilities, judging from everything that we know that occurred that first week in August. Either (a) Aidit was influenced by the Chinese while he was in Peking that week, in which case he could be presumed to have hurried home to Indonesia to carry out the coup on Chinese instructions, or (b) he was influenced by someone or something that happened in Indonesia that he learned about as soon as he returned home; possibly, it was the reason for his returning home.

Because of the timing of Aidit's visit to China and the start of PKI preparations for the coup almost immediately upon his return from China, a case can be made on the basis of circumstantial evidence that the Chinese must have inspired the Indonesian coup. The theory can not be disproved on the basis of what we know about Aidit's talks with the Chinese leaders, as we have seen. We would not rule it out as a possibility, therefore, until we have more definite information. However, we are not convinced that the Chinese played any such direct role in the planning.

of the coup, first of all, because there is no good evidence that they did, except for the timing of Aidit's trip, and secondly, because there would seem to be a better explanation for others having inspired the coup.

From the Chinese point of view, what the PKI did on the night of 30 September was to commit itself not to an "armed struggle" on the CCP model (protracted warfare waged in the countryside by an armed force totally controlled by the party) but rather to an urban putsch, something the CCP is not known ever to have sponsored abroad. This might not have mattered so much to the Chinese if they thought the chances for success favorable to the PKI and the risks acceptable. Certainly, they would have welcomed a successful purge of the anti-Communist army leadership in Indonesia. However, in this case, the PKI was risking its very existence in carrying out an action over which it did not have complete control, an action which, in the last analysis, was completely dependent on Sukarno. The PKI was acting in concert with Sukarno, if not in subordination to him, at the mercy of his decisions and, as it turned out, of his betrayal. It is quite possible that the CCP trusted Sukarno so much (which is the great mistake that the PKI made) or was so impressed with the need for action--because of the imminent danger of Sukarno's death or an army coup or both--that it minimized or failed to realize the risk of Sukarno's backing out on a coup after the PKI had committed itself. The PKI made this mistake.

Since the coup, the Chinese have very definitely tried to convey the impression that the PKI acted contrary to Chinese doctrine in "assuming a position subordinate to the national bourgeoisie." They have suggested that the "mistakes of one kind or another" that the PKI made were due to the party's failure to apply closely enough Mao's principles "for dealing with domestic counter-revolutionaries" and for launching a new type bourgeois democratic revolution. There was only one report at the time that implied that the Chinese would not have approved PKI participation in an action like the 30 September Movement; according to a rumor circulating in Peking in October 1965,

Mao Tse-tung, upon hearing the news of the coup in Indonesia, immediately cabled the PKI with an "order" to call the whole thing off, thereby creating confusion in the PKI ranks. Several months later, Chou En-lai also implied that the CCP advised the PKI against the coup--or at least that it would have advised the PKI that way if its advice had been solicited. In 1966 Chou is reported to have commented that the downfall of the PKI resulted from its failure to adhere to basic principles and its refusal to accept advice (presumably CCP advice). Unfortunately, all of these statements and rumors constitute a self-serving position which the Chinese would be likely to adopt whether or not they had previously approved what was attempted on 30 September.

For all these reasons, a direct Chinese role in the Indonesian coup must be considered unproven. The timing of Aidit's last visit with the Chinese leaders in Peking is not in itself conclusive evidence that the Chinese either knew of the PKI planning for a coup or, further, that they might have suggested the idea to Aidit in the first place.

### Sukarno's Illness

The most significant development that first week in August, aside from Aidit's visit to China, was Sukarno's illness, which was thought at the time to be very serious and which almost certainly played an important role in the events leading up to the coup.

The facts about Sukarno's illness are now fairly well established. He suddenly became ill on the evening of 3 August. According to one report, he "collapsed" in the presence of several palace officials. Sukarno told the doctor who was immediately summoned to his bedside that he felt considerable chest pain which had seemed to come in three separate attacks lasting three to five minutes. He was given an electrocardiogram that evening and another on 4 August after two more recurrences of the chest pain. When these showed no evidence of coronary thrombosis, physicians treating the President concluded that "he had had five attacks of coronary insufficiency but no coronary infarct."

It is not clear whether there were any particular signs that Sukarno's kidney condition had suddenly become critical.\* There was one report that his blood urea nitrogen was elevated. However, in chronic renal disease, this would not be unusual; it would be significant only if it were elevated over its usual level, and we have no information on that. If there had been an abrupt change in Sukarno's kidney condition, presumably his doctors would have put him on dialysis or at least on a stringent diet; apparently, nothing of this sort was done. Thus, it would seem that there was no significant change in his kidney condition. In hindsight, it is clear that the President did not have uremic poisoning, which probably would have been fatal in his case and certainly would have required a longer convalescence than his illness took. But at the time, there was cause for worry. It is understandable that Sukarno's doctors should immediately have gotten in touch with the Viennese kidney specialist, Dr. Fellingner, who had treated Sukarno previously. They are reported to have sent him a cable advising him of the illness and seeking his opinion.

Besides his history of kidney disease, Sukarno was known to have moderate hypertension which was aggravated at times of stress. The combination of impaired renal function and hypertension could give rise to a

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\*As was well known, Sukarno suffered from chronic kidney disease, having lost the use of one kidney because of kidney stones and having been advised repeatedly by his doctors that the other one should be operated on for the removal of a large stone in it. Sukarno had never agreed to an operation, however. Because of a soothsayer's prediction that "he would die under the knife," he has an obsessive fear of surgery.



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number of complications that might suddenly cause death at any time. (On the other hand, one can live for years with this condition.) Under the circumstances, it is quite understandable that Sukarno's doctors (including the Chinese doctors who were summoned from Peking to treat him) came to the conclusion that Sukarno was suffering from some serious complication brought on by his kidney problem, even though there were none of the usual signs of kidney involvement.

The possibility of Sukarno's illness being nothing more than the flu was considered at the time. Nasution, for one, considered it a good possibility. All the reported symptoms of the illness--the sudden onset, the vomiting, the aches and pains, and the general state of exhaustion--plus the complete recovery within a matter of a few days are compatible with a diagnosis of a severe attack of influenza. During the first two weeks in August, many cases of viral infection were reported in Djakarta, with symptoms similar to those of Sukarno. Thus, we would not rule out the possibility that the President's illness was some kind of viral gastroenteritis, totally unrelated to his kidney disease.

Apparently, Sukarno was bedridden for several days. He cancelled a speech that had been scheduled for 4 August. He was still in bed on 6 August but was reported to be up and working on 9 August. To cover his illness, the story was given out that he was working on the speech that he was to give on 17 August.

There was little public knowledge of the fact that Sukarno was sick. However, political and military leaders who knew of Sukarno's illness were following the situation

closely and, as was to be expected, were engaging in various speculations. It was natural that they should prepare for the eventuality that the illness was serious. The fact that Sukarno's doctors and the palace coterie were keeping the nature of the illness so close that even Sukarno's ministerial advisers were unable to learn the cause or seriousness only contributed to the sense of alarm. (Apparently, Nasution learned about Sukarno's illness from a conversation with the wife of one of Sukarno's doctors.)

Sukarno himself appears to have been genuinely alarmed. One suspects that it was his own concern--as much as the concern of his doctors--that his illness was serious that prompted him to keep the fact of his illness a secret from the public. The main reason, however, for thinking that Sukarno was extremely worried is the fact that he called Aidit home from abroad.

#### An Urgent Summons to Aidit

There is no doubt that it was a message from Sukarno, not a summons from the other PKI leaders at home as was originally reported, that brought Aidit back to Indonesia.

Apparently, Sukarno was not willing to wait even a day or two to see whether his condition improved before he called Aidit home. It is not clear whether Aidit received Sukarno's telegram on the 4th or 5th of August; the only thing that is clear is that it was sometime before the morning of the 6th, when he departed Peking in a hurry. It is unlikely that Aidit would have delayed even as long as a day in returning home, so the presumption is that he received the message on the 5th, or possibly early in the morning of the 6th. The Chinese press reported that he left "by special plane," which would indicate that the Chinese immediately made a plane available to Aidit for his emergency trip home.

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It seems that Aidit may actually have been planning to leave Peking on the 6th or the 7th or shortly thereafter. On 5 August, he had met with Mao and been entertained by him at a banquet that evening; this is usually the wind-up of a visit of an important dignitary to China for talks with the Chinese leaders. Of course, the Chinese could have scheduled the meeting with Mao and given Aidit a farewell banquet on the 5th when they learned that he would be leaving prematurely the next day. In any case, Aidit had plans to go on to North Vietnam for talks with the North Vietnamese leaders; he was clearly not planning to return to Indonesia directly. After he left on a special plane for Djakarta, the rest of the PKI delegation that had been with him in Moscow and Peking flew on to Hanoi on 7 August. Karel Supit took over as head of the delegation.

Aidit arrived in Djakarta on 7 August, in the company of two Chinese medical specialists whom Sukarno had instructed Aidit to bring with him to treat his kidney condition. (This is the best indication we have that Sukarno himself thought that his illness was a flare-up of his kidney condition.) Presumably, Aidit and the doctors hurried to the palace to see Sukarno, although we have no reporting on this. Sukarno may still have been in bed on the 7th. All we know is that he was out of bed on the 9th and apparently well enough to drive to Bogor Palace. (He returned to Djakarta on the 10th.) On the morning of 9 August, Aidit is known to have traveled to Bogor, accompanied by the two Chinese Communist doctors. Sukarno's Indonesian doctors were also summoned to Bogor that morning to examine Sukarno. It would seem that there was a medical consultation of all the doctors on the President's illness.

By the 9th, Sukarno was probably pretty well recovered. A week later, he delivered his traditional National Day speech in the normal rousing Sukarno style. There is no indication that he was less than his usual ebullient self at any time after this up to the time of the coup. In fact, as we shall see, he played a very active role in the events of the next several months. He does not seem to have suffered any lasting effects from his illness of early August.

But if Sukarno was safely over this particular attack, the Chinese doctors seem to have been of the opinion that a recurrence would either paralyze or kill him. And, apparently, they expected a recurrence to come soon. At least, that was the gist of Aidit's report to the Politburo which was based on the Chinese doctors' conclusions. Aidit reported that the doctors "were very pessimistic regarding Sukarno's health and tended to believe that he would die or become unable to rule within a short time." The Chinese doctors must have thought that Sukarno's illness was related to his kidney problem, or something equally serious.

#### The PKI in a State of Panic

The PKI obviously felt that it had inside information on the state of the President's health.\* Aidit seems to have accepted the Chinese doctors' conclusions completely. His reports to the Politburo were based on these conclusions; the serious state of the President's health was accepted at all levels of the party. In mid-August, the PKI began to make contingency plans in the event of Sukarno's

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\*The PKI's direct access to the Chinese doctors put the party in the position of having more valid grounds for concern about the President's health than existed in non-party circles. The question that inevitably arises is whether the doctors were acting on Peking's instructions in giving the PKI an unduly pessimistic report on Sukarno's health. In other words, did the Chinese take advantage of the situation to frighten the PKI into action? There is no evidence to prove the case either way, but we are not inclined to believe in the theory of a doctors' plot. First of all, it seems likely that the Chinese doctors really were convinced of the seriousness of Sukarno's illness; there was good reason to be. Secondly, there is no reason to think that the Chinese were anxious to pressure the PKI into precipitate action.

death. On 13 August, the Greater Djakarta Committee (CDR) of the PKI sent special instructions to its 50 subsection committees on the "preparations that were to be made in anticipation of the possible death or incapacitation of Sukarno and repressive measures by the Army at that time." It was explained that the Army knew about Sukarno's precarious health and was making plans to seize power upon his death.

From this and other PKI briefings to party members in August and September, it would seem that the PKI really thought that the Army would move against it as soon as the PKI was without Sukarno's protection. Since Sukarno's death was considered an imminent possibility, the PKI was faced with the immediate prospect of having to defend itself against the Army. Aidit was under no illusions as to the PKI's chances in a military showdown with the Army. In some PKI documents, the view was expressed that the Army would probably be in control in the immediate post-Sukarno period. That the party felt very much on the defensive was indicated in the 13 August instructions to the party subsections in Djakarta to remove all party documents, particularly cadres and membership lists, from homes and offices and to hide them elsewhere. Later in the month, party members were ordered to hide any party documents or Marxist-Leninist books in their personal possession; if necessary, they were to burn them. In another instruction, party members were told to locate homes that might be used as hideouts for party officials. (The homes had to be located in crowded areas, away from main roads, and have several means of entry.) The information that we have on these party briefings in August and September, as well as other reporting on the PKI, clearly indicates that the PKI was increasingly concerned with three things during the weeks immediately preceding the coup: (1) the possible sudden deterioration of Sukarno's health, (2) possible Army action against the PKI, and (3) the general unreadiness of PKI cadres for the future struggle.

### Decision in the Politburo

The general political situation and the subject of the President's health were discussed at a PKI Politburo meeting sometime around mid-August, although the dates of this and another Politburo meeting at which the actual decision committing the PKI to the coup was taken are somewhat less than certain. Sakirman, Njono, and Pardede, all of whom were at the meeting, have given differing dates. Njono spoke of "an expanded session of the Politburo around the end of July" and another meeting of the Politburo on 28 August." Obviously, the first meeting could not have been in July since Njono makes it clear that Aidit took the lead in the discussions and the PKI Chairman was out of the country from 26 June until 7 August. Taking into consideration both facts--(1) that Aidit was at the meeting and (2) that Njono remembered it as having been held "around the end of July," it seems a reasonable conclusion that the meeting was held soon after Aidit returned to Indonesia. Sakirman gave 13 August as the date, and Pardede mentioned 15 August. One reason for thinking that the meeting may have been held on 13 August is the fact that the Greater Djakarta Committee of the PKI is known to have issued the party instructions referred to above on 13 August. It seems quite likely that these instructions were issued as a direct result of the Politburo deliberations.

Besides the following members of the Politburo--Aidit, Lukman, Njoto, Sudisman, Sakirman, Njono, Anwar Sanusi, Pardede, and Suwandi--the secretaries of the West Java and East Java Committees of the PKI are known to have attended the expanded session of the Politburo. (The secretary of the Central Java Committee could not attend because of illness.) According to Njono, the meeting was "of an informative character; no decisions were made."

Aidit gave information on the President's illness, on the impatience of progressive officers in the military with the so-called council of generals, and the plans of the generals' council for a coup.

In Sakirman's words:

Sukarno's illness was discussed and also certain military and political questions that arose in connection with Sukarno's illness. It was concluded that should the President die the leadership of the MPRS would replace Sukarno temporarily while the possibility also existed that the political parties would scramble to seize power and certainly the Armed Forces would not remain quiet but would seize upon this opportunity to take over state power. It was also concluded that within the Armed Forces, especially the Army, there had arisen severe antagonism between the Generals (the term 'Generals' Council' was not used at this time) under the leadership of Nasution and Yani, on the one side, and the middle grade officers and subordinates, on the other. It was concluded that the PKI must support the group within the Armed Forces that opposed the generals. The names of the officers who opposed the generals were not mentioned.\*

The PKI decision to launch the 30 September Movement seems to have been taken at a second Politburo meeting in late August, although again the dates are uncertain. In his testimony in court, Sakirman gave 10 September as the date of the meeting, but this seems unlikely inasmuch as active preparations for the coup were already underway

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\*Peris Pardede confirmed this last point of Sakirman. According to Pardede, neither Aidit nor anyone else ever told the Politburo the names of the military officers who would stage the coup. This is a good example of the compartmentalization of information within the PKI as far as the coup was concerned.

by then. (It will be remembered that Untung and the other military officers were brought into the conspiracy on 4 September.) Njono's recollection of the meeting as having been on 28 August seems more reasonable.\* Whatever the exact date of the meeting, the Politburo clearly approved the decision to launch the 30 September Movement. This is particularly noteworthy in that the Special Bureau normally took its orders directly from Aidit; not only was it completely free of the control of the Politburo, but the Politburo was not even kept informed of its operations. In a matter as important as this, however, Aidit seems to have felt the necessity of securing Politburo approval. With its approval, he was prepared to turn the whole matter of the planning and execution of the coup over to the Special Bureau.

The various accounts of the Politburo meeting on 28 August are in basic agreement as to what transpired at the meeting. All are agreed that Aidit took the lead in the discussions, as he had done at the first meeting on 13 August. The burden of his argument was that (1) the state of the President's health was serious; if he had another attack he would probably die or be paralyzed; (2) a Council of Generals existed in the Army that was discussing Sukarno's health and making plans for action in the event of his death.\*\* In Aidit's words, the

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\*It is an interesting coincidence that the decision on D Day seems to have been made on the 28th of September, exactly a month to the day after the Politburo is reported to have made the decision to start preparations for a coup.

\*\*Apparently, Aidit was the source of all the information given the Politburo on the President's health. His information on Sukarno's illness came from the Chinese doctors; he seems to have accepted their conclusions completely--and, in turn, the other Politburo members seem to have accepted his word on this and the matter of the Generals' Council without question.



question was whether the PKI should wait until the President died and find itself suddenly attacked (because the generals would almost certainly know of Sukarno's death before the PKI did) or whether the party should anticipate the Army's action and attack first? As one participant quoted Aidit, "Shall we jump first or wait to be jumped? I (Aidit) am more inclined toward moving first."

