The Brunei Rebellion of 1962

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Law, Education, Business, and Arts, Charles Darwin University

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Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
2015
Thesis Declaration

I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.
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NOTES

Brunei has four districts, mostly centred around rivers of the same name: the Belait, Tutong, Brunei-Muara, and Temburong districts. The capital of Brunei was known as Brunei Town, or Bandar Brunei, at the time of the rebellion and was renamed Bandar Seri Begawan in 1970.

Sarawak, at the time of the revolt, had five administrative divisions referred to as the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Divisions, of which the latter surrounds Brunei on its land borders. The capital of Sarawak is Kuching.

Jesselton became the capital of British North Borneo in 1946 and was renamed Kota Kinabalu in 1968. The pre-war capital was Sandakan.

All references made to dollars, unless otherwise stated, relates to the currency in use in Brunei, the Straits dollar prior to 1963 and the Brunei dollar thereafter. The former was renamed the Malayan dollar after World War II.

Historical sources used in the course of this thesis frequently spell Malay words differently from current usage. The most prominent instance of this is the phrase Partai Rakyat, which can appear in various combinations of these guises: Parti or Party; Ra’ayat, Raayat, or Rakjat. In most cases, the spelling used at the time will be preferred.
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AM Azahari: Shaikh Ahmad Azahari bin Shaikh Mahmud was founder, chairman, and guiding spirit of the PRB from its establishment in 1956. He lived in exile in Bogor, Indonesia for much of his life.

Dennis White: Sir Dennis Charles White was Brunei’s last British Resident and the first High Commissioner for Brunei, until his retirement in May 1963.

Hapidz Laksamana: Hapidz Laksamana was Secretary-General of the Brunei United Labour Front, as well as being Vice-President of the PRB at the time of the rebellion.

HM Salleh: Pehin Orang Kaya Shahbandar Haji Awang Muhammed Salleh bin Haji Masri was Vice President of the PRB between 1956 and 1958. He later joined the public service and was appointed the State Welfare Officer in September 1961.

Ibrahim Jahfar: Pehin Dato Perdana Mentri Dato Laila Utama Awang Haji Ibrahim bin Mohamed Jahfar was Private Secretary to the Resident from 1935 until the Japanese Occupation, when he was promoted to the office of Chief Administrative Officer. After the war, he retired from the public service and was appointed as the Sultan’s private secretary in 1951. In 1959, he became the first Mentri Besar of Brunei, serving until he retired due to ill health in 1962.

Jamil Umar: Pehin Jawatan Dalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr Haji Awang Mohd. Jamil Al-Safri bin Begawan Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Seri Paduka Haji Awang Umar was Director of the Language Board between 1961 and 1976 and is currently Head of the Pusat Sejarah Brunei (Brunei History Centre).

Lord Selkirk: George Nigel Douglas-Hamilton, Earl of Selkirk was Commissioner General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia and High Commissioner for Singapore from 1959 to 1963.

Marsal Maun: Dato Seri Paduka Haji Marsal bin Maun was a leading member of the PGGMB in the 1950s and was Mentri Besar from 1962 to 1967.

Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim: Pengiran Setia Negara Pengiran Haji Mohamed Yusuf bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim was Deputy State Secretary and Director of Information in December 1962.

Sir Anthony Abell: Sir Anthony Foster Abell was Governor of Sarawak and High Commissioner for Brunei between 1950 and 1959. During 1962, he was a member of the Cobbold Commission.

Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin: Sultan Sir Ahmad Tajuddin Akhazal Khairi Waddin II ibni Almarhum Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II reigned from 1924 until his death in 1950.

Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin: Sultan Sir Muda Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa`adul Khairi Waddin III ibni Almarhum Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam III reigned from 1950 until his abdication in 1967. Before his accession to the throne, he was referred to as Pengiran Muda Tengah Omar Ali Saifuddin, and also as Pengiran Bendahara Omar Ali Saifuddin. After his abdication he assumed the title Seri Begawan Sultan and became his successor’s guide and advisor.

Yassin Affandy: Haji Muhammad Yasin bin Abdul Rahman was Secretary-General of the PRB and General Officer Commanding the TNKU.

Zaini Ahmad: Dr Haji Zaini bin Pehin Orang Kaya Shahbandar Dato Setia Haji Ahmad was Vice President of the PRB in December 1962 and was in Manila with Azahari for the duration of the revolt. He has since written several works on the PRB and political history in Brunei.
MAPS

Map 1: Brunei, Sarawak, and North Borneo in the 19th Century  26-29
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aide-memoire</td>
<td>An informal diplomatic paper, circulated for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanah</td>
<td>Sacred oath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anak</td>
<td>Child; Iban naming word, e.g. Insol anak Chundang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atap</td>
<td>Building material, made from the nipa palm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahasa Melayu</td>
<td>The Malay language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandar</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barisan</td>
<td>Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bukit</td>
<td>Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dato / Datu</td>
<td>An honour conferred by the sultan, equivalent to a knighthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex officio</td>
<td>By right of office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerakan di bawah Tanah</td>
<td>Underground movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inche</td>
<td>Mister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istana</td>
<td>Palace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalan</td>
<td>Street / Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawi</td>
<td><em>Bahasa Melayu</em> written in modified Arabic characters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kajang</td>
<td>Palm frond (usually referring to a building material)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong</td>
<td>Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Ayer</td>
<td>Water Village; specifically refers to the ancient capital of Brunei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemerdekaan</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerajaan</td>
<td>A river / district owned by the sultan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketua kampong</td>
<td>Village head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konfrontasi</td>
<td>Confrontation, specifically referring to the 1963–1966 conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Kris**  A traditional Malay dagger

