

INDONESIAN CONFLICT: FORCES BEHIND THE OPEN REVOLT

By TILLMAN DURDIN
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HONG KONG, March 7—Conditions in Indonesia have long been ripe for the disruptive clash of forces signaled by the formation in Central Sumatra of a revolutionary regime opposed to the Central Government in Jakarta.

Despite progress in some respects, the young republic has experienced an over-all deterioration in recent years. Neither of the two basic political forces—the democratic Moslem elements led by the big Masjumi (Moslem Association) and its unreliable allies, and the Communist-Left-Nationalist faction with its off-and-on collaborators—has been able to establish dominance. The result has been a succession of weak, unstable Governments.

Unable to attract foreign capital or to get much foreign-government aid because of hypersensitive neutralist nationalism and generally uncertain conditions, this nation of 3,000 islands and over 80,000,000 people has experienced severe economic difficulties. Production has not kept pace with needs. Recurrent budget deficits and foreign-exchange shortages have brought steady inflation. Corruption, inexperience and an administrative system strangled with negatives and red tape have kept the management of the nation's affairs at a low level of efficiency.

Sources of Unrest

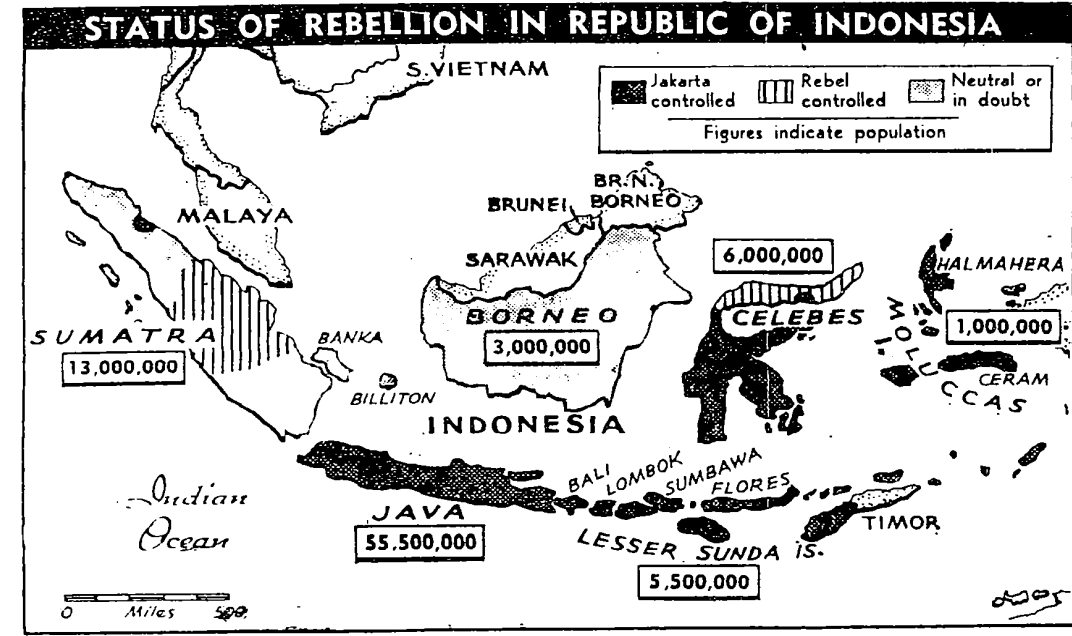
Revolts have sputtered and simmered, the eighty-year-old guerrilla rebellion of the Islam State partisans continuing perennially along with flare-ups of separate or allied groups. Constantly evoked by President Sukarno, the claim to West New Guinea has been a rising national demand barring any chance of cooperation with the Dutch, hampering good relations with the United States and giving the Communists an unending cause to champion and agitate.

President Sukarno's advocacy of cooperation with the Communists has helped their progress enormously. He seemingly decided some years ago that the rising Indonesian Communist movement could be a factor in his own power and popularity, a wave of the future that could be ridden. He followed visits to President Nasser in Egypt and to Russia and China with enunciation late in 1956 of his "guided democracy" conception. He maintained the Communists were a major political force and must be a part of any regime.

Sumatra Leads Resistance

Economic stringency and the Central Government's failure to satisfy Sumatra and other outer island provinces with allocations of revenue had produced a new peak of resentment at this stage. Sumatra, the oil, tin, rubber, tea, tobacco, palm oil and fiber exports from which are estimated to earn 70 to 80 per cent of Indonesia's foreign exchange, was particularly bitter at what seemed to be the large utilization of funds on overcrowded, under-fed Java by a Government predominantly of Javanese. The growth of Communist influence not only alarmed the Masjumi and intensified anti-Communist feelings among this and other groups but sparked new concern in the anti-Communist outer islands, where Communist influence has never been important except in Northeast and South Sumatra.

The "guided democracy" pro-



posal was rejected by the Masjumi. Vice President Mohammed Hatta resigned, partly over the trend of President Sukarno's politics and partly over dissatisfaction with the protracted ineffectiveness of his office.