Apparently, Aidit convinced the whole Politburo of the need for prompt action. It is unclear whether a vote was taken or whether it was simply the consensus of the meeting that the PKI should begin to make its own plans for a coup. According to Sakirman,

it was concluded that the situation had heightened considerably and that the PKI could not remain silent. The PKI had to act first or be acted upon. According to experience, he who acts second cannot achieve victory; he who acts first shall win.

According to Njono,

It was established that subsequently the President would give his approval to these military operations as a matter of course. This was because the facts on the Council of Generals were in the hands of Sukarno, according to what Aidit said.

Special attention was given to certain other individuals, including Subandrio. It was established that Subandrio would adapt himself to the policy of the President.

The various sources are agreed on another important point--that along with the decision to launch a military movement there was a definite decision on the political movement that would be launched in support of the military movement. Njono explained that the meeting agreed "to

launch a movement to foil the so-called coup of the council of generals and subsequently to set up a council of the revolution to replace the Dwikora cabinet." Sakirman's testimony supports this:

It was concluded that in addition to the military movement there had to be a political movement. The military and political movements were to be led directly by the PKI and aimed at (1) supporting resistance against the generals and (2) setting up the Revolutionary Council which would replace the Cabinet. Of the two movements, the military movement would come first; this was what was later called the 30 September Movement.

During the meeting, I (Sakirman) proposed that another course be followed; namely, that there should be deliberation among the political parties, the armed forces, and Sukarno.\*

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\*It is not exactly clear what Sakirman meant by "deliberation among the political parties, the armed forces, and Sukarno." Presumably, he meant that this should take place after the military operation of the coup was a fait accompli (i.e. after the generals had been removed from the scene). In other words, he seems to have been proposing political discussions between the political parties, the armed forces, and Sukarno as the means for arriving at a political solution to the coup. Aidit, on the other hand, had a very definite idea of the political solution that was acceptable to the PKI--namely, the replacement of the Dwikora cabinet by a Revolutionary Council whose members the PKI would select as representative of all the major political parties, including the Communists. Aidit was prepared to take action along these lines, by simply announcing the formation of the Revolutionary Council, without consulting any of the other parties.

Sakirman's claim to having made an alternative proposal to the course followed by the PKI in setting up (footnote continued on page 232)

It was explained that Subandrio, Dani, Martadinata, Surachman and others would sit on the Revolutionary Council. The complete list of names would be worked out later by Aidit, Njoto, and Lukman. My proposal was not accepted; Aidit and Lukman provided reasons for rejecting it.

From both Sakirman's and Njono's account of the Politburo meeting, it is clear that the Revolutionary Council was included in the earliest planning of the PKI for the coup, that it was in fact agreed upon by the Politburo itself. Other facts--such as the fact that Untung and the other military leaders apparently had nothing whatever to do with the formation of the Revolutionary Council except to sign the Decree that Sjam gave them to sign on the morning of 1 October--suggest that the PKI was responsible for the Revolutionary Council.\* The information that we have on the proceedings of the Politburo meeting makes it clear beyond any doubt that the Revolutionary Council was central to PKI planning for the coup from the beginning; in fact, the replacement of the Dwikora Cabinet by

(footnote continued from page 231)

the Revolutionary Council is the only hint we have of there having been any disagreement within the Politburo on the subject of the coup. It is possible that Sakirman was somewhat exaggerating his differences with Aidit in an obvious attempt to exonerate himself of responsibility for the coup. After the coup, he seems honestly to have regretted the whole affair, for very personal reasons, namely, the fact that his brother (General Parman) was one of the victims of the coup. He may not have realized that Gen. Parman would be killed.

\*At his trial, Sudisman admitted that the PKI had drafted Untung's "first announcement" and "the Decree" establishing the Revolutionary Council. It had also picked the members of the Revolutionary Council which was intended to reflect "a broad coalition of people who had endorsed Nasakom."

the Revolutionary Council was the main political aim of the coup to be realized after the military objective of eliminating the top Army command had been realized.

Njono's and Sakirman's accounts of the Politburo meeting also help to clear up another matter, namely, the role that the PKI intended the Revolutionary Council to play in the government after the coup. There was considerable confusion about this at the time, because of the wording of the Decree, which failed to mention Sukarno or the office of the Presidency or the cabinet. It is clear from Njono's and Sakirman's testimony that the Revolutionary Council was intended to replace the Dwikora Cabinet. There was no intent on the part of the PKI to do away with Sukarno; he was definitely to continue as President--with all the same powers. Neither the office of the Presidency nor the role of the cabinet in the government would have been changed as a direct result of the coup. All that the coup would have changed was the composition of the cabinet. From the point of view of the PKI, the Revolutionary Council would have been the perfect Nasakom cabinet that the party had been long demanding.\*

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\*In his testimony in court, Sjam denied that the coup was to be followed by the establishment of a Communist government. He asserted that the Revolutionary Council would have formed a "Nasakom coalition government slate to present to Sukarno." When the judge tried to imply that Sukarno would not have accepted such a coalition cabinet, Sjam snapped back: "We knew he would approve!"

Politburo member Sudisman's testimony on the matter of the Revolutionary Council supports Sjam. He described the Revolutionary Council as "a broad coalition of people who had endorsed Nasakom." He made it clear that the Revolutionary Council was intended to serve "as the supreme organ of the state faithfully implementing the policies of Bung Karno." The plan was to replace the Dwikora cabinet with the new Nasakom cabinet led by the PKI. The coup was not a Communist revolution; it was intended only to "change the Dwikora cabinet and its program." However, in the long run, the coup was viewed as "another step on the road to a 'Peoples' Democracy' and finally to 'Communism.'"

It seems clear that none of the military details of the coup were discussed at the Politburo meeting. It was agreed that the Politburo would handle the political matters involved in the coup and "all the preparations for the military movement would be turned over to Aidit." Apparently, it was well understood that Aidit had his own special apparatus within the party for handling covert operations, especially operations involving the military; it was assumed that both the planning and execution of the military operation of the coup would be entrusted to that secret organization. The Politburo had to take Aidit's word on the capability of that organization for planning an operation like the 30 September Movement; obviously, the Special Bureau had never been involved in an operation of this magnitude before.

As the final conclusion of the meeting, it was decided that "no matter what happened, whether the PKI acted first or was acted upon, members of the party leadership should go to the regions and wait for instructions from the party leadership."

According to Peris Pardede, there were only the two Politburo discussions of the coup. Pardede himself was to hear nothing more about the coup until two or three days before it occurred when he was briefed on his own role in it (he was to go to Medan to coordinate PKI activities in support of the coup in North Sumatra). Pardede testified that he had assumed all the while that preparations were going ahead under the direction of Aidit and the Special Bureau (he did not know the name of the Special Bureau but he knew of its existence) but he was not privy to the planning that was underway.

At best, it was only a week or so between the Politburo decision "to launch a movement to foil the so-called coup of the generals' council" and the start of active preparations for the coup with the first of Sjam's meetings with Untung and the other military officers. Obviously, Aidit and Sjam were not disposed to waste any time. It does not seem to have taken them long to work out the actual plan for the coup. It will be remembered that Aidit had asked Sjam to develop some kind of a plan

of operations against the Generals' Council in May 1965, just before he left for Moscow. Presumably, Sjam had been working on a plan during the summer while Aidit was away. There is nothing to indicate that either he or Aidit was thinking in terms of the elimination of the generals at that time, however. The idea of a military coup against the generals seems to have crystallized in August, after Aidit's return to Indonesia. Thus, it seems that the actual planning for the coup was probably done the last week or two in August. Perhaps, as he claims, Sjam deserves the credit for having planned the Indonesian coup. Since his capture, he has admitted--in fact, boasted--that he was "the brains behind the 30 September Movement."\* Just what contribution Aidit made to the planning is unclear; certainly, he approved all the plans.

#### Sukarno Recovered...and with Aidit

While the Politburo was discussing the political crisis arising from Sukarno's illness, the health of the President gradually improved. Actually, Sukarno seems to have been sick only about a week; by the 9th of August he was apparently almost completely recovered. It was another week before he appeared in public, however. It was widely speculated that he would be unable to participate

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\*As a witness at Sudisman's trial, Sjam was asked by the judges: "Who was really responsible for the coup?" "I was," he said proudly. This was the only point of his testimony that was not confirmed by Sudisman, who immediately objected. He said that he and Sjam were both carrying out Aidit's orders. "I (Sudisman), as a ranking party leader along with Aidit, Lukman, and Njoto, bore full responsibility." Sjam immediately denied that Sudisman was a party leader at the same level as Aidit, Lukman, and Njoto. Reportedly the court was amused by the display of rivalry between the PKI leaders.

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in the National Day celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's independence, but this was disproved when the President appeared on 17 August, apparently in his customary good health, to deliver a rousing Sukarno speech. This did not make the PKI pull back. As we have seen, it was ten days later, at a Politburo meeting, that the final decision on the coup was taken.

Sukarno's activities the last two months before the coup are a matter of great interest. Obviously, they hold the answer to what is probably the most important question about the Indonesian coup that remains unresolved today: the question of Sukarno's involvement in the planning of the coup.\* Unfortunately, not too much is known about Sukarno's activities those last two months before the coup, at least not too much that can be connected with the coup.

In early August, when Sukarno was suddenly taken ill, it will be remembered that he summoned Aidit home from Peking. The PKI leader was one of the few persons who saw Sukarno while he was sick. All during August and September, Sukarno and Aidit were in constant contact. There were numerous official occasions which brought them together; on these occasions, there was almost always an opportunity for talk in private.\*\* Aidit and Sukarno saw

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\*By 'involvement' is meant the whole range of possibilities from Sukarno's not having been involved at all, even to the extent of his having foreknowledge of what the PKI was planning, to the possibility that he knew and approved PKI plans for a coup, to the possibility that the idea of the coup was his to begin with and Aidit and the PKI were doing his will in carrying out a purge of the Army that both Sukarno and the PKI stood to profit from.

\*\*One such official occasion was the occasion of Sukarno's presenting Aidit with the order of the Mahaputra Star. The ceremony took place in the state palace on 13 September. The decoration of Aidit was reported to be for his accomplishment in obtaining additional credits and a supply of arms (apparently from the Chinese) for the use of the police (footnote continued on page 237)



Subandrio, Sukarno and Chinese Foreign Minister Chen I  
at Indonesia's National Day Celebrations

August 1965



each other at social occasions, too. Aidit was often invited to the Palace in the evenings. Besides the times that Aidit and the President were reported to have met in private, there were probably many other meetings that went unreported. In short, Aidit had ready access to Sukarno just before the coup. They could easily have discussed the matter of the coup. If Sukarno ever discussed the coup with anyone, it would certainly have been with Aidit. (He may also have discussed it with Dani and Subandrio.) Although he could easily have done so, and there is good reason to think that he did, it should be emphasized that there is no evidence that Sukarno ever discussed the matter of the coup with Aidit--other than the fact that Aidit and Sjam both implied that he had in certain references to Sukarno in connection with the coup.\*

#### Sukarno Against the Generals' Council

During the six weeks that Aidit had been out of the country, Sukarno had apparently become increasingly alarmed by the rumors about a Generals' Council and its alleged plotting for a coup. Since May, when he had first heard the reports about the Generals' Council, he had continued to receive other reports from the PKI and the BPI to the effect that the generals were plotting his overthrow. Aidit had mentioned these reports to a meeting of the Politburo in May, before he left for Moscow. While he

(footnote continued from page 236)  
mobile brigade. It was thought at the time that the announcement of the arms shipment was an attempt to explain the shipment of arms that had already been received in Indonesia from China. The incident is interesting as an illustration of Sukarno's close identification with Aidit just before the coup. In late May Sukarno had lent his prestige to the celebration of the PKI's 45th anniversary; in mid-September, he conferred a state honor on the Communist party leader.

\*Aidit implied that he had talked with Sukarno when he told the Politburo that the President would give his approval to the coup "as a matter of course." He said that he knew this "because the facts on the Generals' Council are in the hands of Sukarno." Sjam reportedly told Untung, Latief, and Sujono (at their third meeting) that "the great leader of the revolution has his own role (in the coup). The Bung will later on obtain a separate settlement."

was out of the country, knowledge of the existence of the Generals' Council and the rumor that it was preparing for a coup had spread throughout the PKI organization. More than anyone else, the PKI was responsible for spreading the rumor; by the end of the summer, it was heard everywhere in Djakarta. By late August or early September, the Generals' Council had become an open secret.

As mentioned earlier, Sukarno had tended to place full trust in the information supplied him by the PKI, and of course, the BPI. In this instance, he would have been predisposed to believe what the PKI was telling him; namely, that a group of generals in the Army was "out to get him;" apparently, this time, he became convinced of it. Of course, it is impossible to know for sure whether Sukarno really believed that the generals were plotting a coup or whether he just pretended to believe it--as a pretext for a coup of his own making. All that can be said for sure is that he acted as though he believed it. After the coup, he said in public that he believed it, but he might have said that, whether or not it was true, to justify the coup. A more convincing performance was his direct confrontation with Nasution shortly after the coup, when he charged Nasution with complicity in the Generals' Council. Nasution grimly denied it. Then Sukarno said: "But you were aware of a plan by Yani and his men to take power from me." Nasution denied this, too. Sukarno lost his temper and said: "You are lying. You must have known." Nasution then replied: "Bapak, false accusations are even worse than murder." (The reference was to Nasution's belief that Sukarno had been responsible for the murder of the generals.) On this and other occasions, Sukarno seemed truly incredulous that the Army had not really been plotting his ouster.\*

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\*Apparently, Nasution himself had the impression that Sukarno believed the reports about the Generals' Council. In his speech of 20 February 1967 indicting Sukarno for his role in the coup, Nasution had the following to say about his meeting with the President in November 1965:

General Suharto reported to me that slanders about me were reaching the President. On the general's initiative I met with the President in November in an attempt to lay to rest the slander that I  
(footnote continued on page 239)

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Shortly before the coup, around 20 September, Sukarno is reported to have summoned Nasution and Yani and asked them about the reports about the Generals' Council, which he had asked them about at least once before, on 26 May, at the meeting of military commanders at which he first raised the subject of the Generals' Council and the Gilchrist Letter. On the latter occasion, Sukarno is reported to have told Nasution and Yani that he had new information that several high-ranking generals were cooperating in an attempt to overthrow the government.\* When Nasution and Yani asked for

(footnote continued from page 238)

was involved in the attempt to assassinate the President, and so on. I received the impression that the President still was not convinced that the story about a council of generals was a slander and that he still entertained doubts about several generals.

Therefore, with the agreement of the commanders of the four services, I appointed the Odang Committee to investigate the truth of the matter. The committee found absolutely no evidence that the council of generals was planning a coup as has been announced. This was reported to the President. There is no doubt that the President received information that led him to suspect the Army, and during the incident (the 30 September Movement) he retained his suspicions and placed the most trust in Supardjo and his followers. This is proven by his own statement and by his letters to Dewi on 1 and 2 October. The letter of 1 October said that Sukarno had received information from several persons about things that had occurred in the Army. It said that the men who were carrying out this so-called revolution intended to safeguard Bapak and did not intend to oppose him, so Dewi should not worry because Bapak was safe.

\*According to a reliable source, the PKI told Sukarno in mid-August that the Generals group was planning a coup for 5 October (Armed Forces Day). When Sukarno later learned that an unusual number of army generals and troops were to (footnote continued on page 240)

the names of the generals, Sukarno refused to divulge them. Apparently, Yani and Nasution avoided a direct answer on the question of the Generals' Council. Instead they countered with the charge that it was the PKI that seemed to be preparing for a coup. In support of their argument, they presented Sukarno with a report on recent PKI activities, which showed a definite increase in violence on the part of the PKI. It is unclear whether Yani and Nasution showed Sukarno the Army report on the PKI on the same occasion that Sukarno confronted them on the question of the Generals' Council. There may have been two different meetings.

A conversation that Sukarno is reported to have had with General Adjie in July is about the best evidence we have that Sukarno was genuinely concerned about the possibility of an Army coup. The conversation is even more interesting in connection with the question of Sukarno's involvement in the coup. According to an unconfirmed report, Adjie, the pro-Sukarno but anti-Communist commander of the Army in West Java, was approached by Sukarno in July with the report that Yani and other senior generals were plotting a coup against him. Sukarno is reported to have promised Adjie that he could have Yani's job as Commander-in-chief of the Army if Adjie helped to preserve order during the trying period after Yani and the other generals were arrested. There was no mention of PKI involvement or of any intention to assassinate the generals. According to the report, Adjie agreed, and the deal was settled when Sukarno bestowed a medal on Adjie and singled out the West Java Division of the Army for praise in his National Day speech on 17 August. For his part, Adjie made a public statement that he would obey only orders from

(footnote continued from page 239)

be in Djakarta for the Armed Forces Day Parade, he became concerned. Around 20 September, the PKI reported to Sukarno that these army units were being issued a double issue of ammunition. According to the source, this convinced Sukarno that the generals were planning a coup and he agreed with the PKI that counterplans should be made.