**Kuala**  Estuary

**Kubu**  Fort; in Sarawak, a town’s main government office

**Kuripan**  A river / district held by an official of the government

**Lorong**  Lane, minor road

**Melayu Raya**  Greater Malaya

**Mentri Besar**  First or Prime Minister

**Merdeka**  Freedom

**Nipa**  A type of palm tree

**Orang Ulu**  People of the interior

**Padi**  Pre-harvest rice

**Parang**  Machete

**Penghulu**  Sub-district chief

**Pengiran**  Noble

**Perahu**  Boat

**Pulau**  Island

**Rumi**  *Bahasa Melayu* written in Romanised characters

**Sungei / Sungai**  River

**Tamu**  Market or bazaar

**Tengku / Tunku**  Prince

**Tentera**  Army

**Tulin**  A river / district inherited by a noble

**Ulu**  The upstream area of a river; more generally, a term denoting the interior of Borneo

**Wazir**  Principal minister; specifically refers to the Sultan’s four closest royal advisors

**Yang Di-Pertuan Agong**  The paramount ruler of Malaya, selected on a rotational basis by the Federation’s nine sultans every five years
**ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2GR</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Battalion, 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; King Edward VII’s Own Gurkha Rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/7GR</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Battalion, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Duke of Edinburgh’s Own Gurkha Rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1GJ</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Green Jackets (43&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; and 52&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1KOYLI</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Battalion, King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1QOH</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Battalion, Queen’s Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7GR</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Battalion, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Duke of Edinburgh’s Own Gurkha Rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPSO</td>
<td>Afro-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABRI</td>
<td><em>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</em> (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Australian National Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARIP</td>
<td><em>Barisan Pemuda</em> (Youth Front)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESLEC</td>
<td>Brunei, East Sarawak, Labuan Emergency Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA</td>
<td>British Military Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMR</td>
<td>Brunei Malay Regiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMPC</td>
<td>British Malayan Petroleum Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNBC</td>
<td>British North Borneo Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNO</td>
<td>Brunei National Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRUFICO</td>
<td>Brunei Film Production Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSP</td>
<td>Brunei Shell Petroleum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BULF</td>
<td>Brunei United Labour Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUNO</td>
<td>Brunei United National Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUP</td>
<td>Brunei United Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCO</td>
<td>Clandestine Communist Organisation (Sarawak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CINCFE</td>
<td>Commander-in-Chief, Far East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Colonial Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMBRITBOR</td>
<td>Commander, British Forces in Borneo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Commonwealth Parliamentary Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>Commonwealth Relations Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>District Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI</td>
<td>Department of Broadcasting and Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>Department of External Affairs (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>District Emergency Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARELF</td>
<td>Far East Land Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAF</td>
<td>Far East Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEC</td>
<td>Far East Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMS</td>
<td>Federated Malay States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCINCFEF</td>
<td>Flag Officer, Commander-in-Chief, Far East Fleet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerwani</td>
<td>Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women’s Movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHQ</td>
<td>General Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMG</td>
<td>His / Her Majesty’s Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGC</td>
<td>Inter-Governmental Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>Inter-Territorial Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JICFE</td>
<td>Joint Intelligence Committee (Far East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKIMB</td>
<td>Kesatuan Kaum Ibu Melayu Brunei (Unity of Brunei Malay Women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMB</td>
<td>Kesatuan Melayu Brunei (Brunei Malay Union)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMG</td>
<td>Light Machine Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMG</td>
<td>Medium Machine Gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPSF</td>
<td>Malayan People’s Socialist Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRT</td>
<td>Medium Range Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCC</td>
<td>Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARA</td>
<td>National Archives and Records Administration (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKKU</td>
<td><em>Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara</em> (North Kalimantan Unitary State)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Officer Commanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>People’s Action Party (Singapore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partindo</td>
<td><em>Partai Indonesia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGGMB</td>
<td><em>Persekutuan Guru-Guru Melayu Brunei</em> (Brunei Malay Teachers’ Association)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKI</td>
<td><em>Partai Komunis Indonesia</em> (Indonesian Communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMIP</td>
<td>Pan-Malayan Islamic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNI</td>
<td><em>Partai Nasional Indonesia</em> (Indonesian Nationalist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRB</td>
<td><em>Partai Rakyat Brunei</em> (Brunei People’s Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRM</td>
<td><em>Parti Rakyat Malaya</em> (Malayan People’s Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td><em>Parti Rakyat Singapore</em> (Singapore People’s Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWD</td>
<td>Public Works Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QRIH</td>
<td>Queen’s Royal Irish Hussars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r.</td>
<td>Reigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Royal Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REME</td>
<td>Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td>Royal Fleet Auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFMP</td>
<td>Royal Federation of Malaya Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Royal Marines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNZAF</td>
<td>Royal New Zealand Air Force</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S.  

*Sungei / Sungai*

SAO  Sarawak Administrative Officer

SBS  Special Boat Section, RM

SEATO  Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation

SITC  Sultan Idris Teachers’ College (Perak)

SMG  Sub-Machine Gun

SRT  Short-Range Transport

SUPP  Sarawak United People’s Party

TNA  The National Archives (UK)

TNKU  *Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara* (North Kalimantan National Army)

UAR  United Arab Republic

UK  United Kingdom

UMNO  United Malays’ National Organisation

UN  United Nations

US/A  United States of America

W/T  Wireless / Transmitter
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As small as this gesture is, it is essential for me to acknowledge all of the many people who have assisted me in the course of this research and in writing this thesis.

Firstly, all of the people at the various institutions who helped me in any way: The National Archives in London; the National Archives of Australia; the National Library of Australia and especially its magnificent online catalogue, Trove; the State Libraries of Victoria and New South Wales; the National Library of Singapore and, in particular, its online newspaper catalogue; the State Libraries of Sarawak and Sabah; the National Archives of Brunei Darussalam; the Library of Universiti Brunei Darussalam; and the Pusat Sejarah Brunei.

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finally sent him the draft chapter to which he had contributed. So, thanks, Mike, for coming
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beside me every step of the way and never stopped being excited that I was doing this, I
thank you.

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when I was struggling to teach and write at the same time, and seemed to know without me
telling her that leaving me to work alone was the best approach to take, even when the fourth
extension became necessary. I appreciate everything you have done for me, Christine, more
than words can say.

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will (but I tried not to). I do know that I tend to write passive sentences and that I am
seemingly unable to use the past perfect tense correctly, mate, but I really do try to heed your
words of wisdom. And were there ever many of those!

My best friend, Belinda West, has been my sympathetic ear when I needed it, my most
faithful cheerleader, and pretended to laugh at my awful jokes simply to make me feel better
(or possibly because she has a similarly terrible sense of humour). I could not have chosen a
better friend, Bella.

Whilst I was doing this, I acquired two baby sisters of my very own, Charlie and Bebe.
You may have arrived fashionably late, but neither of you are any less valued.
To Daniel and Joey, who are always proud of their baby sister despite my tendency to forget to tell them stuff and general crabbiness. I love my big brothers, even if I get annoyed at your over-protectiveness at times, and I want you to know that I have always known how lucky I am to have you both.

And lastly, but the very opposite of least, to my beloved Mum and Dad, who have made this possible and who have lived with me every day of these past years and survived unscathed, I do not have the words to express the depth of my gratitude and love. Your unstinting support and unfailing encouragement always let us know we could do whatever we wanted with our lives, and it’s this background that has enabled me to get to this point in my life. Just know that I could not have done this without you.
ABSTRACT

The causes of the Brunei Rebellion are little known, despite attracting some attention in the literature on the history of Brunei Darussalam. This thesis posits that the revolt had four main causes and two immediate catalysts, starting with the political development of Bruneian society outside the traditional sphere. The second cause was Brunei’s invitation to enter the proposed Federation of Malaysia, which was bitterly opposed by the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB) because of its own dreams of a Brunei-led federation of northern Borneo. Discontent within Brunei and the dysfunction of the government since the promulgation of the constitution in 1959 was the third cause, while the influence of the PRB’s regional and international relationships on its perception of its own capabilities and prospects also played their part.

The first trigger for the outbreak of the rebellion was the Speaker of the Legislative Council’s rejection of certain motions proposed by the PRB for the first working meeting of that body, which was taken by the Party as a sign that its hopes of implementing some of its policies were not destined to be realised. More importantly, the arrest of several members of the PRB’s armed wing in Sarawak in late November 1962 were thought by the Party leadership to pose an immediate threat to the Party’s very existence.

The revolt and its aftermath are also explored in detail, since there is no really comprehensive account of the entire period in the literature and there are, as a result, many questions about these events yet to be addressed.
Chapter I: Introduction
In the early hours of 8 December, 1962, the militant wing of Brunei’s most popular political party, the *Partai Rakyat Brunei* (PRB), seized control of all major population centres in the Sultanate, as well as others in neighbouring parts of Sarawak and North Borneo. This early success was fleeting, however, since the revolt was crushed by British troops within a week. The Brunei Rebellion, soon to be forgotten by all who had no reason to remember it, brought grief, sadness, and pain to a country known for centuries as the Abode of Peace. It also abruptly halted Brunei’s slow progress on the path to constitutional democracy and destroyed the political party that was its author. Finally, it triggered a wider conflict, known as *Konfrontasi*, between the Republic of Indonesia and the Federation of Malaysia that also embroiled Brunei, Singapore, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

This revolt, a seminal event in Bruneian history, is shrouded in a cloud of unanswered questions. Not the least of these is why it happened. What could cause the PRB, popular and respected, to take up arms against a government led by a sultan beloved by his people and shielded by a protectorate agreement with the United Kingdom? Was the possibility of Brunei becoming part of the proposed federation of Malaysia so threatening? Or was it the seemingly inevitable death of the Party’s dream of Kalimantan Utara, a re-unification of Brunei, Sarawak, and North Borneo under its leadership? Or was it the more immediate threat of arrest presaged by the arrest of several PRB militants in Sarawak in late November?