Northeast, Central and South Sumatra and North Celebes followed by acting on both the regional claims and communism. They announced they would henceforth conduct their own foreign trade, administer their own internal affairs and suppress Communist subversion in their areas. Colonels in the dissident regions took over local administration. (In Northeast Sumatra at Medan a counter-coup by his chief of staff ousted Col. Maludin Simbolon and restored the area to Jakarta.)

President Sukarno put his "guided democracy" plan into partial effect in mid-1957, after another prolonged Cabinet crisis, by ignoring Parliament, naming members of a Cabinet headed by Dr. Djuanda Kartawidjaja and appointing a National Advisory Council of Communist and non-Communist members to propose the main lines of Government policy.

The Cabinet itself contained no Communist party members but three ministers have backgrounds as Communist partisans. The Cabinet has no sanction from Parliament to serve and is thus extraparliamentary and outside the scope of the constitution.

Sukarno Rules

The present authoritarian Jakarta regime amounts to a Sukarno instrument. Under martial law Premier Djuanda, who is concurrently Minister of Defense, and Gen. Abdul Haris Nasution, army chief of staff, have wide latitude. Normal civil rights are suspended and secret arrests and detentions occur as in a police state system. The anti-Communist press is harassed and controlled while the Communist and pro-Communist press has great leeway.

Economic and political tensions in Indonesia were heightened by the takeover of Dutch properties estimated to be worth \$1 billion starting last December under the orders of the Djuanda Cabinet. The takeovers, which have amounted to expropriation without compensation, followed a United Nations Assembly rejection of an Indonesian resolution asking the Dutch to resume talks with Jakarta regarding West New Guinea. Many Dutch rubber, fiber, tobacco, tea, sugar and other estates and factories,

banks, ships and trading firms have ceased operating. Those carrying on under Indonesian management operate on a reduced scale. The effect has been to accentuate Indonesia's economic difficulties.

Open Opposition

Mounting opposition to the acts and policies of the Jakarta Government finally produced last month the most serious repudiation of Central Government authority that has yet occurred. This oppositionist revolutionary group, established in the Padang-Bukittinggi area of Central Sumatra, combines the regional autonomy forces with individuals and groups mainly antagonistic to the authorita-

tionary Government. The Government has given President Sukarno a "reasonable period of time" to meet its terms, failing which he will be disavowed as chief of state.

The revolutionists at present control only Central Sumatra and North Celebes, areas which have about 5,000,000 of Indonesia's people. South and North Sumatra are sympathetic but have not openly joined the new regime. Widespread support in Java itself is claimed.

The new Government, with only small ground forces, no airplanes and no navy, has no power at the moment to attack Central Government areas. The Government has a symbolic appeal, however, for all Indonesians dissatisfied with Jakarta, and its political support may grow.

Power Over Oil

Its economic leverage will be the new Government's most effective material weapon. The regime wants Caltex, Stanvac and the Anglo-Dutch Batavia Petroleum Company to cut off revenues to Jakarta, now constituting the biggest share of the Central Government's income, and asks the two companies with refineries in South Sumatra to stop shipments of refined products to Java. The new Government has the threat of cutting off crude production in Central Sumatra as a means of enforcing its demands.

Even leaving oil out of the picture, the new Government can cause drastic economic strains for Jakarta through forcing heavy military expenditures and the denial of the proceeds from exports other than oil from its own areas. All of Sumatra except the northeast and most of Indonesian Borneo and the east Indonesian islands are continuing as they have for some time

to cut Jakarta off from any share in their foreign trade.

The progressive deterioration of Jakarta's financial situation is indicated by the fact that prior to the declaration of autonomy by the regions of Sumatra and the Celebes in December, 1956, the budget deficit of the Central Government was a billion rupiah (about \$85,000,000) a year. The autonomy declaration was followed by independent trading by the regions and this caused the budget deficit to increase more than four times in 1957. The expropriation of Dutch properties caused the deficit to soar.

Central Government authority is still exercised on Java, in the northeast (Medan) area of Sumatra, in Southern Borneo, the southern prongs of Celebes and in the Lesser Sundas and the Moluccas. Jakarta has claimed the occupation of Gorontalo, a town in rebel North Celebes, and might try an attack with troops in Central Sumatra.

Jakarta Strength

Such a move, however, would probably only result in units getting bogged down in guerrilla warfare after the fruitless seizure of a few cities and towns. Jakarta lacks the means for anything more than a small land attack or a light naval blockade and harassing air attacks.

Talks between President Sukarno and Dr. Hatta may yet bring changes in Jakarta satisfactory to the revolutionary leaders. Dr. Sjafruddin of the Revolutionary Government has said that if his regime can hold out for three months, economic and political disintegration will have insured the break-up of the Jakarta Government.

Large-scale aid to Jakarta from the Communist bloc could forestall such a disruption but this would be likely to provoke similar moves from Washington and other free-world countries in aid of the revolutionary regime. A Korea-type struggle would result, with the Communists certainly taking over a top role on Java.