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Sukarno, no matter what happened.\*

The Month of September: A Flurry of Speeches

With the exception of Adjie, the Army generals came under strong attack from Sukarno in his National Day speech of 17 August. In the context of the speech, it was obvious that he meant the generals when he said:

Those who were progressive yesterday are possibly retrogressive, anti-progressive today. Those who were revolutionary yesterday are possibly counter-revolutionary today. Those who were radical yesterday are possibly soft and resistless today . . . Even if you were formerly a bald-headed general in 1945, if you split the revolutionary national unity today, if you are an enemy of the main pillars of the revolution today, then you have become a force of reaction.

The speech was the first in a series of fiery speeches by Sukarno in August and September that contained the same violent condemnation of the army leaders. Usually, the phrase "capitalist bureaucrats" was used, but that deceived no one. In the tortuous phraseology of Indonesian politics, everybody knew that "capitalist bureaucrats" meant the army generals who were blocking the Communists' and apparently the President's way.

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\*According to the source of the report on the Sukarno-Adjie conversation, the deal Sukarno made with Adjie explains why Untung and the PKI thought they could hold Djakarta with only a few battalions. They were confident that Adjie would not order the Siliwangi troops under his command against the coup forces. Apparently, it was not Adjie who ordered the Siliwangi troops into Djakarta on the morning of the coup but a subordinate commander whose unit was already in Djakarta. Adjie didn't move even after he heard the radio announcement about the revolutionary council. On 2 October, Suharto is reported to have contacted him and ordered him to bring troops to Djakarta, but Adjie refused until he contacted Sukarno. Apparently, when Adjie learned that the PKI was involved in the coup and heard that the generals had been killed, he backed out on Sukarno and finally moved his forces against the coup. He behaved weakly after that, as far as the Army was concerned, in not taking a strong stand against Sukarno, however.

On 1 September, Sukarno spoke at a police "Revolutionary Doctrine" rally. At one point in his speech, he looked directly at the four service commanders sitting in the front row and in dolce voce addressed each one in turn. To Dani, he said that the Air Force was a good revolutionary force, because it was studying Marxism-Leninism (a reference to Dani's introduction of courses in Marxism-Leninism in the Air Force). To Martadinata, he said that the Navy was a revolutionary force now, although it had been in "some trouble" earlier in the year. To Police Commander Sutjipto he said that the police force would soon be a revolutionary force because of its new "Revolutionary Doctrine" program. To Yani, he said: "But, the Army is NOT a revolutionary force. It is still blocking me. I will use my charismatic power and turn the people against you. The people will crush you." Yani is reported to have laughed.

The next day, Subandrio took up Sukarno's theme. On 2 September, he told an audience in Manado: "If the leadership in Indonesia is in the hands of corruptors, the people have the right to take over from them. Power must be in the hands of the people, and it is you who will determine the destruction of the corruptors." On 9 September, he urged a student gathering to "smash the exploiters and capitalist bureaucrats, annihilate the pilferers of the state's wealth." On 21 September, Subandrio told another audience that the Indonesian revolution had given birth to a lot of heroes, but that some of these heroes had now turned into traitors. These "heroes-turned-traitors" had not been strong enough to face the trials of the present era. On 25 September, Subandrio announced that an operation to eliminate the "capitalist bureaucrats" was imminent.

Sukarno probably gave more speeches the last month before the coup than he gave in any other month as President. As the time for the coup drew near, he was averaging four or five speeches a week. One of the most significant was his speech to the PSII Congress in early September, in which he spoke of the "five generations of Indonesian revolutionaries." Once again, as he had done in his speech at the PNI anniversary celebration on 26 July, he publicly

identified himself with the 1926 PKI revolt, or what he labelled the second generation of Indonesia revolutionaries. Historians had always identified Sukarno with the "third generation," which formed the nucleus of the PKI, the political party that Sukarno founded. There is no evidence that he was ever involved with the Communists in the 1926 revolt. Yet, in his speech to the PSII Congress, Sukarno asserted:

I was always a member of the second generation. After the 1926 revolt, when the PKI leaders were in jail, they smuggled letters to me, urging me to carry on the struggle (against the Dutch) . . . . The third generation . . . . I was never one of them. They were revisionists, collaborationists . . . . You can't do anything gradually. You have to seize power by force.

Sukarno's commitment to the PKI had never been so strong. It had reached the point where he was prepared to re-write history--to make it look as though he had always been committed to the PKI and its espousal of the violent seizure of power. His reason for emphasizing the violent seizure of power was obviously connected with Indonesia's entry into socialism, a theme which he kept emphasizing in his speeches all during September. It was clear that he thought of Indonesia's entry into the socialist stage as imminent. It was not a question of the future. It was now.

The PKI through its mass media, was giving maximum play to Sukarno's every statement during August and September. Under interrogation, PKI Politburo member Sakirman later spoke of the propaganda campaign that the PKI mounted in the weeks before the coup, which he described as the work of "readying the masses" for the coup.

\*According to Sukarno, the five generations were: (1) the Sarekat Islam, the nationalist movement in the early 1920's, (2) the 1926 PKI revolt, (3) the Algemene Studie Group, which formed the nucleus of the PNI, with which Sukarno is usually identified, (4) the '45 Generation, which got independence from the Dutch, and (5) the contemporary revolutionary movement.



*Before the coup*

Aidit

and

Sukarno





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In waiting for the date for launching the coup, party agitation and propaganda was stepped up considerably and directed towards the basic target, namely, exposing the bureaucratic capitalists. There was also propaganda aimed at exposing the activities of the Armed Forces Leadership. Propaganda was launched in the form of rumor campaigns that the generals under the leadership of Nasution and Yani were going to stage a coup against Sukarno and the cabinet and would kick out the leadership of the PKI.

In an editorial in Harian Rakjat on 4 September, the PKI accused the Army of "spreading a campaign that the PKI intends to organize a coup, whereas in fact they are the ones preparing for a coup. The baby will be born for sure." The metaphor of the baby was to appear again in several of Aidit's speeches during September, for instance his speech to a meeting of women volunteers of the Ministry of Information on 9 September.

We struggle for something that must be born, and we, the revolutionaries, are the midwives of a child of the new society. The child will definitely be born, and we, the revolutionaries, are taking care that it is safely delivered and will quickly grow up.

It seems that Aidit was alluding to the "birth" of socialism in Indonesia; the "new baby" was the "new socialist society" that was soon to be proclaimed; the 30 September Movement would guarantee the "safe delivery" of the "baby." At the time, the meaning of the metaphor was not exactly clear. The "baby" was generally interpreted to mean the "fifth force." In hindsight, however, it seems clear that Aidit was thinking in much broader terms than just the "fifth

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force." He was apparently alluding to something that Sukarno was being much more explicit about in his speeches at the time--namely, Indonesia's entry into the socialist stage.\*

Around mid-September, Aidit and the PKI began to make allusions in public to the event that would signal Indonesia's entry into the socialist stage; namely, the 30 September Movement. It was not clear at the time, of course, but it seems clear now that this was the event that was thought of as guaranteeing the "safe delivery of the child"--in the esoteric language of the PKI. In the following remarks addressed to a meeting of the National Council of the All-Indonesia Federation of Labor Organizations (SOBSI) on 15 September, there seems to be no question but that Aidit was referring to the coup, which was already well into the planning stage:

The most important thing now is the manner in which we can excise the cancer, i.e., the 'city devils' from the society's body. If we wish our Revolution to develop healthily, we must eliminate the economic dynasty, bureaucratism, and 'city devils' from the whole political and economic state machinery.

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\*On 30 September, only hours before the coup, PKI leader Anwar Sanusi addressed a meeting of the State Bank of Indonesia; in the course of his speech, he used the same metaphor of the "baby" that Aidit used in his speech on 9 September:

We are now in the situation where our country is expecting a child. The midwife is ready with all her instruments necessary for the safe delivery of the child, which was expected for a long time . . . There is a handful of 'devils' who threaten the safety of the country and the child to be born. The midwife, therefore, first should drive these devils away.

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Regional organizations are ready to launch an attack against the 'city devils'.

On 27 September, Aidit addressed a meeting of the Association of Indonesian Students (IPPI):

We shall not surrender our fate to the 'city devils,' but will crush and defeat them.

On the 30th, an editorial in Harian Rakjat was more explicit in calling for the execution of the 'city devils':

Embezzling the country's wealth, the 'city devils' have evil political intentions towards the Government and the revolution. They should be publicly executed. The question is only to implement it. The just demands of the people will certainly be successful.

In his last public speech before the coup, Aidit said that "Communist students should be daring to think and daring to act. Act, act, act. Act daringly, daringly, and once more daringly." The next day, as the coup forces were preparing to act that very evening, Anwar Sanusi made the last PKI public statement before the coup:

We are now in the situation where our country is expecting a child. The midwife is ready with all her instruments necessary for the safe delivery of the child, which was expected for a long time.

During those last weeks in September, both Aidit and Sukarno conveyed a great sense of urgency. One or the other was speaking almost every day, it seemed. There was a feeling of suppressed excitement in all their speeches. From their speeches and from the press and from the many posters that were being put up all over the city one definitely got the feeling that something important was about to happen--although no one seemed to know just what. One could sense the tension in the atmosphere.

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The mood in Djakarta could probably best be described as one of nervous expectation.

In hindsight, it seems more than a coincidence that so many non-communist officials were away from Djakarta at the time of the coup.\* Either Sukarno or Subandrio could easily have arranged for the many Indonesian delegations to be out of town on official business.

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\*At the time of the coup, there were no fewer than 12 different Indonesian delegations in Communist China. The four most important and by far the largest were: (1) a delegation of the Indonesian Provisional People's Consultative Congress (MPRS), which was comprised of Chaerul Saleh, the Chairman of the MPRS, and Ali Sastroamidjojo and Wilujo Puspojudo, vice chairmen of the MPRS, and a score of other government ministers including Surjadi, the Minister of the State Budget, A. Sukendro, Minister of State, and M. Jusuf, Minister of Light Industry; (2) a 58-member delegation of the Indonesian National Defense Institute, led by Major Gen. Wilujo Puspojudo, President of the Indonesian National Defense Institute; (3) a 61-member delegation of the Air Force Staff Academy led by Air Commodore Sri Bimo Ariotedjo; and a small delegation of the Indonesian Cooperation Parliament led by Subamia Deputy Speaker. All four delegations were received by Mao on 30 September; that evening, the MPRS delegation had a farewell banquet. It appears that the delegation may have been planning to leave Peking just about the time that the news of the coup in Indonesia was received in China. Chou En-lai is reported to have broken the news to Chaerul Saleh and Ali Sastroamidjojo and Wilujo Puspojudo on the morning of 1 October. The MPRS delegation may have been uncertain what to do under the circumstances. It stayed in Peking another three days before leaving on a tour of south China, arriving home on 7 October.

Besides an official delegation from the PKI, there were at least six other leftist delegations from Indonesia invited to attend China's National Day celebrations on 1 October. There was a 3-member delegation of the Indonesian Antara News Agency, a 4-member delegation of the All-Indonesian Central Organ of Trade Unions, a 14-member delegation of the Indonesian Journalists' Association, a 9-member delegation of the Indonesia-China Friendship Association, (footnote continued on page 248)

In the situation of having an unprecedented number of non-Communist government officials absent from the country, there was the equally unusual situation of having all the important PKI leaders in Indonesia,\* a very unusual situation considering their regular and frequent travel to China, the USSR, and other places. Aidit himself had refused an invitation to attend Communist China's National Day celebrations on 1 October. Normally, one would have expected the PKI to send an impressive delegation, including someone with Politburo rank. On this occasion, however,

(footnote continued from page 247)

a 4-member delegation of the Indonesian Scientists' Association, and a small Indonesian Moslem delegation. There was also a 3-member delegation from the Indonesian Party (Partindo) led by Hadji Winoto Danuasmere, Chairman of the Central Committee of the party and a 7-member higher education delegation led by Sharif Thajeb, Minister of Higher Education, who arrived in Peking on 30 September.

As one can see, there were a large number of Indonesian cabinet ministers in Communist China on the day of the coup. Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio had not left the country but he had conveniently arranged to be out of Djakarta. Together with 12 other cabinet ministers, he had left on a tour of Sumatra on 29 September. On 25 September, when the official announcement of his planned visit to Sumatra was made, it seemed that Subandrio was at pains to give specific reasons for his trip and to point out that his visit to Sumatra had been ordered by President Sukarno. It had not been normal practice in the past for Ministers at Subandrio's level to go into a long explanation of the reason for making a routine visit anywhere in Indonesia. It was almost as if Subandrio was preparing an alibi for himself.

\*The one notable exception was Adjitorop, who had been in Communist China most of the summer and early fall of 1965. He is still in China, having chosen not to go back to Indonesia after the coup.

Aidit sent a 10-man delegation, the highest-ranking member of which was Sidik Kertapati, a not very well known member of the Central Committee. It is almost an obvious conclusion that Aidit was influenced by considerations arising from the coup in wanting to have all the Politburo members in Indonesia around the end of September.\*

There were two people who actually had plans to be out of the country in September who changed those plans to remain in Indonesia. One was Aidit and the other was Sukarno. Aidit had been expected to leave with Chaerul Saleh and the MPRS group which arrived in China on 27 September. At the last moment, as the delegation was boarding the plane for China, Aidit announced at the airport that he was not going.

President Sukarno had made plans to travel to Vienna in early September for a medical check-up, after his recent illness, by the Austrian kidney specialist Dr. Fellingner, who had treated Sukarno previously. In late August, however, Sukarno cancelled his travel plans, claiming that internal political developments would not permit him to be absent from the country. The fact that he apparently considered it impossible to leave the country in September--the month that the planning for the coup was done--and the timing of his decision to cancel his trip, which coincides with the approximate timing of the decision to stage the coup, raise the possibility that the coup was somehow tied in with his decision to cancel his visit to Vienna. It suggests that the President at least knew about the coup plans ahead of time.

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\*Presumably, the PKI gave the Chinese some explanation for their sending such a low level delegation to the 1 October National Day celebration. They could probably have come up with a satisfactory explanation without telling the Chinese about the coup, but it does suggest that the Chinese were informed about the coup. There are other things that suggest that the Chinese were not informed, however, so it should not be taken as conclusive evidence.

### The Evidence Against Sukarno

Certainly, the people involved in the planning of the coup were led to believe that the President knew and approved of the coup planning. As noted earlier, Aidit implied as much when he told the Politburo that "the President would give his approval to the military operations (of the coup) as a matter of course." At the third meeting of the coup group on 13 September, it will be remembered that Sjam told Untung and the others that "the great leader of the revolution has his own role (in the coup). The Bung will later on obtain a separate settlement." According to Latief, everyone present concluded from that "that no matter what happened the President would play a role." All the military officers involved in the coup seem to have been under the very definite impression that Sukarno had given his blessing to the coup. At the trial of former first lieutenant Ngadimo, it was brought out that Ngadimo told several persons before the coup "that the idea of the Revolutionary Council had been created by Aidit and that the President had given it his blessing in the presence of Subandrio." Apparently, Ngadimo got his information from Untung. He testified in court:

My activities (on behalf of the coup) began after I met with Lt. Col. Untung in front of the Tjakrabirawa complex on Djalan Tanah Abang II. He told me that there was a Council of Generals that was going to stage a coup against the Palace and that the Palace was going to establish a Revolutionary Council to counterbalance the Council of Generals. The motive for my activities was that I felt proud to be able to serve the President.

Untung, Latief, Sujono, Dani, and Sjam are all reported to have implicated Sukarno in the planning of the coup in the course of their secret interrogation by the Army. Under direct questioning by Suharto, Latief is reported to have said that "Sukarno gave the coup, including the murder of the generals, his support from the

beginning."\* As noted previously, Sjam definitely implied that the President had previous knowledge of the coup when he answered a question about the President and the Revolutionary Council with the retort: "We knew he would approve!" Other PKI officials have indicated that the PKI definitely expected the President to make a statement in support of the coup.

We do not have exact information as to what Sujono and Dani and others may have told their Army interrogators regarding Sukarno's role in the coup. In the case of Dani, there are reliable reports that he gave the Army "documents and statements, containing allegations, and possibly proof, that the man who gave the order for the implementation of the 30 September 1965 coup, including the murder of the generals, was President Sukarno himself." Except for one letter which Dani is supposed to have written to Suharto, in which he reportedly stated that "neither he nor any Air Force components involved in the 30 September affair undertook any actions that were not directly ordered by the Supreme Commander (President Sukarno) himself," we have no information what these "documents and statements" are.\*\* To the surprise of

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\*After his capture, Latief was questioned by Suharto himself. In the course of the interrogation, which was tape-recorded, Latief made the statement quoted above. Suharto is reported to have sent Sukarno a copy of the tape. He sent it via Brig-Gen. Sutjipto, since Sukarno refused to see him personally.