Although the issues raised above were important, this thesis argues that the primary cause of the Brunei Rebellion was the inferior position that the PRB occupied in relation to that of the Sultan, from which it could neither effect change nor achieve its stated goals. This powerlessness was the factor without which the revolt would not have happened. A more fundamental cause of the revolt was the development of political consciousness in Brunei, begun in earnest with the growth of western-style education in the early decades of the 20th century. A general sense of discontent with the performance of the government and the existence of the *Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara* (TNKU, National Army of North Kalimantan) were the two other major factors behind the rebellion.
This question of why the rebellion occurred is matched by the many unresolved issues arising from the course of the event itself. For example, why was there no concerted effort to capture the Sultan, the symbolic and functional centre of government in Brunei? Why, also, was the acting High Commissioner allowed to telegraph news of the revolt to Singapore and request assistance from the British Army? The incompetence that these two failures illustrate contrasts with the surprising brutality evident in the ruthless murder of the District Officer of Temburong and the use of hostages as human shields in Seria. Such a startling blend of ineptitude and savagery, of comedy and tragedy, only strengthens the aura of mystery that surrounds the revolt.

It is in the context of these questions and considerations that this research is undertaken. Although, as noted below, the Brunei Rebellion has received some attention in the literature, it is usually analysed merely as one part of a larger subject. There is no really comprehensive study of the revolt that examines its causes and course in any systematic way, so there is much about it that remains obscure. This lack of knowledge about such a seminal event in Brunei’s history needs to be rectified, and this is the aim of this thesis.

The literature on the Brunei Rebellion is best described as inadequately developed and in many respects unsatisfactory. Until recently, there were no works published in the English language that concentrated solely on the insurrection, only sources that analysed it within the context of another issue, such as the formation of Malaysia, Indonesia’s Konfrontasi with the new Federation, or political development in Brunei. This situation was rectified in 2007 with the publication of Rebellion in Brunei: The 1962 Revolt, Imperialism, Confrontation and Oil by Harun Abdul Majid¹ and Remember, Remember... The 8th of December by Mohamed Bolkiah.² Neither of these works, however, is completely satisfactory for one whose goal is to understand the causes of the revolt.

² Mohamed Bolkiah, Remember, Remember... The 8th of December, Bandar Seri Begawan: Brunei Press, 2007.
The problem with Harun’s work is that he analysed the rebellion in the context of the
defence and security of Brunei, rather than providing a coherent account of the event itself. 3 Consequently, he has mainly discussed issues that either had no or only minor relevance to
the causes of the revolt. When he did address the rebellion, Harun did not analyse its causes
in any organised manner, mentioning in passing that “[t]he Rebellion was all about how
Brunei should be ruled within a context of a North Borneo political entity”. 4 He later stated
that “[t]he rebellion was therefore directed against the British colonial and protecting power
and against plans for Malaysia; certainly against the immediate joining of Malaysia.” 5 There
was no concentrated discussion of the relative importance of any of these factors, nor any
analysis of other significant causes. Though it would be unfair to criticise Harun for failing
to pursue issues that were not relevant to his own subject, it is reasonable to question his
rather misleading title.

Mohamed Bolkiah, on the other hand, has written a very personal account of the course
of the revolt. He approached his story in the manner of a memoir, and as a way of “com[ing]
to terms with what happened” during the rebellion. 6 As Bolkiah himself says, “I offer no
academic thesis”; there is no analysis of causes or context and the author is very much
present in the text, so there is no question of an objective discussion of the issues
surrounding the revolt. 7 The only conclusion that Bolkiah offers in regard to cause is this
comment from a former rebel: “It seemed like a good idea at the time”. 8

Until the publication of the works of Harun and Bolkiah, there was only one detailed
description of the Brunei Rebellion itself, by Harold James and Denis Sheil-Small. 9 Though
it was mainly focused on Konfrontasi, the first few chapters have given a fairly detailed
description of events in Brunei. James and Sheil-Small were concise about the causes of both
conflicts, but the very presence of the insurrection in their work implied a definite link to

5 Harun, op. cit., p. 11.
7 Ibid, p. 131.
Konfrontasi. They also largely approach the revolt from the external perspective, describing Indonesian motivations for support rather than any internal causes of discontent. In their view, President Sukarno of Indonesia was hostile to Malaya because of its economic system and its continued friendly relations with its former colonial power. This antagonism led to a determination to thwart the formation of Malaysia, and the revolt in Brunei presented an opportunity to do this. ¹⁰

A more recent account of the course of the rebellion itself appeared in 2012 in the form of The Brunei Revolt 1962–1963, by Nick van der Bijl.¹¹ He has credited the formation of the TNKU to an Indonesian government that wished to “undermine the idea of a Malaysian Federation by subversion and mounting intelligence operations”.¹² Van der Bijl has also stated that the postponement of the Legislative Council meeting was the catalyst for the decision by the PRB to revolt.¹³ Moreover, it is evident from other passages in his work that van der Bijl subscribed to the theory put forward by Poulgrain, which is discussed further below.

Much of the other literature that deals with the Brunei Rebellion views it through the prism of other subjects. One of these is the role that the revolt played in the origins of Indonesia’s Konfrontasi with the Federation of Malaysia. Although there is general agreement in the literature that the outbreak of the rebellion signalled the beginning of Konfrontasi, there are differing opinions of the degree to which it was a cause of the dispute. JAC Mackie, in his comprehensive analysis of Konfrontasi, portrayed the insurrection as a fortuitous opportunity that allowed Sukarno to promote his new ideology of the so-called New Emerging Forces opposed to imperialism and colonialism.¹⁴ Mackie also later argued that Konfrontasi was necessary because the Indonesian Government, as the creator of this doctrine and natural leader of the New Emerging Forces, was unable to ignore the Brunei

¹⁰ Ibid., p. xviii.
¹² Ibid., pp. 38-9.
¹³ Ibid., p. 44.
Revolt, as a manifestation of these forces, without abandoning its own ideology and being criticised by domestic allies and opponents alike for doing so.\textsuperscript{15}

Matthew Jones, in his more recent work on \textit{Konfrontasi}, agreed with Mackie’s interpretation, but emphasised Sukarno’s need to sustain the delicate balancing act between the two contending forces in Indonesian politics, the \textit{Partai Komunis Indonesia} (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party) and the \textit{Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia} (ABRI, Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia).\textsuperscript{16} Jones also pointed to the “hesitant and improvised way” in which Indonesia’s opposition to Malaysia emerged, implying that although the revolt was an important factor, it was not so significant that Indonesia would have held to this position solely because of the Brunei Rebellion. Therefore, the revolt was not important to Indonesia in itself, it was more of an opportunity to obstruct the formation of Malaysia, push an anti-imperialist line for domestic consumption, and project power onto the world stage.\textsuperscript{17}

An entirely different view was taken by Gregory Poulgrain in his analysis of the origins of \textit{Konfrontasi}.\textsuperscript{18} Poulgrain’s thesis was that the revolt was precipitated by the British intelligence services, in collaboration with the local branch of Royal Dutch Shell, so that British troops could be deployed to Brunei and Sarawak to quell this contrived uprising. Indonesia was expected to react as it, in fact, did and “once Indonesia entered the fray, Britain was relentless in pursuing confrontation to the end”.\textsuperscript{19} Poulgrain did not really analyse the specific role that the rebellion played in the origins of \textit{Konfrontasi}, since this point was not integral to his work, but it would be safe to assume that he had concluded that the two events were associated, although the nature of this link, for Poulgrain, was very different from that posited by Mackie and Jones.