\*\*In the letter to Suharto, written while he was in hiding in Cambodia after the coup, Dani reportedly expressed a desire to clear himself and the Air Force of any taint of complicity in plotting the coup and requested permission to return to Djakarta to stand trial in order to exonerate himself and the Air Force. The letter indicated that Dani's defense at such a trial would be that he acted only on the order of Sukarno. Dani obviously did not foresee the possibility that the Army would want (footnote continued on page 252)



many people who expected Dani to implicate Sukarno in his testimony in court, his trial produced no sensational revelations about the role of Sukarno in the coup. The Army obviously intended, at least at that stage in its struggle against Sukarno and the PKI, to put the blame for the 30 September Movement entirely on the PKI;

(footnote continued from page 251)

to preserve some of Sukarno's prestige as the first President and great national leader of Indonesia even while it was engaged in destroying him as a political force, and consequently would not admit evidence of Sukarno's complicity in the coup in court. If the Army had wanted to defame Sukarno completely, Dani would have been very useful indeed. He was useful to the Army, as it was. The Army was able to use him to bring pressure on Sukarno by threatening to have Dani tell the whole story of the coup. Dani's deal with the Army was nowhere near as helpful to him. The line of defense that he had planned to use--that he had simply been following orders from Sukarno--got him nowhere. It seems that he may have been forbidden from mentioning the name of Sukarno in court. Without mentioning him by name, it was perfectly clear who Dani's defense attorney meant though, when he asked: "Is it just that this man be convicted for following orders, while his superior, who gave the orders, is never brought to trial?"

Suharto is reported to have used Dani's letter of 17 February 1966 to unite the chiefs of the armed services and various key subordinate military units behind him in his dealings with Sukarno. With his position thus further strengthened, he was able to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the President to obtain the President's delegation of authority on 11 March 1966.

the attack on Sukarno would come later and in a much different form.\* Not only in Dani's trial but in all the others, there seems to have been a deliberate effort to stay clear of the subject of Sukarno's involvement in the coup. Whenever the testimony of witnesses put the finger on Sukarno as having prior knowledge of the coup, this was not carried in press accounts of the proceedings.\*\*

It is worth noting that both the Soviets and the Chinese have made private statements that indicate that they believe Sukarno was involved in the planning of the coup. At the 23rd CPSU Congress, there was an official report on the Indonesian coup, in which the point

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\*In the case of Sukarno, the Army tried to destroy him politically without discrediting him completely, a consideration they did not have to worry about in the case of the PKI. The public charges that have been made against Sukarno concern his activities on the day of the coup and his efforts after the coup to protect those involved in the coup and to restore the political situation to that existing before the coup, just as though nothing had happened. Sukarno's role in the planning of the coup is still a sensitive subject, which is not discussed publicly in Indonesia. However, very recent information indicates that President Suharto may now be prepared to press charges against Sukarno for his role in the coup. In mid-November 1968, Suharto is reported to have ordered an exhaustive interrogation of former President Sukarno prior to bringing him to trial in mid-1969. Presumably, the Army has new and very good evidence of Sukarno's involvement in the planning of the coup or it would not take this drastic and unexpected step.

\*\*The evidence which came out of the early trials of Njono and others which pointed a finger at Sukarno reportedly made the President furious. At a private meeting with Suharto at the Palace on 17 February 1966, Sukarno ordered that his name be kept out of all testimony being taken by the special military court trying the leaders of the 30 September Movement. Sukarno wanted no repetition of the incident in which Sujono mentioned Sukarno's name in connection with the plans to house and safeguard Sukarno, Aidit, and Subandrio at Halim Air Force Base during the critical hours of the coup.

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was made that the Chinese had apparently urged Aidit to seize power on the assumption that Sukarno was dying. In their propaganda, the Soviets had encouraged the view that the Chinese had instigated the coup; they had not admitted PKI involvement, however. They managed to do this by quoting either the PKI cover story that the coup was simply "an internal Army affair" or later statements by the PKI denying any involvement in the coup.

Reactionary forces (in Indonesia) have intensified their anticommunist campaign on the pretext that the PKI was involved in the 30 September Movement. The accusation was denied by the PKI in a statement issued on 7 October.

(Commentary by a former Soviet correspondent in Indonesia broadcast over Moscow Radio, 29 October 1965)

The second important point that was made in the official party report to the CPSU Congress that had not appeared in Soviet propaganda concerned Sukarno.

The problem was further deepened by the fact that Sukarno himself knew, prior to the crisis, that the Communists were trying to seize power and he was not opposed to it. Sukarno may have had a deal with the Communist Party of China that in exchange for certain areas in which to carry out A-bomb tests, the Chinese would devise a way of doing away with Sukarno's army. Sukarno's line was clearly Chinese insofar as foreign policy was concerned, but it was also clearly Chinese insofar as his attitude to revolution was concerned, which was a 'Putsch' ideology.

The Chinese, in private, have also indicated that they believe Sukarno knew and approved of the planning for the coup. At least, they have said this to visiting Communists from Europe. In public, they have not gone so far as the Albanians, who are usually considered to

speaking for the Chinese on matters of controversy between the USSR and China. A lengthy Zeri I Popullit article of 12 May 1966, analyzing the failings of the PKI, warned that the PKI's error lay in putting "too much faith in the political strength of Sukarno...whose authority and prestige did not lie on any solid base." The implication was that Sukarno had misled the PKI on the coup. Exiled leaders of the PKI now living in China, such as Adjitorop, have made a similar charge. In a 3 November 1966 speech to the Albanian party congress, Adjitorop reviewed his party's past mistakes and spelled out the lessons that had been learned from the "temporary setback to the revolutionary movement." The PKI's fundamental error, according to Adjitorop, was that it allowed "the proletariat (the PKI) to assume a position subordinate to the national bourgeoisie (Sukarno)." Again, the criticism was made in the context of the coup.

If we are to admit as evidence the opinion of others who are in a much better position to know the full story of the Indonesian coup, we must certainly say something about the military and other informed opinion in Indonesia today. According to the most reliable sources, many of the senior military leaders and government officials in Indonesia have expressed their own personal opinion, in private--which they would never admit in public--that Sukarno was behind the 30 September Movement from the beginning. Some attribute the planning of the coup to Sukarno; others acknowledge that he at least knew and approved of the coup planning. Nasution and Suharto have said this in private. So have many others. About as far as an Indonesian will go in discussing the subject with a foreigner is illustrated in the following conversation between a high Indonesian military official and an American reporter in early 1966. The Indonesian official is reported to have asked: "Do you think Dani would have risked his career if a certain

very high-level person had not been aware of the coup?" The American replied: "No. I imagine Subandrio knew." The Indonesian said: "No. Not Subandrio. Someone much higher. Do you think Dani would have done it if only Subandrio knew?" The Indonesian was obviously implying that Sukarno must have given the coup his blessing or Dani would never have become involved in it.

Apparently, the Indonesian government is now considering bringing Sukarno to trial. The Army must feel that it has definite proof of Sukarno's involvement in the coup--not just his involvement on the day of the coup and afterwards, but his involvement in the planning of the coup--to contemplate such a move. In October 1968, Sukarno was moved from Bogor, where he had been under virtual house arrest, to Djakarta for interrogation by the Army. Suharto is reported to have ordered an exhaustive interrogation of Sukarno, prior to bringing him to trial in mid-1969.

No doubt, the Army has a lot more evidence of Sukarno's involvement in the coup than it has admitted. As far as we know, the only concrete evidence to link Sukarno with the planning of the coup consists of (1) a secret meeting with Dani on 29 September, eight days after Dani reported to the President on the secret mission he made to Communist China from 16-19 September on Sukarno's direct orders, (2) several meetings with Aidit the last week in September, and (3) a conversation with Brig. Gen. Sugandhi on 30 September.

It will be remembered that Dani was in China for three days in mid-September on a secret mission that only Sukarno, Aidit, and Subandrio knew about at the time. Although he could have gone to China for a number of reasons--such as to arrange for the shipment of Chinese

arms to Indonesia or the purchase of airplanes for the Indonesian Air Force or the exchange of information in the atomic energy field (all of which were reported to have been under discussion by the two governments)--he may well have gone in connection with the coup. We simply do not know the real purpose of Dani's trip to China. In any case, he reported on the results of his trip, first, to Subandrio and, then, to Sukarno on 21 September. Eight days later, on the morning of 29 September, he met with the President again, in private. The circumstances of their meeting leave no doubt that it was a matter of great urgency and secrecy. Sukarno is reported to have received Dani in his bedroom in the palace in Djakarta around 0900 hours, ahead of several other important people who had scheduled appointments with the President that morning and were waiting to see him. Dani had just come from a meeting with General Supardjo, who had arrived in Djakarta from West Borneo the previous afternoon. Supardjo is reported to have given Dani "news from Sjam," with whom Supardjo had been in contact almost as soon as he arrived in Djakarta. According to Dani, the "news" concerned "a group within the army which was dissatisfied with the Army leadership and which intended to make some changes." Sukarno is reported to have asked Dani to meet with him again at the palace in Bogor (where Sukarno normally spent his weekends) the following Sunday, October 3rd, at 1000 hours. He was to bring Gen. Supardjo with him. After this brief meeting with Sukarno, Dani reportedly hurried from the palace to report to Gen. Supardjo on the conversation with the President. It was Dani's second meeting with

Supardjo that morning. The next time he was to see Supardjo was at Halim on the morning of 1 October.\*

As mentioned earlier, Dani's meeting with Sukarno on the morning of 29 September is a very significant meeting in connection with the coup. It would tell us a lot about the coup, particularly about Sukarno's and Dani's role in it, if we knew exactly what the two men talked about when they met together privately in the palace that morning. It is probably one of those things about the Indonesian coup that we will never know for sure, however. It can only be presumed that the meeting was concerned with the arrangements for the coup. The timing of it, on the morning of 29 September, suggests that Dani was actually informing Sukarno of the exact date that had been set for the coup. The decision to stage the coup on the night of 30 September had just been made the night before (on the 28th). According to Dani, he told the President "that there was a group within the army which was dissatisfied with the Army leadership which intended to make some changes." The thing that Sukarno must have been waiting to hear--and the thing that Dani probably told him--was when "the group within the army that was dissatisfied with the army leadership intended to make some changes."

One thing that is clear that Sukarno learned from the meeting with Dani was that Supardjo had arrived in Djakarta from West Borneo--which was a secret from the Army. In his speech of 12 February 1967 indicting Sukarno for his role in the coup, General Nasution made quite a point of the fact that Sukarno was one of the few people who knew that Supardjo was in Djakarta. In the Army's eyes, Sukarno was definitely guilty of conspiring to keep this a secret from the Army. Sukarno must have known that Supardjo was away from his command in West Borneo

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\*It will be remembered that Supardjo would have had absolutely no reason to report to Dani as Minister/Commander of the Air Force, except in connection with the coup. As a general in the Army, he would have reported to Yani or Suharto or some other commanding officer in the Army.

without the knowledge or permission of his superiors in the Army. It seems almost unbelievable that he should not have known the real reason for Supardjo's being in Djakarta. Certainly, he does not seem to have expressed the least surprise when Dani told him of seeing Supardjo that morning. He even made plans to receive Supardjo at the palace on 3 October. Obviously, he expected Supardjo to be in Djakarta for several days, at least until 3 October. As it is highly unlikely that Supardjo could have come to the palace in Bogor without being noticed, the fact that Sukarno made plans to receive him there on 3 October would seem to indicate that he expected Supardjo's presence in Djakarta to become known by then. This suggests that he expected the coup to be a fait accompli by then. He could hardly have known this if Dani had not told him. After all, the decision on D-Day had only been made the night before, by Aidit himself apparently; Sukarno could not have learned of it much in advance of his meeting with Dani. It appears that Dani must have been the one to communicate Aidit's decision on the timing of the coup to the President. In short, Dani's meeting with Sukarno on the morning of 29 September is strong, though circumstantial, evidence that Sukarno had foreknowledge of the coup, that he had very precise knowledge, in fact, of the date that the coup was planned for.

There were other ways, of course, that Aidit and Sjam could have communicated their decision on the timing of the coup to Sukarno, although Dani does seem to have been the obvious choice of an intermediary. Of all the people directly involved in the coup, he was the only one high enough in rank to have ready access to the President who was not openly associated with the PKI. The fact of his meeting with Sukarno would not seem in the least unusual; there would be no reason to attach any particular significance to it. Furthermore, there would be no reason to suspect PKI involvement on the part of Dani. It would have been out of the question for Sukarno to have had any contact with the military officers who were to lead the movement, such as General Supardjo or Untung, as this would have compromised the President completely. The same argument would apply to Sjam and Pono, the deep-cover PKI agents who were on the Central Command



of the coup. That leaves Aidit. Unquestionably, there would have been plenty of opportunity for Aidit to have discussed the coup with Sukarno; they saw each other regularly. During that last week in September, they were reported to have been together on several occasions. Even on those occasions when other people were present, there was usually an opportunity for private conversation. The last time that Aidit saw Sukarno before the coup (which was to prove to be the last time that the two men saw each other before Aidit's death) was on the evening of 29 September when they both addressed a meeting of the national association of university students (the CGMI) at the Sports Stadium in Djakarta. Aidit was not scheduled to speak, but Sukarno is reported to have closed his speech with the words "Now we must hear from Aidit." In a short extemporaneous speech, the PKI chairman explained that "the PKI had become great, precisely because it dared to act." We will probably never know whether Aidit and Sukarno had the opportunity for any private communication that evening.

One thing happened during Sukarno's speech that evening that should be mentioned, mainly because of the attention it has received in connection with the coup. After he had been speaking about five minutes, Sukarno quite abruptly left the stage and disappeared from sight. Some observers say he seemed to falter. After a period of time--and there is disagreement over the length of time, with estimates ranging from 5 minutes to an hour--he reappeared and continued to give a normal rousing Sukarno speech. It was speculated at the time that he had gone into a private room to get an injection or other medicine from his accompanying doctor; but there is nothing to substantiate such speculation. The only report we have from someone who claims to have seen Sukarno during the time that he disappeared from public view stated that he was seen conferring with military officers.

One of the most persistent theories about the coup is that it was a premature move on the part of the Communists that was triggered by the President's faltering during his speech to the CGMI Congress. According to this theory, word of Sukarno's "collapse" at the Sports Stadium

was flashed to the Communists. who, acting on the mistaken assumption that he was dying, made a hasty decision to seize control. fearing otherwise that the army would move against the PKI as soon as Sukarno died. In support of this theory, it was reported that Aidit was seen leaving the Sports Stadium early. almost as soon as he finished his speech, presumably. on his way to brief the Politburo on the evening's happening.

In the light of later evidence, this theory simply does not stand up. By the evening of 29 September, the coup preparations were much too far advanced to have been triggered by anything that happened then. There is good evidence that the decision to stage the coup had been taken at least twenty-four hours earlier. It is unlikely that the party would have moved on the assumption that Sukarno was dying, anyway. Acting too soon on the belief that Sukarno was not going to last long had been fatal to many another political group in Indonesia. The Communists would not have been likely to move until they knew for sure that the President was in extremis.

Since Sukarno has not died and there are no signs that he suffered a collapse (other than a political one) in the immediate postcoup period, there is absolutely nothing to substantiate the speculation that he suffered a collapse at the CGMI Congress on the night of 29 September. What is quite possible is that he was called off the stage, either to be given some message or to be asked for instructions, possibly in connection with the events of the coming day. We have no further information as to who the military officers he was seen conferring with might have been.

The possibility must also be considered that Sukarno staged the whole incident to make it look as though he had suddenly been taken sick. We know that on the night of 29 September, Sjam and Pono were meeting with Untung and the other military leaders of the coup. It had already been decided by Aidit that the coup would begin the following evening, though as yet the decision had not been communicated to the military leaders. Supardjo had been

summoned to Djakarta from West Borneo; everything was in readiness--as far as the PKI was concerned. But not as far as Untung and Latief were concerned. They were not prepared to consider going on with the plans for the coup, until the matter of the Cavalry was definitely settled. At this point, Sjam and Pono undoubtedly realized that there would be no armored support. They were not prepared to let this, or any other matter, stand in the way of the coup, however, which Aidit had ordered to begin the following night. They would naturally look for some new compelling reason to present to the military officers for going on with the coup. It may well have occurred to them that if Sukarno were suddenly to be taken sick again, they could use this as a pretext for moving immediately against the Army, before it could move against the PKI. Assuming that Sukarno knew of the coup plans, he might well have cooperated with the PKI in providing this ostensible excuse for the PKI to move against the Army. Since Sjam's meeting with the military leaders was later in the evening than Sukarno's address to the CGMI Congress, Sjam could easily have brought the news of Sukarno's faltering in the middle of his speech to the military officers. It would have had a dramatic effect on Untung and Latief and the others.

The next day, 30 September, Sukarno had a conversation with Brig. Gen. Sugandhi which, because it is well documented, is one of the most convincing pieces of evidence that (1) Sukarno knew in advance that a PKI coup would take place, (2) that he was given some understanding of what the coup involved, and (3) that he agreed to the plan. In order to appreciate the significance of the Sugandhi-Sukarno conversation, it is necessary to know something of its background, in the nature of two earlier conversations of Gen. Sugandhi on 27 September, one with

PKI Politburo member Sudisman and the other with PKI Chairman Aidit.

On 27 September, Sugandhi had the following conversation with Sudisman:

Sugandhi: Man (abbreviation for Sudisman), what is going on with all these preparations and digging of wells in the villages?

Sudisman: Why don't you just join us?

Sugandhi: That is impossible, Man. I cannot possibly join the PKI, because I am a religious person.

Sudisman: If you do not want to, it is because you have been listening too much to Nasution.

Sugandhi: No, it is not a matter of listening too much to him, it is a matter of ideology. If you continue with your plan, you will be crushed and destroyed.