Other sources discuss the Brunei Rebellion as part of their analysis of the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. Willard A Hanna has provided a contemporary perspective on

\begin{flushleft} \textsuperscript{15} Ibid, pp. 6 & 331. \\
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p. 116.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, p. 8. \end{flushleft}
this process in a series of reports written in the field for the purpose of illuminating current events overseas for an American audience.\textsuperscript{20} He wrote three reports on the rebellion, all of which convey a palpable sense of astonishment at the turn that events had taken. This freshness and contemporaneity is the main virtue of this work, evoking the atmosphere and immediate reaction that secondary sources cannot. The nature of this source separates it from the remainder of the literature on the formation of Malaysia, because it provided a detailed analysis of political affairs in Brunei as part of its analysis of the revolt. Hanna listed various causes of the rebellion, including the aggravating effect of the Malaysia proposal, rapid economic, political, and social development, the incompetence of the Sultan’s government, and the attractions of the PRB’s irredentist policy concerning Sarawak and North Borneo.\textsuperscript{21} The main weakness of this source is that it does not put events into context with each other, or analyse the impact that the insurrection had on the formation of Malaysia. However, as it was not Hanna’s intention to do either of these things, it is highly unjust to criticise him on these grounds.

Mohamed Noordin Sopiee, in his work on political integration in the Malaysian area, devoted a chapter to the formation of Malaysia.\textsuperscript{22} Though he was naturally more concerned with the effect of the revolt on Brunei’s attitude to Malaysia, Sopiee suggested that it was the rejection by the Speaker of the Legislative Council of a PRB motion advocating Kalimantan Utara that triggered the revolt. As for the larger cause, he pointed to a comment that Azahari made in Manila in late November, that “the people ‘will fight’ if the British forced the formation of Malaysia”.\textsuperscript{23} Sopiee, thus, did not really analyse why the rebellion occurred, but he did highlight one of the tenets of the PRB: the British still ruled in Brunei in spite of the introduction of the 1959 Constitution.

There are also other sources that have analysed the revolt in the context of political development in Brunei. The most important of these is that by BA Hussainmiya, one of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Ibid}, pp. 127-8, 134-5, & 142.
\item \textit{Ibid}, pp. 174-5.
\end{itemize}
few well-researched, detailed, and comprehensive works on Brunei’s modern history available in English.\textsuperscript{24} The author focused on the reign of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III, with particular emphasis on the years between his accession to the throne in 1950 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963. The primary weakness of this source is its marked bias in favour of its subject, though Hussainmiya has built a good case for a positive view of the Sultan’s reign. He treated the revolt as a decisive event in Brunei’s history, describing it as “crucial to an understanding of the forces at work that froze the democratic process set in motion during the early years of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin’s rule”.\textsuperscript{25} Despite this, he identified one of the main problems encountered when studying the rebellion: the uncertainty that surrounds many vital issues. Even though he gave a cogent, well-documented account of the insurrection, Hussainmiya did not entirely resolve this problem.\textsuperscript{26}

Anthony Stockwell has written a journal article that also focused on political development in Brunei, which is quite similar to Hussainmiya’s work since both are based in large part on the same British archival documents.\textsuperscript{27} The difference lies in perspective, length, and analysis, primarily due to Stockwell’s less positive view of the Sultan. He posited two factors that prevented Britain from withdrawing from Brunei, royal sovereignty and the rebellion: “On the one hand, the Sultan’s sovereign status precluded coercion and, on the other hand, the 1962 rising reinforced his resistance to domestic reform and territorial merger”.\textsuperscript{28} Stockwell concurred with the Colonial Office’s view that the insurrection was basically “an internal struggle for power” between the Sultan and his government on the one hand and the PRB on the other.

DS Ranjit Singh took a different approach to this subject, analysing Brunei’s political development from the 19\textsuperscript{th} century up to the cusp of independence in 1984.\textsuperscript{29} In this wider view, he focused on how Brunei managed to survive as an independent country in an adverse

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p. 292.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, pp. 786-7.
environment: assailed by expansionist rivals, an indifferent protecting power, and an impoverished aristocracy only too willing to exchange their last remaining asset, land, for immediate financial gain. Singh’s analysis of events after World War II was marred somewhat by a factor out of his control, the unavailability at the time of his research of the archival material that Hussainmiya and Stockwell used so effectively. Consequently, he relied largely on newspaper reports for his evidence, a deficiency that did not prevent him from, largely, concurring with Stockwell. Singh posited a power struggle between a monarchist-aristocratic group led by the Sultan and a populist nationalist group spearheaded by the PRB. In his view, conflict between these groups was inevitable because neither was prepared to compromise, and it was the PRB that lost this contest in the end.30

Another important source on political development in Brunei has been provided by Zaini Ahmad, formerly vice-president of the PRB.31 He collected various documents connected with the Party and wrote a lengthy introduction to give some context to these items. In that introduction, he told the story of the PRB from his point of view as an insider. There was thus little criticism of the actions of the Party or its leader, nor any objective analysis of its antagonists’ perspectives. Zaini only gave one reason for the outbreak of the revolt, the “rising expectation and frustration theory”, which he did not really define beyond saying that “[i]t took almost six years for AM Azahari and his colleagues to condition the minds of the people to reach the rising expectation level, and perhaps three years more to reach the point of frustration”.32 In this interpretation, issues like the BRUFICO (Brunei Film Production Company) Affair of 1953, constitutional development, economic inequality, education, and the Malaysia proposal were all used to inflame the passions of Bruneians and garner support for the PRB. Rising frustrations would also, presumably, help to justify a resort to violence.

All of these sources have provided their own interpretations of the causes of the Brunei Rebellion. As stated above, the main argument of this thesis is that the primary cause of the revolt was the PRB’s inability to achieve its goals. The position that the Sultan occupied at

32 Ibid, p. 32.
the head of the administration meant that the PRB could not hope to win power without his consent, or without a fundamental change in the structure of the government of Brunei. Thus, unable to achieve their goals as quickly as they wished, the PRB chose to revolt.

History is built upon two foundations: pre-existing literature and primary sources. The former was already discussed above, while the latter comprises primarily contemporary newspapers, governmental archives, and interviews with relevant people. The more important of the first of these different types of sources was The Borneo Bulletin, the only independent newspaper printed in Brunei at the time of the rebellion. Complete collections of this newspaper are held at The Brunei National Archives, providing access to a source rich in detail on personalities, events, and rumour, that uniquely important vein of information for the historian.

Of the second category of primary sources listed above, the majority mentioned in this thesis belong to the exhaustive collection of official documents relating not only to Brunei but also to Sarawak, North Borneo, and the formation of Malaysia at The National Archives of the United Kingdom. These documents included situation reports written by defence and civilian officials during the rebellion, memoranda on political events in the northern Borneo territories, and ordinary correspondence between officials in the area and the Colonial Office in London. Similar kinds of documents can be found at the Australian National Archives in Canberra, though these naturally provide a slightly different perspective from those in London.

The third type of primary source, interviews with relevant people, should feature prominently here, but does not. This is a major deficiency of this thesis, which has been mitigated somewhat through the use of others’ interviews, such as those conducted for the documentary, Return To Limbang. Though this method has many drawbacks, it does minimise the effect their bias has on my analysis. This single advantage does not, however, atone for the large hole left in my sources where interviews should be.

The thesis is structured in three parts, with the first and third parts constructed differently from the second, confining discussion of issues raised in each discrete section to the chapter
conclusion. Part I explores the Sultanate’s history in order to set the scene for the remainder of the thesis and highlight certain events that elucidate or affect later incidents. It begins by exploring the foundation of the Sultanate of Brunei and the expansion of the Brunei Empire to its apex during the reign of Sultan Bolkiah. Then it turns to the slow decline of the empire and the influx of European powers into the Southeast Asian region. Brunei’s history in the 19th century is described in some detail, including the arrival in Borneo of both the Brooke regime and the British North Borneo Company, as well as the annexation of Limbang, an event that is responsible for the present bifurcation of the Sultanate. This is followed by an examination of the establishment and early years of the British Residency up to the cusp of World War II.