Sudisman: No, that is impossible. We will have the initiative. Whoever begins and strikes the first blow will win. Have trust in us. We have made thorough calculations.

Shortly afterward, on the same day, Sugandhi had this conversation with Aidit:

Aidit: Have you talked with Sudisman. We will start in a short time, in two or three days. Bung Karno [Sukarno] knows all this. It would be better for you if you join us.

Sugandhi: Sudisman already talked to me, but I do not want to join the PKI. The PKI wants to stage a coup. I have my own doctrine, the Soldier's Oath.

Aidit: Bung, do not say 'coup.' That is an evil word. The PKI is going to improve the revolution which is being subverted by the council of generals. We will start within two to three days. Will you join us or not? I have already informed Bung Karno about all this.

Three days later, on 30 September, Sugandhi is reported to have had the following conversation with Sukarno in the President's bedroom in the palace.

Sugandhi: The PKI is going to stage a coup. Do you know about this? I have been contacted by Sudisman and Aidit themselves.

Sukarno: Don't be a communist-phobe. Don't you know about the existence of the council of generals? Don't you know that these generals are hopeless? Be careful when you talk.

Sugandhi: If there are hopeless generals, why don't you just dismiss them? Isn't that your authority? There is no council of generals. There is a Rank and Post Review Council. It is an evaluation council to assist the army minister/commander to evaluate colonels who are to be promoted to generals, and not for any other purpose.

Sukarno: Don't you interfere. Shut up.  
You must have been listening too  
much to Nasution.

Sugandhi: It is true, Bapak. There is no  
council of generals. Pak Yani said  
so himself and declared to Bapak  
that there was no Council of  
Generals. Isn't Yani a man who  
is loyal to you, somebody who may  
be called your right hand?

Sukarno: Don't talk too much. Don't meddle.  
Don't you know that according to  
Thomas Tonly in a revolution a  
father can eat his own children?  
Don't you know?

Sugandhi: If that is the case, you must have  
joined the PKI.

Sukarno: Shut up, or I will slap you till  
you faint. Go home, and be careful.

On the basis of Gen. Sugandhi's reported conversations with Sudisman, Aidit, and Sukarno, Nasution stated unequivocally, in public, on 13 February 1967 that "the President gave the coup his blessing and assistance." He cited a 19 January 1967 central investigation team report stressing "the importance and the validity of the Sukarno-Sugandhi conversation of 30 September as proof of the President's advance knowledge and involvement in the 30 September affair."

## Conclusions

Although the Indonesian coup, as it was carried out, was in every respect the planning of the PKI, other people besides the Communists were involved in the plot to eliminate the top Army leadership. The evidence in the case of all but one or two of the people involved in the coup is sufficiently clear-cut to justify a rather definite judgment of their respective roles in the coup. The most important question about the Indonesian coup that remains open to some doubt on the basis of the evidence that is available is the question of Sukarno's role in the coup. Our judgment of his role and that of Subandrio must necessarily remain somewhat tentative, until there is more evidence on the subject.

The PKI -- The central role of the PKI in planning the coup has been well established. The evidence is overwhelming that the PKI made all the major decisions, including who would lead the movement, what military units would be involved in the operation, when the coup would take place, how the political campaign in support of the coup would be managed, and what changes in the government would be made as a result of the coup. Aidit himself made the more important decisions, such as when the coup would take place and who would be on the Revolutionary Council, which was intended to replace the Dwikora Cabinet. Sjam, the chief of the PKI Special Bureau, to whom Aidit entrusted the detailed planning for the coup, seems to have made most of the other decisions, subject, of course, to Aidit's approval.

After securing Politburo approval for the PKI to begin making preparations for a coup in late August 1965, Aidit turned the whole matter of the planning and execution of the coup over to the Special Bureau, the secret organization within the PKI that had been established in late 1964 to direct PKI covert activities. Apparently, only a very few people in the Politburo even knew of the existence of the Special Bureau; it is not at all clear

whether anyone besides Aidit knew the identity of the man who headed the organization. He had been one of Aidit's closest personal friends before Aidit persuaded him to join the PKI in 1948. Aidit probably trusted Sjam as much or more than any other PKI leader. There is no doubt that Sjam's loyalties were, first and foremost, to Aidit. In the Special Bureau, with Sjam as its chief, Aidit had, in effect, his own special apparatus within the party for handling "sensitive matters." Completely free of the control of the central committee and the Politburo, the Bureau operated as a completely autonomous organization within the PKI, answerable only to Aidit.

According to Sjam, the Special Bureau was "charged with the task of preparing for armed struggle," which was not the official policy of the PKI at the time. As long as things were going well for the PKI under Sukarno's protection, Aidit believed that the best policy for the PKI was one of strong support for Sukarno's renunciation of force as the way to gain power in Indonesia, and the espousal of the peaceful, parliamentary road to "socialism." Yet, because he could not definitely rule out the possibility of the PKI's having to resort to armed force some time in the future, if things suddenly changed for the worse, he seems to have been concerned to develop some kind of covert apparatus, distinct from the overt apparatus of the party, which could be assigned the task of preparing for armed struggle, should that ever become necessary. Because of the risks involved in arming and training PKI party members--which, if it became known, would have vitiated Aidit's whole effort over the years to create just the opposite image of the PKI as a party that operated entirely within the legal political system of the country--Aidit preferred a policy of PKI infiltration and subversion of the Indonesian armed forces. Rather than train and arm a PKI armed force, pretty much from the beginning, the Special Bureau would concentrate its efforts on subverting the Indonesian military.

The extent of PKI penetration of the military was certainly never realized by the army leadership before the coup; it clearly came as a surprise and a shock to Nasution and Suharto and the other army generals after



the coup when they learned about the operations of the PKI and the Special Bureau from the confessions of the military officers involved in the coup. The extent of the penetration was shockingly evident in one fact that was revealed--that Sjam himself had acted as a double agent in pretending to be an informer for the Djakarta Military Command. By the time of the coup, the Special Bureau had established a pattern of regular contacts with perhaps a hundred or more military officers who, because they were well placed in positions of command over a much larger number of troops, put the PKI in the position of being able to command a sizeable military force. Although it could not have hoped to withstand an all-out attack from the military, the PKI was in a position where it could at least contemplate carrying out a limited military operation--such as the kidnapping of a number of Army generals and the seizure of a few key installations in Djakarta. A practical measure of the military strength of the PKI in late 1965 would actually be the 30 September Movement. It seems that all or almost all the resources of the Special Bureau were involved in the coup. We know that Aidit was concerned to commit the maximum number of troops at his disposal to the coup action, even to the point of rushing the training of some 4,000 Communist volunteers as an auxiliary force. In short, the coup was the supreme military effort that the PKI was capable of at the time.

The Special Bureau was the obvious organization within the PKI to plan an action like the 30 September Movement. First of all, it had "contacts" in the military who could be counted on to carry out the party's will in staging a coup. Secondly, and just as important, the military officers who were under the control of the Special Bureau were not openly identified with the PKI, which meant that the role of the PKI in the coup could be obscured and the coup made to appear an internal Army affair. Aidit seems to have felt strongly that the coup should be handled entirely within the Indonesian military. Unfortunately for the PKI, a last-minute decision to use the Communist volunteers, who had been armed and trained by the coup leaders as an auxiliary force, compromised Aidit's and Sjam's planning to avoid direct PKI involvement

in the coup. It was never intended that these volunteers play a role in the military operation of the coup; they were thought of as a "reserve force" in the defense of Halim Air Force Base, which was selected to serve as the command center for the coup. However, in the late hours of the coup, when the coup was all but lost, they were sent into Djakarta in a last desperate move by the coup leaders. They staged a dramatic--but pointless and totally disorganized--entry into Djakarta, only to be promptly disarmed by Suharto's forces. Except for the presence of these armed Communist volunteers and the failure of the PKI to stop publication of an editorial, which had obviously been written in advance of the coup for publication the morning after the coup, the PKI might well have concealed its involvement in the coup, at least at the time. As it was, the arrival of armed Communist elements on the scene in the late hours of the coup created the false impression that armed Communist civilians had been involved in the raids on the generals' homes, a false impression that contributed significantly to the immediate, violent reaction against the PKI. The 2 October Harian Rakjat editorial endorsing the coup was another disaster for the PKI; it provided the documentary justification for the PKI's own obliteration after the coup.

As for the PKI, the fact that it got others to execute the deed does not change the fact that it was in every way responsible for the planning of the Indonesian coup. After the coup, Aidit was attacked by the militant wing of the surviving PKI organization for having bypassed the PKI party organization in his planning of the coup. This is not completely true, in that he got Politburo approval for the PKI to begin making plans for a coup and top party leaders were given specific roles to play in the coup--for instance, Njono, the Chief of the Greater Djakarta Committee of the PKI, was in charge of the "operational-technical" preparations for the coup, including the recruiting of the PKI volunteer troops, and Lukman, Sakirman, Pardede, Sanusi, and Narsukud were given the assignment of coordinating party activities in different parts of the country after the coup. Because of the need for secrecy, even these top officials of the PKI were not briefed on their assignments more than a day or so in

advance of the coup. Except for these top leaders, the PKI as an organization was not informed about the coup ahead of time. In this sense, Aidit's critics within the party were right in accusing him of bypassing the party. The coup was essentially an operation of the Special Bureau. The PKI was no less responsible because the Special Bureau planned the coup, of course, than it would have been if the overt party organization had managed the whole affair.

The military leaders: Untung, Sujono, Latief, and Supardjo -- The military was only the executive arm of a coup that was masterminded by the PKI. Untung and the other military leaders were little more than dupes of the PKI. Long accustomed to following the PKI line on political matters, they were easily convinced by the PKI of the necessity of taking action against the Army leadership.

None of the military leaders of the coup were Communist, in the sense of being Communist party members. Some were known to be pro-Communist; a few, like Untung, had openly supported Communist causes in the past. But, in the main, they were not known for their political views; most often, they were described as "apolitical" or "politically naive." They seemed much more interested in their military careers than in politics, and, in every case, they had promising careers ahead of them. Untung was actually something of a national hero after the West Irian Campaign; he had been decorated by President Sukarno himself. In 1965, his career was definitely on the way up, after the temporary setback it had suffered as a result of his involvement in the Communist uprising of 1948. Only a few months before the coup he had been promoted from Battalion Commander in the Central Java Division of the Army to Commander of the 1st Battalion of the Tjak-rabirawa Honor Guard that guarded the President.

The military leaders of the coup do not seem to have been personally acquainted with one another before September 1965. They had one thing in common, however, that was to bring them together in a fateful alliance. For some time each had been having regular contacts with

highly-placed PKI agents. In the case of Untung, his PKI contact was a man called Walujo; in the case of Latief and Sujono, it was a certain Pono; in the case of Supardjo, it was Sjam himself. Although Untung and the other military leaders did not know the true identities of the men they called Sjam, Pono, and Walujo and certainly did not appreciate the fact that they were the three top men in the PKI Special Bureau, they all seem to have accepted the fact that they spoke for the PKI. Actually, they seem to have had some idea that they represented Aidit personally.

Untung, Sujono, and Latief were introduced to one another by Sjam and Pono at a meeting on 6 September 1965. During the month of September, the group of five men met together a total of eight times, usually late at night at the homes of either Col. Latief or Sjam. The planning for the Indonesian coup was started and finished in the one month of September, in the course of these eight meetings.

Sjam presided at every meeting. There is no question that he was always in charge. At the early meetings, he presented the PKI's analysis of the political situation and cited the need for action. The military leaders seem to have accepted his word on the existence of a Generals' Council in the Army and its alleged planning for a coup to overthrow Sukarno. Convinced that they were acting to protect Sukarno, they allowed themselves to be used by the PKI in carrying out a coup of the PKI's making. As the month wore on and the discussions centered more and more on the military planning for the coup, Sjam retreated somewhat from the center of the stage and allowed the military officers to make some of the purely military decisions--in preparation for the final moment, when he would withdraw altogether to the sidelines and leave the military leaders to face the shock of the coup.

During the course of the meetings, Sjam had mentioned that one other person would be joining the coup group at a later date. He was Gen. Supardjo, Commander of the 4th Combat Command in West Borneo. The reason that Supardjo became involved in the coup was precisely

the same reason that Untung, Latief, Sujono, and the others became involved; he was a PKI sympathizer who was being "managed" by the Special Bureau and could be counted on to carry out the will of the party. Supardjo was actually the prize "asset" of the PKI in the Indonesian military. Probably because of his rank, he was personally "managed" by the chief of the PKI Special Bureau--Sjam himself. He was in and out of Djakarta often enough, in connection with his assignment as Commander of the 4th Combat Command, that he could have managed to see Sjam fairly regularly. Presumably, he was kept informed of the coup planning during those last weeks before the coup when he was still in West Borneo. On 28 September he received a prearranged signal that he should come to Djakarta immediately; he arrived late in the afternoon that same day and went immediately to Sjam's house. During the next two days, he was actively involved in all the last-minute preparations for the coup. He joined the other military leaders at the last meeting of the coup group on 29 September. On the day of the coup, he acted as the chief liaison between the coup leaders and President Sukarno.

Dani -- Omar Dani, the Minister/Commander of the Air Force, who was obviously involved along with the Communists in the plot to eliminate the top Army leadership, is a special case among the military officers who were involved in the coup. Like Untung and the others, he had for some time been having secret contacts with representatives of the PKI Special Bureau. His contact man was Walujo, the same man who "managed" Untung and Gen. Pranoto, the latter of whom Sukarno appointed "caretaker" commander of the Army, vice Gen. Yani, who was one of the victims of the coup. As Commander of the Air Force, Dani was the highest-placed "contact" of the PKI in the military. He was far too senior to be considered in the same group with Untung and Latief, or even Supardjo. He never met together with them in the planning sessions for the coup. Thus, he was not a member of the so-called Central Command of the coup, as the five-man group (plus Supardjo) was called.

Although he had assumed an increasingly leftist position after 1962, when he was appointed Minister/Commander of the Air Force, Dani was not a Communist. It would not even be accurate to describe him as of leftist conviction. Apparently he had no strong political convictions of his own. After a year of pilot training at Bakersfield in California during 1950-51, he was regarded as an anti-Communist with a strongly expressed preference for U.S. technology and equipment over Soviet technology. Yet, within a few years, he was espousing the Communist line and setting up Marxism study courses within the Air Force. Dani was, above all else, an opportunist, as Ruth McVey described him, "a man out for the main chance... which he perceived not unbrightly to lie with Sukarno and the PKI." Slim, handsome, sporting a clipped mustache and wearing his cap at a dashing angle, he looked more like the matinee idol than the air force chief. He was vain, ambitious, completely pliable, and, most of all, susceptible to flattery. Needless to say, he did not lack for the latter from the Communists. They knew well how to exploit an ambitious man like Dani.

It was to Sukarno, not the Communists, that Dani owed his appointment as Commander of the Air Force. He had been hand-picked by the President to lead the Air Force in 1962, when the former Commander of the Air Force was relieved, under pressure from the Army and Navy, for supposed Air Force "negligence" in an incident involving the death of a Navy Admiral. The succession of Dani to the post of Air Force Commander scarcely improved the situation from the point of view of the Army and Navy. Although intelligent and well trained for the operational leadership of the Air Force, Dani was obviously given the job for other reasons. With his weak character and lack of a strong personal following in the Air Force, he would be totally dependent on the President for his position and therefore amenable to Sukarno's wishes. Under his leadership, the Air Force made a series of advances to the "left," always on Sukarno's initiative. At the time of the coup, it was the only one of the four services that was prepared to accept the idea of Nasakom Councils within the Armed Forces; it was giving strong public approval to the idea of the fifth force, at a time when both the

Army and the Navy were fighting it determinedly. The contrast between the Army and Navy's reaction to Presidential pushing on these matters and Dani's ready acquiescence on all matters could hardly have been more striking. It was no secret that Nasution and Yani and the other Army leaders had little use for Dani, but that mattered little to Dani so long as he had the backing and protection of Sukarno. He was receiving all that he wanted--in the way of a gorgeous lakeside home, luxury automobiles, and access to the palace social life--from Sukarno. Certainly, Sukarno was happy with Dani. He referred to the Air Force, under Dani's leadership, as "his sweetheart."

It is true that the Air Force had some reason to be jealous of the Army, which got nearly two-thirds of the annual military budget while the Air Force ranked last among the four services in receiving less than 10% of all military expenditures. Apparently, the Air Force considered itself discriminated against in the matter of promotions, as well as the allocation of foreign aid. Many of its officers are reported to have resented the superior position and prestige of the army. However, Dani himself, as we have seen, had no personal cause for grievance along these lines. It is highly unlikely that he would have joined a conspiracy against the Army generals because of inter-service rivalry of this kind. Nor is it likely that he would have acted out of any strong political motivation of his own. There would seem to be only one good reason why Dani would have become involved in anything as dangerous as a coup--namely, that he knew that Sukarno knew and approved of the coup plans. It would have been totally out of character for him to have risked his life and his career, otherwise. As long as the coup had Sukarno's blessing, there was no risk for him. In fact, not to have supported the coup, in those circumstances, would have been more risky. Dani's involvement in the coup, as much as anything else, argues for Sukarno's having been involved; it is one of the most convincing reasons for thinking that Sukarno must have known and approved of the coup plans. Dani was not someone who would in any event have been expected to act without the President.

Whereas it can be argued that the PKI could easily have convinced Untung and Latief and the other military leaders of the coup that Sukarno knew about the coup plans, whether he did or not, Dani is not likely to have taken anyone's word--either Sjam's or Aidit's--when he could so easily have checked the matter out with Sukarno himself. He was in constant contact with Sukarno all during the period just before the coup. In fact, he seems to have been in the very select company of Subandrio and Aidit as one of Sukarno's most trusted confidants. Only two weeks before the coup, he made a secret trip to Communist China on the direct orders of Sukarno. Besides the President and Dani, only two other people in the Indonesian government knew about Dani's secret mission --Subandrio and Aidit. Although he could have gone to China for a number of reasons, the timing of the trip suggests that it was in connection with the coup. Apparently, Sukarno was in the process of negotiating a secret arms deal with the Chinese. Assuming that he knew about the coup planning, he may have sent Dani to China to arrange for an immediate shipment of arms, with the thought that they would be used in the coup. (This is not to suggest that he informed the Chinese of his reason for wanting the arms immediately.) It is interesting to note that soon after he returned to Indonesia, Dani had a meeting with Air Force Major Sujono, who was deeply involved in the coup planning; among other things, he was in charge of the secret military training that the Air Force was giving the Communist volunteers at Lubang Buaja. On the day of the coup, it was Sujono who procured the arms from the Air Force depots; they happened to be Chinese arms.

Dani is implicated in the planning of the coup by one other important piece of evidence. On the morning of 29 September, he is known to have conferred with Gen. Supardjo, one of the PKI's contacts in the military who was to play a major role in the coup. Actually, he saw Supardjo twice that morning, once before and once after he talked with Sukarno. Supardjo is reported to have given Dani "news from Sjam." After the meeting with Supardjo, Dani went to the palace, where he conferred in private with the President for several minutes. The circumstances of the meeting leave no doubt that it was a matter of



great urgency and secrecy. After this brief meeting with Sukarno, Dani hurried from the palace to report to Gen. Supardjo on the conversation with the President. We know that the decision to stage the coup on the night of 30 September was taken by Aidit on the night of the 28th, the very evening before Sjam told Supardjo the news that Supardjo obviously thought important enough to tell Dani right away and Dani felt obliged to tell Sukarno immediately. It appears that Dani must have been the one to communicate Aidit's decision on the timing of the coup to Sukarno. Although there were other ways that Aidit and Sjam could have communicated with the President, Dani does seem to have been the obvious choice of an intermediary. Of all the people directly involved in the coup, he was the only one high enough in rank to have ready access to the President who was not openly associated with the PKI.

Dani's actions on the day of the coup leave absolutely no doubt that he had foreknowledge of the event and lent it his full support from the beginning. He left his home soon after midnight on the night of the 30th to go to Halim Air Force Base, where arrangements had already been made for his and Aidit's "safe protection" during the critical hours of the coup. He was at the Operations Command Center there when Sukarno arrived the next morning and was the first to report to the President on the progress of the coup. Early in the morning, he drafted an order-of-the-day pledging the support of the air force to the coup. With the broadcast of the order later that day, Dani's fate was all but sealed. His complicity in the coup, like that of the PKI, was now documented. He could never hope to disclaim any involvement in the coup, as Sukarno was to leave himself the option of doing.

Subandrio -- Subandrio's role in the coup is, in many respects, the most surprising and the most difficult to explain. It seems that he definitely knew about the coup planning, that he had precise knowledge, in fact, of the details of the planning such as when the coup would take place. However, he does not seem to have been involved in the actual planning and he was not even in Djakarta on the day of the coup to participate in the events of the coup.

Apparently, the military leaders of the coup got the definite impression from Sjam that Sukarno, Subandrio, and Dani all knew about the coup planning. There is good reason to think that Subandrio did. First of all, we know that he knew about Dani's secret trip to China in mid-September, which is presumed to have involved the preparations for the coup. After the coup, Gen. Sukendro remembered a discussion he had with Subandrio on 17 September which, in hindsight, convinced him that Subandrio knew about the coup. Subandrio asked his opinion of a number of top Indonesian army generals, most of whom were later killed in the coup. Subandrio said that he thought all these generals were much too interested in politics and could no longer be relied upon as good army officers. He described only one general--Gen. Mursjid--as a general who "did his job as a military man and didn't get involved in politics." Gen. Mursjid was not a victim of the coup.

On the morning of 29 September, the same morning that Dani saw Sukarno on a matter of great urgency, which is thought to have been the occasion of Dani's telling Sukarno of Aidit's decision on the timing of the coup, Aidit is reported to have met with Subandrio. There is no information as to what was discussed, but it is a good bet that Aidit told Subandrio of the final decision he had made the night before to stage the coup on the 30th. After his meeting with Aidit, Subandrio is reported to have become very busy, meeting with several other cabinet ministers. Later that day, he left on a speaking tour of North Sumatra.

When the official announcement of his planned visit to Sumatra was made on 25 September, it seemed that Subandrio was at pains to give specific reasons for his trip and to point out that it had been ordered by President Sukarno. It had not been normal practice in the past for ministers at Subandrio's level to go into a long explanation of the reasons for making a routine visit anywhere in Indonesia; it was almost as if Subandrio was preparing an alibi.

Just why Subandrio, who obviously knew about the coup plans, should have planned to be away from Djakarta on the day of the coup is not exactly clear. One somehow

gets the feeling that he was not as enthusiastic about the idea of the coup or perhaps not as confident of its success as Aidit, and presumably Sukarno. Certainly, Subandrio was a much more cautious man, by nature, than Sukarno; he may well have had some premonition that the coup might fail. Aside from its chances for success, he may not have been altogether happy about the whole idea of eliminating the top leadership of the Army, which represented the main balancing force to the PKI. He didn't have the backing of any political party, the way Sukarno had the PNI, Aidit had the PKI, and Nasution and Yani had the Army. His power derived solely from Sukarno. He may well have figured that his own power position was better served by a continuation of the status quo than by any sudden upset of the balance between the PKI and the Army, which the coup would have accomplished, in favor of the PKI.

In any case, Subandrio was obviously not considered essential to the coup plans, apparently either by Sukarno or the PKI. One would not have expected the PKI to give Subandrio a major role to play in any coup of PKI making. He was, after all, Aidit's chief rival for influence with Sukarno and a major contender for power after Sukarno. The PKI could hardly exert the control over him that it could over Dani and the other military leaders involved in the coup.

As for Sukarno's feelings about Subandrio's participation in the coup, assuming of course that the President knew about the coup plans, it should be mentioned that Subandrio's stock with the President was reported to be at a low ebb during the summer and fall of 1965, as a result of the Afro-Asian Conference fiasco. Apparently, Subandrio's intelligence organization had painted a glowing picture of the prospects of the Afro-Asian Conference, from Indonesia's point of view, particularly the prospects for Indonesia's keeping Malaysia out of the conference and the prospects for Indonesia's emerging as one of the leading nations at the conference. After the postponement of the conference, Sukarno was reported to be very unhappy about the poor intelligence assessment he had been given. There were other reports that he was becoming wary of Subandrio who seemed to be attempting to build

his own power base. Whatever truth there may have been to these reports, Sukarno was obviously anxious to have the benefit of Subandrio's counsel when things suddenly began to go badly for the coup on the afternoon of 1 October. He sent an urgent message to Subandrio: "Objective not achieved. Return immediately." He even sent his Presidential plane to Medan to bring Subandrio home.

Subandrio had not seemed in the least surprised when he first received the news of the coup on 1 October. According to a member in his entourage, he acted "as if nothing had happened." Obviously, he was in no hurry to return to Djakarta. He was quoted as saying that "nothing urgent" called him, so he would "wait to see how events turned out." He manifested no particular worry or anxiety. In response to Sukarno's urgent summons home, he calmly decided to continue his tour of Sumatra. On 2 October, he is reported to have received a message from Deputy Prime Minister Leimena also requesting him to return to Djakarta. Again, he is reported to have commented: "Why must I go? Let Leimena settle this mess himself. The President is still there." Finally, on 3 October, he returned to Djakarta, going straight from the airport to Bogor to see the President.

At his trial, Subandrio repeatedly stated his innocence of any complicity in the coup. The trial certainly cannot be said to have established his guilt. He was convicted of other crimes against the state, having nothing to do with the coup. Thus, his involvement in the coup must be considered unproven. It seems clear that he knew about the planning for the coup, but he does not seem to have played any part, either in its planning or execution. In fact, he seems to have taken great pains to avoid becoming involved, no doubt because he knew that it would be assumed that he had been involved and he seems to have had some fears that it might not succeed.

Sukarno -- Probably the most crucial question about the Indonesian coup concerns the role of Sukarno in the coup. It is one question about which there will probably always be a certain amount of doubt. But it has always been the history of conspiracies, especially those

involving persons in high office, that certain facts have never been known for sure. The Indonesian coup is no exception.

It is quite clear, first of all, that Sukarno's sympathies were with the coup, if only from his actions after the coup. Everything that he did or said after the coup was in the interest of quieting the national furor raised over the generals' deaths, protecting those involved in the coup, and restoring the political situation to that existing before the coup. In the years since the coup, Sukarno has never sought to change the initial impression that he gave of his attitude towards the coup. He has never said that the coup was counter-revolutionary; in fact, he has never suggested that the 30 September Movement was carrying out a coup at all. Although the guilt of the PKI in planning the coup has long since been established, he has refused to place the blame on the PKI. For many months after the coup, he tried to resist the efforts to crush the PKI, which he continued to praise as the party that had suffered the most casualties and displayed the most merit in the Indonesian revolution.

From his actions on the day of the coup it seems clear that Sukarno at least knew about the coup plans ahead of time. There is the well established fact that he left a note for his wife Dewi when he left her home early on the morning of the coup. He had already left Dewi's house and was on his way to the palace when he was first notified by the Tjakrabirawa Palace Guard of the attack on the generals' homes. He would have had no way of knowing of the coup events before he left, unless he had prior knowledge of the coup. In the note, he explained that "the men who were carrying out this so-called revolution intended to safeguard Bapak (Sukarno) and did not intend to oppose him." He assured Dewi that "Bapak was safe."

Sukarno does not seem to have been either shocked or surprised by the news of the coup. He is not known to have asked any questions about the kidnapping of the generals, a most abnormal reaction to hearing such news for the first time. The only thing that seemed to interest

him was the report that Gen. Nasution had escaped. He was obviously very much concerned to learn the truth about Nasution. His first comment upon hearing of Nasution's escape had been: "This comes as an absolute surprise. What will you do with me?" Sukarno was not in the habit of asking other people "What will you do with me?" It suggests that he suddenly felt very much on the defensive, as though he assumed that the Army would know that he had been involved in the generals' kidnapping.

It could hardly have been a coincidence that Sukarno decided to go to Halim Air Force Base, which was serving as the coup headquarters. We know that the coup leaders were expecting him to arrive there around 0800-0900 hours; Sujono had made arrangements for the President to spend the day at Commodore Susanto's house on the airbase. Sukarno did not disappoint them. He arrived there around 0930 hours--at his own initiative and of his own free will. He spent the entire day of the coup at Halim, along with Aidit and Dani and Untung and Sjam and the others. Although he did not see Aidit or Sjam or Untung, who were at different locations on the airbase, he conferred often with Supardjo, who acted as courier between Aidit and the Central Command and Sukarno and Dani. He was with Dani at the Operations Command Center all morning; in the afternoon, he was at Commodore Susanto's house, where he is reported to have spent most of the afternoon "resting and sleeping," amazing as that might seem under the circumstances. He did not leave the airbase until late in the evening, after all hope for the coup was gone.

In no sense was Sukarno a prisoner of the coup group while he was at Halim. On the contrary, he seems to have been very much his own free agent from the time that he went to Halim at his own initiative to the moment that he decided to leave for Bogor. His complete independence of action was clear from the fact that he sent his own emissaries back and forth from Halim into Djakarta all day long. He was also free to use the coup-controlled radio to broadcast a Presidential statement to the nation.

The success of the whole coup depended on the public statement that Sukarno was expected to make. There is absolutely no question that the coup leaders fully expected the President to make a statement in support of the coup. His endorsement of the coup was the one strategic calculation that made sense of the coup. The military odds against the success of Untung's move on 1 October were overwhelming. Aidit, with his relatively good sense of the military, would never have risked such odds. Clearly, the President was the essential factor in the calculation; his endorsement would have been enough to guarantee the success of the coup.

If the coup leaders made one serious miscalculation, it was in thinking that they could count on Sukarno, in a crisis, if anything went wrong. Actually, they seem never to have considered the possibility of anything going wrong, such as their failing to capture all the generals, and the effect that it would have on Sukarno. At other times of national crisis, such as at the time of Indonesia's Independence, Sukarno had displayed a conspicuous lack of courage. The coup leaders had failed to plan for just such a thing happening again.

It is difficult to know just what influenced Sukarno to back out on the coup on the afternoon of 1 October. Certainly, Nasution's escape was one factor. Sukarno was alerted to the possibility that Nasution had escaped very early in the morning, several hours before the coup leaders at Halim Air Force Base received information that led them to suspect the reports they had received that all the generals had been captured. Sukarno spent the entire morning trying to check out the reports that Nasution had escaped. He kept receiving conflicting information. Thus, he was forced to make many of the major decisions of the day in a state of uncertainty, not knowing for sure whether Nasution had escaped or not. The whole effect seems to have been to throw him off-balance. It was not that Nasution's escape was all that disastrous for the coup. It is doubtful that Sukarno would have considered it a major disaster and that he would have decided to call off the coup simply because of it.

According to one theory, it was the murder of the generals that caused Sukarno to pull back. There is a great difference of opinion as to whether or not Sukarno knew that the generals would be killed, assuming of course that he knew and approved of the plans to arrest the generals. The main reason for thinking that he would never have approved the murder of the generals is that it was not his style of dealing with political opponents. The prisons in Indonesia were full of Sukarno's political opponents, but he had never executed anyone for political reasons, and that included several people convicted of trying to assassinate him. If Sukarno was surprised and/or shocked by the murder of the generals, he certainly never showed it, either on the day of the coup or afterwards. In fact, his whole attitude towards the murder of the generals was one of unbelievable callousness. That, as much as anything else he did or said after the coup, turned the Army and the nation against him.

Probably the main factor influencing Sukarno to call off the movement was the unexpected recovery of the Army from the stunning loss of six of its top generals. Here again, Nasution's escape was not the crucial factor. It was Gen. Suharto, not Nasution, who was the hero of the day, in rallying the armed forces against the coup. It could never have been foreseen that Suharto, known as a strong and capable officer but obviously underestimated as a leader, would so quickly and effectively take command of the Army in a crisis situation. It was his rallying of the Army against the coup that seems to have frightened Sukarno most. As mentioned above, the President had never been known for his physical courage. When it looked as though the Army was about to attack Halim Air Force Base, Sukarno apparently lost his nerve. He decided against making the public statement in support of the coup that he had obviously intended to make; he finally decided to stop the movement altogether; he called in Supardjo to tell him of his decision.

It is quite clear now that the coup leaders felt themselves betrayed by the President. It is debatable whether the coup would have succeeded or failed if Sukarno had not backed out on the coup. Quite clearly, the coup leaders



had miscalculated on one thing: the reaction of the Army to the loss of its top command. That miscalculation was not necessarily a fatal one, however. If Sukarno had not deserted the coup but had spoken out in defense of the action taken against the generals, as was planned, it is not at all certain that Suharto would have stood up to the President. Sukarno could probably have carried the day for the coup, even though the Army was not in the leaderless, paralyzed state that the coup planners had figured it would be. Thus, it seems that the coup was probably a good bet to succeed--if everything had gone according to plan. Actually, not everything had to go according to plan. Neither the mistake in not capturing Nasution nor the miscalculation of the Army's response were crucial. The crucial factor was Sukarno. The success of the coup depended on him. When the coup leaders failed to get his support, their cause suddenly became hopeless. Their fatal mistake had been to trust everything to Sukarno.

It is interesting to speculate just why the PKI should have risked everything on a coup of PKI making which, in the last analysis, depended on Sukarno, not the PKI. Almost certainly, Aidit would not have risked an action like the 30 September Movement without Sukarno's express approval beforehand. As we have seen, there is good evidence that the President was informed about the coup plans ahead of time. Although he may not have known all the details (for instance, he seems to have been surprised that Untung was chosen to lead the movement), he obviously knew a lot about the plans, including what was expected of him. He had a specific role to play in the coup, which had been planned well in advance; the PKI seems to have been in no doubt that he would do exactly what was expected of him.

Aidit's supreme confidence in Sukarno's commitment to the coup may well have been based on more than Sukarno's approval of PKI plans for a coup; Aidit may actually have been convinced that he was carrying out a coup on Sukarno's behalf. A purge of the Army leadership, which is what the Indonesian coup intended, was absolutely in keeping with

the direction of Sukarno's policies in 1965. In a series of bold moves against the opposition in late 1964 and early 1965, he had succeeded in eliminating all effective centers of opposition, except the Army. In April 1965, he had begun to move against the Army; in the spring and summer, he was able to push through several reforms that had the effect of undermining the Army as an independent political force. However, the Army had stood firm against two proposals that would all but have destroyed it as an independent power in Indonesia: the "fifth force" concept and the political commissar system, which both Sukarno and the PKI were pressing on the Army. Sukarno may well have decided that unless there was a change in the Army leadership the Army was not likely to give in on the matter of the "fifth force" and the even more controversial matter of introducing Nasakom councils in the command structure of the Army. In other words, he may have begun to think of purging the Army leadership, as he had purged the PNI leadership.