The second part, the majority of this thesis, explores the causes of the rebellion. There are four chapters, each exploring one major cause of the revolt, and a fifth that covers its catalysts. The first discusses the politicisation of Bruneian society, including the growth of education, the impact of the Japanese occupation during World War II, the protracted process of creating the Constitution of 1959, and the foundation of the PRB. Chapter IV explores the proposal that Brunei join the Federation of Malaysia and the effect that this had on events in Brunei. Next is an examination of the resumption of internal self-government in Brunei in 1959 and the sense of general discontent with the government that followed closely upon this event. Chapter VI surveys the PRB’s links with elements in Indonesia and elsewhere and the role these had in the establishment of the TNKU. Finally, the immediate triggers of the revolt are discussed, both the final postponement of the Legislative Council meeting in early December and the arrests of TNKU members in Lawas by Sarawak police in late November.

The third part of this thesis dissects the course of the revolt, beginning with the proclamation of independence in the early hours of 8 December. It then describes the progress of the revolt in each major centre of Brunei and those parts of Sarawak and North Borneo that were affected, as well as the despatch of British forces from Singapore and their successful efforts to regain control of Brunei, northern Sarawak, and western North Borneo.
Chapter IX examines Brunei government measures to restore its reputation with the people, followed by the operations to round up those rebels still at large. Then, there is a brief discussion of the treatment that the rebels received in detention at the hands of the Brunei, Sarawak, and North Borneo governments. The thesis ends with a fairly detailed exploration of events in the international arena, including the activities of PRB leader, AM Azahari, in Manila, reactions to the rebellion at the United Nations, and the early stages of Konfrontasi.
PART 1
Chapter II: The Sultanate of Brunei from its Foundation to World War II
The purpose of this chapter is to examine Brunei’s history up to the eve of the Second World War, in order both to set the scene and to provide background information on certain events and issues that are discussed in later parts of this thesis. It will also provide context to the subjects that are the focus of this thesis, since no historical event occurs in a vacuum and it is always necessary to see the whole picture. In addition, some topics discussed here are especially significant because they had some bearing on the causes of the Brunei Rebellion, including the cession of what was to become North Borneo, which provides essential background information for events in the lead-up to and during the Brunei Rebellion itself, most obviously why the Philippine government entertained the idea of supporting the rebels.

The loss of another district, Limbang, is also discussed at some length, simply because it loomed so large in Brunei’s history for over 100 years, affecting relations with Sarawak and Great Britain, ensuring that there was significant support within the district for a return to the Sultanate’s sovereignty, and, most importantly of all, becoming the most stubborn centre of resistance during and after the revolt. The poverty that Brunei endured during the Residency years is also discussed, highlighting how the austerity that had been forced upon the government encouraged the growth of political activity in the community, while the stark contrast between this poverty and the wealth acquired during the oil boom of the 1950s gave rise to unrealistic expectations of the improvements that this sudden prosperity might bring to the Sultanate.

The Foundation of the Sultanate

The foundation date of the Brunei Sultanate is not precisely known; in fact, there is some contention on this point, with estimates varying from the late 13th to the early 16th centuries. What is known is that a sultan ruled Brunei by 1515, by which time Brunei controlled all of coastal northwest Borneo, the southern Philippines, and areas of southern and central Borneo. This empire was, crucially, based on trade, which materially affected the nature of Brunei’s control over its territories:
As Brown stresses, ‘no sharp geographical boundaries of Brunei can be drawn’ for the kingdom exercised control over trading networks, merchants and people rather than over large areas of territory. Control of river estuaries, a powerful presence in the ports of the region and a rich exchequer able to support an army of retainers were integral to the success of the kingdom.¹

This amorphous nature would later play an important role in Brunei’s decline and contraction.

The apex of Brunei’s empire is generally equated with the reign of the fifth sultan, Bolkiah. Like so much in Brunei’s history, it is not clear when precisely Sultan Bolkiah reigned, only that it was approximately contemporaneous with the capture of Melaka by Portugal in 1511 and the subsequent arrival of other European powers. Brunei’s success was built upon its trade, with its partners including ports in modern-day Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam, China, and perhaps even India, while the items traded encompassed both products of the jungle and of the sea, such as camphor, rhinoceros horn, rattan, gold, birds’ nests, pearls, turtle shells, and trepang. People, too, were traded: it was “a trade [that was] long established and sanctioned by custom and tradition, and upon which some economies depended for labour”.² However, the seeds of the Sultanate’s failure had already been sown, as Saunders has noted: it “was Brunei’s misfortune that European Christian powers arrived to challenge it at the moment when it appeared poised to enter upon a period of greatness”.³

Tarling has suggested two reasons for the European powers’ initial interest in Southeast Asia: its position in the extensive intra-Asian trading network and its role as the only source of certain spices at a time when they were as valuable as gold. The arrival of the imperialists, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English, gradually eroded Brunei’s power by diverting trade away to the entrepôts favoured by these powers and embroiling the Sultanate in wars that not only depleted its financial and military strength but also caused it to lose control of its possessions in the Philippine archipelago. The rise of other sultanates, such as Sulu,

³ Ibid., p. 48.
Pontianak, Banjarmasin, Kutai, and Sambas, further weakened Brunei’s economic and political influence, which in turn impaired the rulers’ ability to enforce their ascendancy by employing armed retainers. This spiralling decline meant that, by the beginning of the 19th century, Brunei controlled only modern Sarawak, Brunei, and the western coast of Sabah, the remainder of the latter having come under Sulu’s influence.⁴

The British had become interested in Borneo during the second half of the 18th century as the English East India Company’s trade with China increased. Although these beginnings, involving failed attempts to establish settlements in different places, came to nothing, the importance of the northwest coast of Borneo because of its position on the sea route between India and China meant that the British returned in the mid-19th century. Tarling described Britain’s goals thus:

"Their particular interests in Southeast Asia were limited, even extraneous, largely determined by its interests elsewhere, in Europe, in India, in China. Britain wanted to ensure the security of its growing dominion in India by keeping other European powers at distance and ensuring that neighbouring powers offered no challenge, policies that mainly affected Burma and the west side of the Bay of Bengal. It wanted to guarantee the security of the route to China, the focus of the East India Company’s trade in tea, in particular through the Straits of Malacca. And it wanted to preserve a balance in Europe over against the main challenger, France."⁵

By nature, these goals were unsuited to colonial intervention, but they could be fulfilled by unofficial involvement, paving the way for the arrival of James Brooke, the first European Rajah of Sarawak.

At this point, a brief explanation of Brunei’s traditional system of government is necessary in order to understand how the territorial contraction of the Sultanate occurred. Turnbull has described it this way:

"Brunei’s government was still organized in principle as a typical Muslim-Hindu Malay sultanate, with four great chiefs and a hierarchy of lesser nobles, or pangiran [sic]. It was not a centralized polity but comprised a group of individual river states ruled by pangiran, some holding a river valley by hereditary right, others by the sultan’s gift. As in the Malay peninsula, some fortunately-placed and enterprising pangiran were wealthier than the sultan, commanding more labour or more revenue from river tolls or poll taxes."⁶


More precisely, as Brown has stated, “All territories or peoples over which Brunei claimed or exercised dominion were allocated for purposes of administration and taxation either to officials as appanages or to individuals as hereditary domains”; there were three categories, kerajaan being appanages of the ruling Sultan, kuripan appanages of other officials (such as the wazirs), and tulin private hereditary domains.7

The four great chiefs that Turnbull mentioned were the Pengiran Bendahara, Pengiran Di-Gadong, Pengiran Pemancha, and Pengiran Temenggong, collectively known as the wazirs. Brown has demonstrated the difficulty of establishing anything about these offices for certain, except that they have existed for some centuries. Functions and ranks changed with time, particularly as some offices went unfilled for extended periods, meaning that the number of wazir often fluctuated between two and four. Brown has also provided the best definition of the role of the wazir: “The Sultan was the functionally un-specialized center of authority and of power. The viziers [wazirs] were very close to that center, but in other respects [were] scarcely distinguishable from their fellows of lesser rank.”8

The Loss of Sarawak

James Brooke, an Englishman often described as an adventurer, arrived at Sarawak, in the far west of Brunei, in 1839. At the time, this district was growing in economic importance because of the exploitation of its antimony and gold resources, so the Brunei government had re-asserted its control there in order to prevent Sambas from expanding its influence at their expense. The inhabitants of the district, however, did not welcome this interference in the affairs that they had previously been successfully managing themselves and began a small-scale revolt in response, which both the governor and the Pengiran Bendahara, Pengiran Muda Hassim, failed to quell.9

7 DE Brown, Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate, Muzium Brunei, Brunei Town, 1970, p. 79.
8 Ibid., pp. 105-10.
9 Saunders, op. cit., pp. 73-4.
Brooke was “convinced of Britain’s mission to rescue the [Malay] archipelago, ‘this Eden of the Eastern Wave’, from anarchy and poverty”.¹⁰ This ambition to reform what he saw as poor governance led him to make his assistance in subduing the rebellion conditional on his appointment as governor, or rajah, of Sarawak. This proposal was apparently accepted by the Bendahara in the belief that Brooke represented the British government, which would be able to assist the Sultan and his government in preserving the unity of Brunei. It is important to remember that, once he became Rajah of Sarawak, Brooke was not an independent ruler but an official of the Brunei government who paid an annual tribute to the sultan and pledged not to alienate the district without the latter’s consent.¹¹

It soon became clear, however, that this appointment was a catastrophic mistake for the Sultanate, when Brooke, with the assistance of the Royal Navy, suppressed the allegedly piratical activities of the Iban people in areas nominally under Brunei’s authority. This was followed by Brooke’s direct intervention in a dynastic dispute between the reigning Sultan of Brunei, Omar Ali Saifuddin II (r. c.1828–52), and the Bendahara. Brooke hoped to be able to achieve his dreams of reform by allying himself with the latter, an alliance that eventually resulted in the murder of the Bendahara and much of his family by the Sultan’s faction and a decades-long resentment between the competing arms of the nobility regarding these events.¹²

This was a decisive moment, for, in the course of the retribution that Brooke meted out to the Sultan, the Rajah secured the cession of Sarawak in perpetuity. It also led to the surrender of Labuan to Britain as a colony and the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce of 1847 by the governments of Brunei and Great Britain. The significance of the treaty was embodied in Article 10, which stated in part, “His Highness the Sultan engages not to make any similar cession, either of an island or of any settlement on the mainland, in any part of his dominions, to any other nation, or to the subjects or citizens thereof, without

¹⁰ Turnbull, op. cit., p. 158.
the consent of Her Britannic Majesty”.

The treaty itself was clearly weighted towards the commercial needs of Britain and seemed to offer nothing in return to Brunei, though Singh’s analysis that Article 10 “could help to prevent the further break-up of the Brunei sultanate” is, at face value, reward enough. Singh himself, however, offered the qualifier, “provided [that] the British Government sincerely adhered to the clause and had the interests of Brunei at heart”, a stipulation that would not, in the end, be fulfilled.

**Gradual Disintegration**

The intricacies of the events of the second half of the 19th century will not be explored here, important though they are in order to understand the contraction of Brunei’s remaining empire. To summarise, however, the various elements already identified – the nature of Brunei’s empire and its system of government, European intervention, the erosion of the Sultanate’s economic and political influence, and the presence of a reform-minded Rajah of Sarawak – combined to deprive Brunei of its districts, one after another. Other factors included the cession of land to the British North Borneo Company (BNBC), the ever-increasing impoverishment of those who possessed the ability to surrender districts, and the escalating rivalry between the Brookes and the BNBC for Brunei’s land. This story is also told in visual form in the series of maps on the following pages.

Sarawak’s expansion began innocently enough, with the cession of the Batang Lupar and lower Rejang Rivers to Brooke for the purposes of administration only in 1853; surplus revenues would be shared with the Sultan, suggesting that Brunei’s sovereignty still subsisted. After that, however, complete cessions were made, in the words of Hussainmiya, “through threats, intrigues, bribery, diplomacy, and payments”. By 1861, Brunei had ceded all of its territory south of the Bintulu River, and only the intervention of Britain had prevented the surrender of the Baram district in 1868. London’s motivation for doing so in

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15 Hussainmiya, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-1; Cleary & Wong, *op. cit.*, p. 14. The definitive account of Brunei’s contraction is Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, though others, such as Saunders, Singh, and Turnbull, have provided useful summaries.
this instance was solely to avoid having to define the extent of its responsibility toward Sarawak, which any positive interference in support of either Sarawak or Brunei would certainly require; hence, by treating Sarawak as an independent nation under Article 10 of the 1847 Treaty, Britain could refuse to sanction any cession of territory by Brunei and thus, effectively, prohibit further cessions.\textsuperscript{17}

The entrance onto the stage of another actor, the BNBC, muddied the waters even further. Much of the territory now known as Sabah had come into Sulu’s possession in about 1704, when Brunei had transferred it in exchange for assistance in a dynastic dispute. This transaction was later disputed by Brunei, though it was generally believed by other nations to be valid. Sulu, however, did not have \textit{de facto} sovereignty over North Borneo, which has been described as a “no-man’s land” during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{18} This situation made it possible for Brunei to grant Charles Lee Moses, the American Consul to the Sultanate, a lease over North Borneo for ten years in 1865. Moses then sold his lease to Joseph Torrey in early 1866, who established a settlement at Kimanis Bay. This venture had foundered by the end of the next year, and Torrey sold his rights in 1875 to the Austrian Consul to Hong Kong, Gustavus, Baron von Overbeck.\textsuperscript{19}

Overbeck’s aim was to interest Austria-Hungary in the territory in order to sell his rights at a profit. Before he could do that, however, he had to convince the Sultan of Brunei to extend the lease, something that he was unable to do because the Sultan had not received any payment from Torrey and was therefore reluctant to grant any credit to Overbeck. So, the Austrian went into partnership with Alfred Dent, a Hong Kong businessman and son of his former employer, to secure from Brunei a cession of the land from Kimanis Bay in the west to the Sibuco River in the east. Overbeck was then informed by the British Consul-General

\textsuperscript{17} Saunders, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 75 & 85-6; Tarling, \textit{Britain, the Brookes and Brunei}, pp. 208-11.
\textsuperscript{19} Leifer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4; Noble, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.
to Borneo, William Treacher, of Sulu’s claims to North Borneo and subsequently negotiated a similar treaty with that Sultanate, extending from the Pandassan River to the Sibuco.\textsuperscript{20}

Tarling has described in detail the attempts of Dent and Overbeck to obtain official British approval for their actions, in the form of a chartered company “somewhat, tho [sic] on a smaller scale, after the manner of the late East India Company”, as Overbeck informed Treacher.\textsuperscript{21} The Foreign and Colonial Offices argued the question back and forth, at such length that Dent and Overbeck might have resorted to the device of threatening to sell their rights to a foreign power. The primary issue was Britain’s reluctance to incur responsibility for North Borneo, as well as concerns about foreign interest in the area. There were also qualms about granting to Dent and Overbeck rights that had been denied to Brooke in the case of the Baram cession. As a result of these discussions and delays, it seemed, though Tarling did not say so, that Overbeck had tired of the entire business and, in 1880, he sold his rights to Dent. This transaction ended Britain’s opposition to a charter, and the British North Borneo (Chartered) Company was finally established in May 1882.\textsuperscript{22}