There is some evidence that Sukarno actually went to the lengths of fabricating evidence that could be used against the Army in justifying a move against the generals. It has never been proved who forged the Gilchrist Letter, which was used by Sukarno as evidence of Army plotting against the government and Army intrigue with foreign enemies of the Indonesian state. However, the weight of the evidence points to Subandrio and his intelligence organization, the BPI, as having been responsible for the forgery; almost certainly, such an operation would have had Sukarno's approval. It is possible that Sukarno and the BPI were also responsible for the stories about a Generals' Council and its alleged plotting for a coup. The original report about the Generals' Council originated with the BPI.

There was enough truth to the reports about a Generals' Council, however, that one must also leave open the possibility that Sukarno really believed the reports that the generals were plotting his overthrow. Since January 1965, Gen. Yani and four of his most trusted advisers in the Army had been meeting together in secret

to discuss ways of resisting Sukarno's moves to destroy the Army as a political force opposed to the radical movement to the left. Thus, the reports about the existence of a Generals' Council were true. However, there seems to have been no truth to the reports that the generals were planning a coup; there is no evidence that they were planning anything more than defensive measures to resist the efforts of Sukarno and the PKI to neutralize the Army as a political factor.

As one might expect, there is little in the way of concrete evidence to link Sukarno with the planning of the coup. About the only evidence that there is consists of (1) a conversation of Sukarno with Gen. Adjie in July 1965 in which Sukarno is reported to have promised Adjie that he could have Yani's job as Commander of the Army if he helped preserve order "during the trying period after Yani and the other generals in the Army were arrested," (2) the secret meeting of Sukarno with Dani on the morning of 29 September, which is thought to have been the occasion of Dani's telling Sukarno of Aidit's decision to stage the coup on 30 September, (3) several meetings of Sukarno with Aidit the last week in September, and (4) a conversation of Sukarno with Gen. Sugandhi on 30 September, in which Sugandhi asked the President directly if it was true, as Aidit had told him, that Sukarno knew about the plans of the PKI to stage a coup; Sukarno told Sugandhi not to interfere too much, to "go home and be careful." On the basis of Gen. Sugandhi's conversation with Sukarno, Nasution stated unequivocally, in public, on 13 February 1967 that "the President gave the coup his blessing and assistance." Because the conversation is well documented, it is probably the most convincing piece of evidence that (1) Sukarno knew in advance that a PKI coup would take place, (2) that he was given some understanding of what the coup involved, and (3) that he agreed to the plan.

Chinese Involvement -- At the time of the coup, many people--including most of the Communist leaders around the world--leaped to the conclusion that the Chinese must have been directly involved in the planning of the Indonesian coup. After years of patient tactics, owing little to Maoist precept, the PKI had seemed close to taking power; suddenly, its leaders had apparently been persuaded by Mao to risk all and lose all in a return to violence.

There are certain inescapable facts that suggest that the Chinese were at least aware of PKI planning for a coup, though the evidence is all circumstantial. There is the fact that the decision to stage the coup was taken within a few days of Aidit's having talked with the Chinese leaders in Peking and Sukarno's having talked with the Chinese Foreign Minister (Chen Yi) in Djakarta. There is the fact that Sukarno sent Air Force Commander Dani on a secret mission to Communist China in mid-September to arrange for the immediate shipment of a quantity of small arms that the Chinese had promised to send Sukarno. Whether or not the Chinese were informed of the reason for Sukarno's wanting the arms immediately is uncertain. Whether or not any of the arms shipments that Dani discussed with the Chinese officials arrived in Indonesia before the coup is also uncertain. However, the Chinese are known to have sent arms to Indonesia prior to September. Some Chinese arms, whether they were those sent before or during the month of September, were used in the coup--by the PKI volunteer troops that had received a quick course in military training for the specific purpose of the coup.

There is one other fact that suggests that the Chinese were informed about the coup planning in Indonesia. Normally, the PKI would be expected to send an impressive delegation, including someone of Politburo rank, to the National Day Celebrations in China on 1 October. On the occasion of National Day 1965, however, Aidit sent a 10-man delegation, the highest-ranking member of which was Sidik Kertapati, a not very well known member of the Central Committee. He was obviously influenced by considerations arising from the coup in wanting to have all PKI Politburo members in Indonesia around the end of September. Presumably, the PKI gave the Chinese some explanation for their sending

such a low level delegation. They could probably have come up with a satisfactory explanation without telling the Chinese about the coup, but it does suggest that the Chinese were informed about it.

There is no doubt that the Chinese encouraged the PKI in the direction which finally led to the Indonesian coup. We know that they were privately urging other Asian Communist parties in the fall of 1965 to undertake certain preparations for armed struggle, such as the establishment of a covert apparatus that would be trained and ready to engage in specific acts of violence at any time. It seems likely that the Chinese had influenced Aidit to set up the Special Bureau in November 1964; they probably had a fairly good idea of the capabilities of the Special Bureau for organizing an action like the 30 September movement. The Chinese would almost certainly have approved the PKI plans for the coup, especially as it was planned to have Sukarno's endorsement. It may be argued that the coup was more of an urban putsch than the kind of rural-based armed takeover of power that the Chinese advocate, and that consequently it was not the kind of action that the CCP would have recommended to the PKI. Actually, however, the coup was never thought of as a move to seize power from Sukarno. It was a purge of the top Army leadership, with which the Chinese presumably would be very much in sympathy. If the CCP had had any qualms at all, it might have been on the question of how far Sukarno was to be trusted by the PKI.

Chinese support of the coup was, of course, made very clear after the coup. The Chinese leaders are reported to have received the news of the coup with "obvious glee;" they were reportedly "very smug" in reporting the news to the various Indonesian delegations visiting in Peking at the time. (The fact that they mentioned the names of the generals who had been "captured"--and included Nasution among them--before the identities of the missing generals had been clearly established and announced over the Indonesian radio has been cited as an indication that the Chinese were aware of the plot in advance and thought from early reports that it had been completely successful.) When later news was received that the coup was a failure, Peking's short-lived exuberance quickly turned to gloom

and the Chinese maintained a discreet silence on the subject of the Indonesian coup for many days. In all of their actions after the coup--such as the famous flag incident, in which the Chinese refused to honor the Indonesian government's request that all foreign embassies in Djakarta fly their flags at half mast in honor of the dead generals--the Chinese were absolutely unequivocal in their support of the coup, even though it was by then a hopeless cause and their continued support of it only contributed to the worsening of Chinese relations with the new Indonesian government.

In summary, although the Chinese may have been aware of the coup plans and certainly very much in sympathy with them, there is no evidence that the Chinese masterminded the Indonesian coup. On the contrary, the evidence is that the planning of the coup was done by Aidit and Sjam. It would seem unlikely, in fact, that the Chinese were informed of specific details of the coup planning, such as the timing of the coup. There probably was not the time or the opportunity to inform the Chinese of the date set for the coup without risk to the secrecy of the plans. The final decision on the timing seems to have been made by Aidit on the evening of the 28th and communicated to the military leaders of the coup the next day, only a little more than 24 hours before the start of the coup. It is questionable that Aidit would have told the Chinese the exact timing of the coup, anyway, for security and other reasons. There is some indication that the Chinese were actually caught by surprise on the day of the coup. Mao made some remarks to a group of visiting Indonesian officials on 30 September that it seems he would not have made if he had known that the coup would be staged that very night, since, under the circumstances, his remarks could be taken to imply Chinese foreknowledge of the coup.

On the matter of Chinese involvement, the evidence is simply not conclusive, much less so than it is on other aspects of the coup. This ambiguity is unlikely to change unless and until information is obtained on Aidit's conversations with the Chinese in Peking in early August 1965 or on Dani's secret negotiations with the Chinese in September.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Fall 1964 - Early 1965

Sukarno steps up campaign to eliminate all effective opposition to him in Indonesia. Banning of BPS... Banning of Murba Party... Banning of Opposition Newspapers... Retooling of '45 Generation... Purging of PNI.

November 1964

PKI Special Bureau founded by Aidit. Sjam appointed as Chief.

January 1965

General Yani and 4 other senior generals in the Army begin to meet together in secret to discuss deteriorating political situation. Within the Army, the group is known as "General Yani's braintrust"; it is referred to by the PKI as the "Generals' Council."

Chou En-lai first presents the idea of the "fifth force" (training and arming peasants and workers) to Subandrio in Peking. Aidit begins to pressure Sukarno on the idea of the "fifth force."

25 March 1965

Sukarno first speaks of Indonesia's entry into the "socialist stage."

April 1965

Sukarno orders the Army to "get into step with the revolution."

May 1965

Sukarno proposes Nasakom advisory councils in the Army and mentions idea of "fifth force" for the first time in a speech to the National Defense Institute. He orders the Defense Institute to be placed under civilian control and pro-Communist courses added to the curriculum.

Aidit asks Sjam to develop a plan of operations against the Generals' Council.

Mid-May 1965

Aidit mentions the reports about the Generals' Council to a meeting of the Politburo. Tells Politburo that the discovery of the Gilchrist Letter tends to confirm the existence of the Generals' Council.

23-26 May 1965

Celebration of PKI 45th anniversary. Sukarno lends his full prestige to the event and pays great tribute to the PKI in a speech on the occasion.

26 May 1965

Sukarno confronts the Army with the "discovery" of the Gilchrist Letter and the existence of the Generals' Council.

26 June 1965

Aidit leaves Indonesia on six-week trip to USSR and Communist China.

30 June 1965

Air Force Minister/Commander Dani endorses idea of "fifth force."



July 1965

Sukarno reported to have conversation with General Adjie, Commander of the West Java Division of the Army, in which he promises Adjie he can have Yani's job as Commander of the Army after "Yani and the other generals are arrested."

Early July 1965

Subandrio makes 1st public announcement of "discovery" of Gilchrist Letter at press conference in Cairo.

7-29 July 1965

Aidit in Moscow for talks with Kosygin and Suslov.

26 July 1965

Sukarno speaks again of Indonesia's entry into the "socialist stage" in a speech at the PNI anniversary celebration.

29 July - 6 August 1965

Aidit in Communist China for talks with Chinese leaders.

Early August 1965

Chen Yi presses subject of "fifth force" on Sukarno.

3 August 1965

Sukarno taken sick. Summons Aidit to return home immediately.

6 August 1965

Sukarno still in bed.

7 August 1965

Aidit arrives in Djakarta, in the company of two Chinese doctors brought along to treat Sukarno.

9 August 1965

Sukarno out of bed. Visited by Aidit and two Chinese doctors. Chinese doctors of opinion that another attack of Sukarno's kidney disease would "paralyze or kill him."

13 August 1965

Aidit discusses Sukarno's illness at Politburo meeting. Raises subject of Generals' Council again.

Greater Djakarta Committee of PKI issues instructions on "preparations to be made in anticipation of possible death or incapacitation of Sukarno."

17 August 1965

Sukarno mentions idea of "fifth force" for first time in public in speech on National Day. Attacks Army generals.

28 August 1965

Aidit convinces Politburo of need for prompt action. Decision is made to launch a military movement against the Generals' Council. The planning for the coup is entrusted to the Special Bureau.

Late August 1965

Sukarno cancels plans for a trip to Vienna in early September for medical treatment. Claims "internal political developments will not permit him to be absent from the country."

1 September 1965

Sukarno speech at the Police "Revolutionary Doctrine" Rally, in which he tells Yani that "the people will crush you (the Army)."

Early September 1965

Sukarno speech to PSII Congress in which he identifies himself with 1926 PKI revolt.

2 September 1965

Subandrio attacks Army in speech in Manado.

4 September 1965

Untung is contacted by PKI Special Bureau and told to attend meeting on 6 September. Sjam and Pono of PKI Special Bureau contact Latief, who is also told to attend meeting on 6 September.

6 September 1965

First "get-acquainted" meeting of military officers involved in coup, including Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, Pono, Sigit, and Wahjudi.

7 September 1965

Untung recruits Dul Arief for coup activities.

8 September 1965

PKI party organizations in Djakarta told to provide certain number of volunteers for rush military training course at Lubang Buaja, to be conducted by officers of the Air Force.

9 September 1965

Second meeting of coup group, including Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, Pono, Sigit, and Wahjudi. Sjam discusses PKI plans for Revolutionary Council.

9 September 1965 (con't)

Subandrio attacks Army in speech to a student gathering.

Aidit refers to "child who will definitely be born" (apparent allusion to birth of socialism in Indonesia) in speech to women volunteers of Ministry of Information.

11-18 September 1965

Communist volunteers receive one-week military training course at Lubang Buaja. Sujono in charge of training.

13 September 1965

Third meeting of coup group, including Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, Pono, and Sigit. Discussion of troops and the role of Sukarno in the coup. Sjam tells the military officers that "the great leader of the revolution (Sukarno) has his own role to play."

Sukarno presents Aidit with order of Mahaputra Star in ceremony at the palace.

15 September 1965

Untung meets with Major Sukirno, Commander of 454th Batta'ion of Central Java Division of Army, who assures Untung of the use of his troops in the coup.

Aidit refers to the coup in speech to National Council of All-Indonesia Federation of Labor Organizations (SOBSI).

16-19 September 1965

Air Force Minister/Commander Dani in Communist China on secret mission for President Sukarno. Only Aidit and Subandrio informed of trip.

18-25 September 1965

Second course in military training given at Lubang Buaja to another 1500 Communist volunteers.

19 September 1965

Fourth meeting of coup group, including Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, and Pono. Sjam names Generals who are to be victims of coup. Appoints Untung as leader of the coup.

20 September 1965

Sukarno summons Nasution and Yani to ask them once again about the reports about the Generals' Council. Yani evades the issue.

21 September 1965

Dani reports to Sukarno on his secret trip to Communist China.

Subandrio attacks army again in speech. He says some former "heroes (in the Army) have turned into traitors."

23 September 1965

Fifth meeting of coup group, including Untung, Latief, Sjam, and Pono. Discussion of troops. Sjam mentions that General Supardjo, Commander of 4th Combat Command in West Borneo, will soon be joining group. Sujono not present at meeting because of an appointment at same time to see Dani. Matter of business between Dani and Sujono unknown but thought to concern matter of arms for the coup.

25 September 1965

Subandrio announces that an operation to eliminate "capitalist bureaucrats" is imminent.

25 September 1965 (con't)

Sixth meeting of coup group, including Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam and Pono. Sujono reports on the military training of Communist volunteers at Lubang Buaja. There is also a discussion about the Cavalry. After the meeting, Untung goes to Gambir Railroad Station to check on the arrival of the 454th and 530th battalions from Central Java.

26 September 1965

Untung meets with Capt. Kuntjoro, Deputy Commander of the 454th Battalion.

27 September 1965

Aidit addresses meeting of IPPI. Again calls for crushing of "city devils." Aidit cancels plans to go to Communist China for National Day Celebrations.

PKI leader Sudisman and Aidit have separate conversations with Gen. Sugandhi, in which they refer to the coup preparations.

Untung and Lt. Dul Arief meet with Capt. Kuntjoro and Lt. Ngadino of the 454th Battalion and Capt. Suradi of the 530th Battalion. Afterwards, Dul Arief takes Capt. Kuntjoro, Lt. Ngadino, and Capt. Suradi on a review tour of Lubang Buaja.

Seventh meeting of coup group, including Untung, Sujono, Latief, Sjam, and Pono. Untung discusses the review of Lubang Buaja that Kuntjoro, Ngadino, and Suradi made that afternoon. Another discussion about the Cavalry.

28 September 1965

Third group of Communist volunteers begins military training at Lubang Buaja.

28 September - afternoon

Aidit meets with PKI leaders Lukman and Sakirman for five hours. Decision on D-Day is reached. Later that night, Lukman and Sakirman leave for Central Java.

Late afternoon

Gen. Supardjo, in West Borneo, receives signal that the coup is about to begin. He flies to Djakarta, arriving there in late afternoon. He goes immediately to Sjam's house.

Evening

On the eve of his departure for Sumatra, Subandrio confers with Sukarno.

29 September - early morning

Lukman and Sakirman arrive in Semarang.

0900 hours

Gen. Supardjo reports some "news from Sjam" to Air Force Minister/Commander Dani. Dani immediately rushes to the palace, where he confers with Sukarno in private. Then Dani reports to Supardjo on his conversation with the President.

Morning

Aidit sees Subandrio at latter's office. A few hours later Subandrio and 12 other cabinet members leave on inspection tour of Sumatra.

29 September (con't)

Evening

Sukarno gives speech to CGMI Congress at Senajan Sports Stadium. Rumored that he seemed to falter in the midst of delivering speech, but no good evidence of this. For whatever reason, he suddenly leaves the stage and is seen conferring with military officers in a side room. Then he goes back and finishes his speech.

Evening

Communist volunteer troops who have completed military training at Lubang Buaja are picked up at PKI centers throughout Djakarta and driven to Lubang Buaja.

Late evening

Eighth meeting of coup group. Gen. Supardjo and Walujo and two unidentified women join the regular group of Untung, Sujono, Latief, Sjam and Pono. The military leaders are informed that there will be no armored support. Sjam announces decision on D-Day and explains that the movement will be called the 30 September Movement.

30 September 1965

PKI leader Sanusi, addressing a meeting of the State Bank of Indonesia uses the metaphor of the "baby" about to be born. Harian Rakjat editorial calls for the execution of the "city devils."

Gen. Sughandi tells President Sukarno about his conversations with Aidit and Sudisman on 27 September. He asks Sukarno if he knows about the coup preparations that are being made by the PKI. Sukarno tells him "to go home and shut up."



30 September (con't)

Communist volunteer troops at Lubang Buaja are given small arms.

Mid-day

Lt. Dul Arief gives military briefing to commanders of various units involved in the coup.

Afternoon

Sujono arranges accommodations for Dani and Aidit at Halim Air Force Base on the day of the coup. Then he goes to Aerial Survey Office to arrange use of the office as the Command headquarters of the coup the next morning.

Gen. Suharto reviews military drill of troops scheduled to participate in military parade on Armed Forces Day (5 October). Some of these same units along with others, begin to assemble at Lubang Buaja in early evening, on orders of military officers involved in the coup.

Evening

Sukarno gives speech at the National Conference of Technicians at Senajan Sports Stadium. Returns to the palace but soon leaves again to spend the night at his wife Dewi's house.

2230 hours

Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, Pono, and Supardjo review troops at Lubang Buaja.

1 October - 0130 hours

Lt. Dul Arief gives final briefing to troops involved in the coup.

1 October (con't)

0130-0200 hours

Sujono escorts Aidit to Halim; at the same time, Dani leaves his home to spend the night at Halim.

0200 hours

Untung, Latief, Sjam, Pono, and Supardjo arrive at the Aerial Survey Office.

0400-0500 hours

Coup forces launch surprise attack on the homes of seven top Army generals. Generals Harjono, Pandjaitan, Yani are killed resisting capture. Generals Suprpto, Sutojo, and Parman are captured alive, put aboard a bus, and taken back to Lubang Buaja. Gen. Nasution escapes capture. His aide Lt Tendean is mistaken for Nasution and taken back to Lubang Buaja.

0515 hours

Nasution's aide alerts Gen. Umar Wirahadikusumah, Djakarta garrison commander. of the attack on Gen. Nasution's home.

0530 hours

Gen. Umar arrives at Nasution's house. Nasution comes out of hiding and is taken to safety.

Gen. Suharto learns about the kidnapping raids on the generals' homes.

Chief of police phones palace about the kidnappings. Security guards on duty at the palace can not locate Sukarno.

1 October (con't)

0530 hours (con't)

Sujono makes arrangements for Sukarno to spend the day at Commodore Susanto's house on Halim Air Force Base. Informs Dani at Operations Command Center at Halim that Sukarno will arrive at Halim between 0800-0900 hours and will be housed in Commodore Susanto's home.

0600 hours

Sukarno en route to the palace from Dewi's house. Col. Saelan and Capt. Suwarno contact him on car radio and advise him not to enter the palace, which is surrounded, but to proceed to his wife Harjati's home in Grogol.

0630 hours

Sujono arrives at Aerial Survey Office. Just as he is arriving, Gen. Supardjo, Major Bambang and Major Sukirno are leaving to go to the palace.

0630-0700 hours

Gen. Suharto arrives at KOSTRAD headquarters. Assumes command of the Army.

0630-0915 hours

Sukarno at Harjati's house. Col. Saelan tells him of Nasution's escape. Sukarno orders Col. Ebram to check out the report that Nasution has escaped, but Ebram is unable to verify the report.

1 October (con't)

0700 hours

Major Sukrisno reports to the Central Command from Lubang Buaja that all seven generals (supposing Lt. Tendean to be Nasution) have been captured. He asks for instructions as to what should be done with the ones remaining alive. Sujono, at the Aerial Survey Office, issues written instructions that the "ones remaining alive should be done away with." Lt. Dul Arief supervises the murder of the generals and the hasty burial of the bodies in a well at Lubang Buaja.

The coup forces take over Radio Indonesia and make the first public announcement of the coup.

0800 hours

Dani drafts his order-of-the-day pledging the support of the air force to the coup. The final copy of the order is dated 0930 hours.

Lt. Dul Arief arrives at Aerial Survey Office and reports on the "success" of the kidnapping missions.

0900 hours

Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, and Pono leave the Aerial Survey Office and go to Sgt. Sujatno's home on Halim Air Force Base, where they spend the rest of the day.

0915 hours

Gen. Supardjo arrives by helicopter at Operations Command Center at Halim, having been unable to locate Sukarno at the palace. Dani welcomes Supardjo with exclamation "Success!" Supardjo goes immediately to Sgt. Sujatno's home on the air base to report to Untung and Sjam and the others.

1 October (con't)

0930 hours

Sukarno arrives at Operations Command Center at Halim. Dani reports to him on progress of the coup.

0930-1015 hours

Gen. Supardjo is with Untung, Sujono, Latief, Sjam, and Pono at Sgt. Sujatno's house. Untung and Supardjo sign Decree No. I, setting up the Revolutionary Council.

About 1000 hours

Subandrio in Medan receives news of the coup.

1015 hours

Supardjo returns to Operations Command Center from Sgt. Sujatno's house.

1030 hours

Supardjo reports to President Sukarno. Sukarno congratulates Supardjo on the success of the coup. Supardjo assures the President that Nasution was captured and explains why Untung was chosen to lead the movement.

1100 hours

Untung signs Decision No. 1 and 2 at Sgt. Sujatno's house.

1115 hours

Supardjo returns to Sgt. Sujatno's house to brief Untung, Latief, Sujono, Sjam, and Pono on his meeting with Sukarno. They decide to recommend to Sukarno that he appoint Gen. Pranoto as "care-taker commander" of the Army.

1 October (con't)

1145 hours

Supardjo returns to Operations Command Center to tell Sukarno of the Central Command's decision re Gen. Pranoto. Sukarno and Supardjo discuss the possibility that Nasution may have escaped.

Around noon

Sukarno tells Supardjo to stop the movement. The President leaves the Operations Command Center and moves to the nearby home of Air Commodore Susanto, where he spends the rest of the day.

Couriers sent by Sukarno at Halim arrive at KOSTRAD headquarters in Djakarta. Suharto refuses to allow Gen. Umar, Gen. Pranoto, or Admiral Martadinato to go to Halim as Sukarno requested. He sends Deputy Prime Minister Leimena to Halim with an ultimatum for Sukarno.

1200 hours

Decree No. 1 is broadcast over the radio. It is repeated at intervals throughout the afternoon.

Shortly after noon

In Semarang, Col. Suherman seizes control of the Divisional Army headquarters and broadcasts two announcements over the radio: (1) that he has taken over command of the division and (2) that a Revolutionary Council has been formed in Semarang, as called for in Untung's first announcement of the coup.

1 October (con't)

1300 hours

Decisions No. 1 and 2 broadcast over the radio.

1330 hours

Announcement is made over the radio that Sukarno is "alive, safe, in good health, and still in control of the state and the revolution."

Announcement is made on authority of Gen. Sabur, Commander of Tjakrabirawa Presidential Guard.

Afternoon

Sukarno sends his personal airplane to Medan to bring Subandrio to Djakarta.

Suharto negotiates with the coup forces surrounding the palace and radio station. The 530th Battalion agrees to surrender. Suharto issues ultimatum to the 454th Battalion.

1530 hours

Dani's Order-of-the-Day is broadcast over the radio.

1800 hours

In Solo, the Communist Mayor Utomo Ramelan issues a statement, which is read over the radio, announcing the formation of a Revolutionary Council in Solo.

454th Battalion withdraws from Djakarta to Halim. Communist volunteers stage disorganized march into Djakarta from Lubang Buaja.

1 October (con't)

2000 hours

Radio Indonesia in Jogjakarta begins broadcasting support for Untung's coup in Djakarta, which is itself in last stages of collapse. By 2000 hours Suharto is in full control of Djakarta. An official Army announcement over the radio brands the coup "a counterrevolutionary action."

Around 2000 hours

Suharto receives second communication from Sukarno, asking for "clarification of the situation." Suharto tells him to go to Bogor immediately.

2030 hours

Sukarno leaves Halim and drives to Bogor Palace.

2200 hours

Suharto receives report that Sukarno has arrived at Bogor. He orders RPKAD paracommandos to infiltrate Halim Air Force Base.

Around midnight

Sukarno's airplane returns to Halim from Medan, but without Subandrio, who chooses to continue his tour of Sumatra rather than go back to Djakarta.

2 October - 0130 hours

Aidit flies out of Halim on Air Force plane. Lands in Jogjakarta around 0400 hours, leaving immediately for Semarang (by car).



2 October (con't)

Around 0200 hours

Dani leaves Halim and flies to Madiun in Central Java. Lands at Iswahjudi Air Force Base in Madiun at 0600 hours. Briefs officers on duty there.

Early morning

Sjam and Gen. Supardjo leave Halim on foot. They spend the day and night of 2 October at home of PKI member in Djakarta. On 3 October, they go their separate ways.

Untung and Latief leave Halim on foot. They travel around the environs of Djakarta together for at least a week, before they split up. Sujono spends night of 1 October at Sgt. Sujatno's home at Halim.

0600 hours

Suharto in full control of Halim.

0800 hours

Aidit arrives in Semarang, where he meets Lukman and Sakirman. Together, they leave for Solo. Later in the day, Aidit writes a letter to Sukarno, which the President receives on 6 October.

Morning

The PKI endorses the coup in an editorial in Harian Rakjat.

Sukarno meets with Col. Sarwo Edhy at the palace in Bogor.

2 October (con't)

Afternoon

Dani flies back to Bogor. He and his family live in the palace at Bogor until 19 October, when Sukarno arranges an official excuse for them to go to Cambodia.

Meeting of armed forces commanders with Sukarno at Bogor Palace. Sukarno, Leimena, Dani, Suharto, Adjie, Pranoto, Sabur, Sutjipto, and Martadinata, present at meeting.

Rebels still hold Jogjakarta and Solo. Semarang is re-occupied by forces loyal to Suharto.

3 October - 0130 hours

Sukarno's radio broadcast to the nation.

5 October 1965

State funeral for the slain generals. A day of official mourning. Sukarno does not attend funeral services.

Jogjakarta and Solo back in the hands of forces loyal to Suharto.

PKI leader Njono is arrested in Djakarta.

PKI issues statement denying any involvement in the 30 September Movement.

6 October - 1000 hours

Plenary session of the Cabinet at Bogor Palace. Sukarno, Subandrio, Dani, Njoto and Lukman among those attending.

11 October 1965

Latief is arrested in Djakarta.

13 October 1965

Untung is arrested in Tegal.

15 October 1965

Sujono is arrested.

19 October 1965

Dani and his family fly to Phnom Penh.

22 November 1965

Aidit is captured and summarily executed by  
Army in Sambeng Gede.

April 1966

Dani returns to Indonesia and is arrested by the  
Army.

February 1967

Supardjo is arrested.

March 1967

Sjam is arrested.

## APPENDIX II

### SOME COMMENTS ON THE INTERROGATION REPORTS

Since our knowledge of the coup preparations that were being made in late August and September 1965 comes mainly from the confessions and interrogation reports of those involved, it seems appropriate to say a few words regarding the validity of such evidence. We have been able to see a good number of the interrogation reports, but by no means all of them. In most cases, we have the reports of several days of interrogation of a certain individual, but not his whole interrogation report; in the case of a few important people, we have no report at all of their interrogation. In both cases, however, we have the public testimony of the individual in question, either as a witness or the defendant in a case in court.

The importance of the fact that the interrogation reports are the official reports of the Army and not a special version of the reports prepared for release outside the Indonesian Government is that the Army is not suspected of having edited or otherwise changed them in any way for any special purpose of its own. (It is interesting to compare the interrogation reports with later statements made by the Army about the confessions of certain key figures in the coup; naturally, the Army choose to emphasize certain points made in the course of the interrogation and play down others). The interrogation reports themselves are convincing proof that they have not been fabricated, in part or in whole. There are differences on a number of points--such as dates of meetings, persons attending, matters discussed, and precise wording of quotes from Aidit, etc. If these were fabricated statements, put in the mouths of the accused, one would expect

the coup) with a mysterious figure "Sjam", who started the discussions with an explanation of the Generals' Council and its plans for a military coup and, consequently, the urgent need to prepare for a countercoup. Sjam is always reported to have led the discussions, which increasingly centered on military preparations for the countercoup; he is consistently reported to have told the group not to be concerned with the political ramifications of their action, as that had been taken care of by others. It would have been all but impossible for the Indonesian Army to have included Sjam as a significant figure in a fictitious account of the coup preparations, when his identity and function were not even known within the PKI, much less to the army, prior to his arrest in March 1967 on the basis of descriptions of him in the interrogation reports.

There is always the possibility that the major participants in the coup might have agreed ahead of time on a cover story to be used later in the event that the coup failed. However, everything indicates that the planning for the coup was not as thorough as all that. Other, much more important things were not well prepared for. There are a number of facts that suggest that the plotters were remarkably confident of success; apparently, they never considered the possibility of failure--witness the obvious lack of advance planning as to what to do (not just say) if the coup failed. Untung, Latief, Sujono, and Supardjo have all stated that there was no contingency planning for a second attack in case the first move was less than successful; they have all remarked that Sjam only kept assuring them of success. Furthermore, if their stories about the September meetings with Sjam and the last minute preparations at Halim had all been made up, they could never have been so detailed. Even in the details, they reinforce one another; the differences are not so much contradictions as inconsistencies due to personal differences in sensitivity to detail, ability to recollect, and, probably in some measure, to willingness to be completely forthright.

To be sure, one has to be discriminating in choosing what to believe and what not to believe in the testimony

of each individual and whom to believe and whom not to believe when their testimony differs. After a while, one gets a definite feeling for the people being interrogated and the reliability of certain testimony vs. other testimony; for instance, Untung's testimony vs. that of Dani or Sujono. The latter two were obviously devious in answering some questions; their testimony is sometimes illogical. Sujono again and again tries to put the blame on someone else for decisions he clearly seems to have made himself. At Untung's trial, Untung directly challenged parts of his testimony. Where there is no other supporting evidence we would definitely tend to accept Untung's version over Sujono's. Most often, Untung seems to have the clearest memory of events and to have paid the closest attention to detail, for instance, the exact time that he issued a certain order or signed the various Decrees. His account usually checks out well with other facts that are known to be true--for instance, the time that the decrees were first read over the radio or the timing of the attacks on the generals' homes, etc. And then there is the difference in motivation (other than coercion) of the different men in confessing to their activities in the coup. After the coup, Untung seems genuinely to have regretted his actions on behalf of the 30 September Movement and to have been willing to confess the whole truth as best he remembered it. At the end of his interrogation, he had the following words to say:

Everything that I have stated is true and if necessary I am willing to swear to the truth of my statements. Everything that I have said to this interrogator is all that I can remember; perhaps I have forgotten some things, but this is not due to any deliberate deviation on my part but rather it is due exclusively to a lapse of memory of the matter. I would like to state from my heart that I truly regret everything that occurred on 1 October because I had no knowledge at all nor was I informed either by the military which took part in the movement or by the PKI which planned the entire movement the cruel tragedy that would occur

and thus this was beyond my humanity. I once again state that I truly regret what has happened.

None of the other coup leaders expressed any such feelings of remorse over what they had done. As we shall see later, Untung seems really to have believed in the existence of the Generals' Council and its plans to stage a coup against Sukarno. After the coup, he apparently realized that the generals never had any such plans to overthrow Sukarno and that he had been tricked by the PKI into believing this. Apparently, he also felt that he had been let down by Sjam and the others who planned the coup; all the assurances he had received of adequate military strength, of support from certain army and air force units that never materialized, and of logistical preparations had proved to be false. In the interrogation reports of some PKI members one can detect a similar distinct feeling of betrayal by the party leaders, particularly Aidit. It is perhaps understandable that out of deep bitterness these people should tell the whole story of the coup as they remembered it. Other people would obviously have quite different feelings and motivation. Some--like Dani or Subandrio and possibly Sjam--who presumably knew more than Untung or Latief or Sujono about who was really behind the coup and who would presumably still want to protect those persons, would obviously be less forthcoming than Untung in telling all that they knew. Their answers to questions regarding Sukarno's involvement, for instance, might be deliberately misleading, while on other matters their testimony might be more reliable. Where interrogation reports are the main source of information, there will obviously be matters of judgment such as these, in accepting one person's testimony over another's or a certain part of the testimony but not all of it.

In conclusion, although there are certain difficulties in piecing together the whole story of the conspiracy that lay behind the events of 1 October--considering the fact that the coup preparations were a well kept secret all during the time they were in progress and there is no independent reporting to confirm or deny what is really the only important source of our information on the subject.

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- the word of the conspirators themselves--there is good reason to think that we do now know the essential truth about those preparations. Although it is not and never will be a matter of proven fact--in the way that the events of 1 October and the days following can be established as fact--the true story of the conspiracy behind the coup seems to us to have been established beyond any reasonable doubt in the confessions of those involved in the conspiracy.