Brunei’s primary aim in ceding North Borneo was to create a counterweight to Sarawak’s growing importunity and the support that it usually received from the British government. However, this act backfired, as had the introduction of Brooke into Sarawak, when the BNBC began to vie with Sarawak to acquire as much of Brunei as possible. This race was inaugurated when Britain granted the charter, giving Dent’s company recognition and official support, as well as effectively rescinding the prohibition instituted by the British government in 1868 on the expansion of Sarawak. The race for Brunei’s remaining districts had begun.\textsuperscript{23}

Britain’s attitude to Borneo since 1847 has been summarised best by Tarling: “Northern Borneo was never of great importance to Britain, though it neighboured regions that were,
above all the routes to China through the South China Sea”. This position was complicated by the presence of the Brooke regime, anomalous and perplexing: the British Government could neither dispose of it to the Netherlands nor ignore Brooke’s claims to recognition. Their solution was to provide informal support only, a policy that had allowed them to avoid intervening in Bornean affairs and led to the 1868 prohibition on Sarawak’s expansion. However, the entry of other European powers in the area, such as France in Indochina, meant that they had to abandon this policy, a change that contributed to the decision to sanction the BNBC.25

The internal situation in Brunei, at this point, was dire:

The territorial and economic power of Brunei had faded. Such a decline was both cause and consequence of the loss of territory. As the economic resources of the state dwindled, so land cessions were made, trading immediate financial gain for long-term decline. The loss of territory further accentuated a decline in trade which, by depriving the central authority of various duties and tariffs, weakened their finances. So, by a kind of downward spiral, the state was, once more, forced either to sell off land or mortgage its taxation rights on imports and exports, largely to Chinese traders.26

The fact that there were three separate areas (Kuching, Labuan, and Sulu) capturing Brunei’s vital maritime trade contributed to this decline. It was further exacerbated by the heavy taxation that the pengirans levied on their remaining districts, a burden that only increased with every cession as there were fewer people to tax.27

The situation deteriorated further as unrest spread, caused partly by the increasing tax burden and partly by the cession of Baram to Sarawak in 1882, which deprived the Sultan of the services of the Kayan people, who had previously been his enforcers. By this time, Brunei had only its present four districts plus Limbang, Trusan, Lawas, and certain other minor rivers left to it, encouraging Rajah Charles Brooke (who had succeeded his uncle in 1868) in his ambition to swallow all of Brunei. The British Government itself favoured the

24 Tarling, Britain, the Brookes and Brunei, pp. 545.
25 Ibid., pp. 547-8.
27 Saunders, op. cit., p. 86.
partition of Brunei between Sarawak and North Borneo, a position that allowed the cession of Trusan to Sarawak and Padas to the Company in 1884.\textsuperscript{28}

**The Loss of Limbang**

At this point, the district of Limbang revolted, which was attributed by British Consul-General Peter Leys to the exactions of the Pengiran Temenggong, Hashim Jalilul:

> The rulers were in debt, through their improvident habits and their large households, rather than through the smallness of their revenues, and hence they abused their powers to fine. One with appanage rights in the Limbang—Leys meant the Temenggong, though later reports were to modify the strictures on him—fined the people there heavily, and even foreclosed on sago plantations, thus acquiring private property, in order to make money before going to a higher office. Moreover, the tax-gatherers applied a squeeze. And the nearer the capital, the heavier the burden: it was indeed a parasite on the Limbang.\textsuperscript{29}

A later British consul, AL Keyser, believed that others who owned rights in the district bore more responsible for the unrest than the Temenggong. By November 1884, a settlement had been negotiated and active rebellion was over, though it was an uneasy truce.\textsuperscript{30}

The Rajah and his officials meanwhile put pressure on the Temenggong to cede Limbang through the latter’s weakest point, his financial position, and he agreed, but this move was thwarted when the Sultan refused to put his seal to the agreement. By early 1885, Sultan Abdul Mumin (r. 1852–85) had become convinced that further cessions would spell the end of Brunei and consequently swore his wazirs and other officials to uphold an amanah (sacred oath) forbidding the surrender of more territory. Shortly afterwards, the old Sultan died and the Temenggong ascended the throne as Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam (r. 1885–1906). This increased the pressure on him to cede Limbang, which he was able to withstand because of the amanah.\textsuperscript{31}

It was at this stage that the British government began to reconsider its position. Germany’s move towards a colonial policy in 1883–5 and its growing presence on the international stage forced Britain to formalise its hold on northern Borneo for fear that not


\textsuperscript{29} Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, p. 288.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 299; Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia*, pp. 80-1.

\textsuperscript{31} Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, p. 82; Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
only Germany but also other European powers might intervene. Consequently, negotiations with Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo were undertaken in order to place them under protectorate agreements. The aim of the 1888 Protectorate Agreement with Brunei, then, was to prevent another foreign power from gaining a foothold there, “without entailing the responsibility involved in direct administration as part of Labuan”.

It also left open the option of partition between North Borneo and Sarawak at a later date. By contrast, Brunei hoped that the Agreement would preserve what little remained of its districts, an aim that British Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury had explicitly promised that his government would support.

In the meantime, the uneasy truce in the Limbang had occasionally been disturbed by unrest, apparently because, as British official Stewart McArthur later stated, “the Brunei Chiefs responsible for the government of the country were too busily engaged in intrigues among themselves to pay any attention to the matter”. Brown has observed that Sarawak may have encouraged this unrest and certainly exaggerated its extent and significance in reports to London. The seriousness of these disturbances is difficult to gauge, as most contemporary accounts were written by supporters of Sarawak. McArthur, who had been sent to Brunei in 1904 for the express purpose of evaluating the situation in the Sultanate without bias, recorded the Sultan’s opinion: “if no interference had taken place[,] the district would have settled down”; McArthur appeared to share this view.

In March 1890, Brooke forcibly seized Limbang from Brunei, citing this unrest as his excuse. Horton has summarised the Rajah’s arguments thus:

…the district had been de facto independent ever since 1884; the people were oppressed by unjust taxation and had refused to pay anything further to Brunei; the headmen had raised the Sarawak flag of their own accord; and Sultan Hashim was

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preparing to exact his revenge[.] which would have caused fearful bloodshed if Sarawak had not intervened.\textsuperscript{36}

Brunei hotly contested these allegations, asserting that all of Limbang, including the foremost dissident, Datu Khelassi, had acknowledged Brunei’s authority, that the Brunei flag had been raised there and tribute paid, and that only 25\% of the population, mostly those in the interior, preferred Sarawak rule to that of Brunei.\textsuperscript{37}

Perhaps a more accurate reflection of the Rajah’s motive, apart from his ongoing ambition to seize Brunei whole, was the allegation made by GL Davies of the BNBC:

The real reason why Raja Brooke had seized the Limbang river is because the Sultan has begun to let land to Europeans for tobacco cultivation and Raja Brooke knows that the influx of British capital into the state of Brunei would make it prosperous and lead to the appointment of a British Resident; his chances of getting the country would be gone for ever.\textsuperscript{38}

Tarling has also suggested that the Sultan and the Pengiran Di-Gadong, who had previously been embroiled in a feud, had reached some accord because of the tobacco concessions, which then, in turn, had led to progress in re-establishing Brunei’s authority in the Limbang.\textsuperscript{39}

Britain had been urging the Sultan to accede to the Rajah’s pressure to surrender the Limbang since 1886 (and perhaps earlier), so it was no real surprise that London sanctioned the annexation. They did order that a limited inquiry be conducted into the wishes of the inhabitants, but it is reasonable to cast doubt on its conclusions. For example, a poll of 15 headmen was taken by the British consul where 12 voted in favour of Sarawak rule, but there had been 33 headmen in the district as recently as 1886, meaning that the result was even more unrepresentative of the views of the inhabitants than such limited surveys usually were. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the consul arrived on a Sarawak launch accompanied by Sarawak officers. As McArthur later observed: “In the circumstances it was hardly likely that he would hear anything except professions of admiration and gratitude for Sarawak intervention”.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{36} Horton, “Preface”, p. 30.  
\textsuperscript{37} Tarling, Britain, the Brookes and Brunei, pp. 406-7.  
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., pp. 407-8.  
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 409.  
\textsuperscript{40} McArthur, op. cit., para. 78; Tarling, Britain, the Brookes and Brunei, p. 358; Singh, op. cit., p. 84.
The reason that the Sultan had resisted the Rajah’s pressure for so long was the importance of the Limbang district to Brunei Town. Horton has summarised McArthur’s more detailed description thus:

The Limbang was the true river of Brunei Town. The Brunei River, so-called, was actually an arm of the sea, salt throughout its length, with no ulu. In these circumstances Kampung Ayer folk depended on the large, fertile Limbang for food, clothing, and materials for housing and fishing. Since 1890, however, the Sarawak authorities had imposed export duties on these materials, so that Brunei people could no longer afford to obtain them from Limbang. Furthermore, petty traders, such as collectors of jungle produce, found their livelihood undermined. All four sago factories in Brunei Town had been obliged to close down, because they were no longer able to meet competition from their Sarawak rivals, who obtained the raw materials free of export duty. McArthur estimated that the annexation of Limbang had cost Brunei $200,000 annually in trade (the trade in the remainder of the country he put at only $500,000, not including coal export of $112,000 from Broketon). The acting consul agreed that Sarawak control had eliminated the worst excesses of Brunei rule in Limbang, but the rajah’s intervention had punished innocent as well as guilty. And the annexation of Limbang by Sarawak was “a real loss to all Brunei, and not only to its unworthy owners”.  

McArthur had also recorded Sultan Hashim’s view: “From the first he has obstinately refused to listen to any terms, insisting that ‘Limbang is Brunei, and Brunei Limbang,’ and that he could never agree to the cession of the one, knowing how much the prosperity of the other depends on its retention”.  

Brunei was offered financial compensation for the seizure of Limbang, a total of $6,000 annually that was to be shared amongst all claimants. The Sultan declined this, in spite of pressure from Britain and some of the pengirans to accept it. While it is true that Sultan Hashim was entitled to little of this money and that even this small sum would have gone directly to his creditors, it is still reasonable to conclude that he had far more admirable motives than the merely pecuniary. For one thing, in his financial position, any lessening of his debt burden would certainly have been welcome. Tarling’s belief that “there were other than financial or petty considerations” is another:

The situation was not a new one. As some British officials had come dimly to recognize, the Sultan relied on elements in Brunei opposed to orang puteh [literally, white people] or clinging to vested interests. These he could play off against the heirs of the previous Sultan and other members of the pulau Raja branch of the

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41 Horton, “Preface”, pp. 30-1. Broketon was a coalmine at Muara that Brooke owned and operated, so that the revenues went to Sarawak rather than Brunei.
42 McArthur, op. cit., para. 80.
43 Tarling, Britain, the Brookes and Brunei, p. 413. This offer was to stand for three years from the date of seizure, with the money being paid into a bank. When the Sultan refused to accept it, Britain persuaded Sarawak to extend the deadline to August 1895. Once that date passed, the money was returned to Sarawak. Saunders, op. cit., p. 93; Tarling, Britain, the Brookes and Brunei, p. 413.
family [the slain Pengiran Muda Hassim’s faction] and so preserve his own position; and they could not force him to agree to take the money…nor eliminate him in a new family blood bath. The loss of the Limbang harmed Brunei, but it also helped Hashim to preserve what was left, as well as giving [Colonial Office official CP] Lucas an argument against the Raja. For inasmuch as Hashim’s opponents were those who most wished to lease the remaining rivers—even asserting a tulin-based right to do so, sometimes encouraged by would-be lessors—his policy was not merely personal in motive. It was patriotic.44

The fact that the Sultan spent the remaining years of his life persistently agitating for Limbang’s return supports this argument.45

**Brunei Reprieved**

The economic situation deteriorated even further once Limbang had been lost, forcing Britain to rethink its position. The High Commissioner for Borneo, Sir Charles Mitchell, was sent to the Sultanate to evaluate the situation in 1896 and he recommended that either Britain annex Brunei or that the status quo should be maintained. Lucas of the Colonial Office suggested extending the Residency system then in operation in parts of the Malay Peninsula to Brunei with a view to gradually rolling it out to Sarawak and North Borneo. Mitchell’s wait and see approach was preferred because the annexation idea was deemed too harsh and Lucas’ plan too expensive. Brooke, meanwhile, persisted in proposing cessions, to the extent that he offered $12,000 to the Sultan and $6,000 each to the Bendahara and Pemancha in June 1902 in exchange for what little remained of their country.46

The British continued to wait and see while both Tutong and Belait revolted, Sarawak made further offers, and the Sultan began to make overtures to other countries for the assistance that Britain would not provide. It was at this point that Britain finally acted by dispatching McArthur to Brunei in 1904; they were clearly anxious to preserve their position in northern Borneo without the interference of other powers. Official British opinion on Brunei’s future at this stage was dominated by the view that partition was “both inevitable

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44 Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, p. 417; Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 86; McArthur, *op. cit.*, para. 80 & p. 246n.
45 Horton, *The British Residency*, p. 8. The British Government had a vague plan to review the status of Limbang, among other outstanding issues, when the Rajah died. In the event, however, it was decided that to confiscate Limbang so early in Rajah Vyner’s reign would damage his prestige. Horton, *The British Residency*, pp. 10-1; Horton, “Preface”, p. 49.
46 Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-9; Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*, p. 434; Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
and appropriate”.

It is obvious, then, that McArthur’s visit to Brunei was a decisive moment in Brunei’s history.

The report that resulted from McArthur’s mission examined all aspects of Brunei’s government, as well as possible options for the future. McArthur summarised his views thus:

It must be remembered that, even if the actual condition of the country is not as bad as has sometimes been stated, there is nothing to prevent the possibility of the most ruthless cruelty and extortion becoming at any moment a fact. The state of affairs which I have tried to depict temperamently in the preceding pages appears to me to be sufficiently hopeless to make all exaggeration unnecessary. When it is remembered that these evils flourish under nominal British protection, and that it is that protection alone which keeps Brunei in existence as a separate State, it seems obligatory on His Majesty’s Government to take some steps to ameliorate them, either by insisting on internal reform or by withdrawing all semblance of suzerainty, when Brunei would rapidly be absorbed, piecemeal, by its neighbours.

McArthur also recorded the Sultan’s preference for the future:

As far as I am able to ascertain, His Highness is most unwilling to part with the remainder of his territory, but I gather from hints which he has dropped from time to time that he would not be averse to a large measure of British protection so long as he was left nominally in supreme control.

McArthur summarised the British government’s options in the latter half of the report:

(i) to support the present regime, trusting to the personal influence of a Consul on the spot to prevent or check abuses.
(ii) to encourage the British North Borneo Company to acquire what remains of Brunei.
(iii) to consent to the absorption of Brunei by Sarawak.
(iv) to establish British protection.

He dismissed the first option because of the Sultan’s lack of control over the entire country, as well as the provision of the Protectorate Treaty that prohibited Britain’s interference in the internal affairs of Brunei. He then discarded the possibility of ceding Brunei to the BNBC on the grounds that the Company probably could not afford the responsibility. A more important objection, in his view, was the fact that Brunei lay within Sarawak’s sphere of influence. The Sarawak alternative was discussed at length and eventually rejected for several reasons: people in Brunei “generally disliked and distrusted” the Rajah; there was a marked reluctance to allow their country to disappear as it would if it were taken over by either Sarawak or North Borneo; and the need for Brooke’s “experience and reputation” if

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48 McArthur, op. cit., para. 100.
49 Ibid., para. 63.
50 Ibid., para. 103. Horton has suggested that, as Brunei was already a British protectorate, McArthur was probably referring in this latter point to an increased measure of British protection in the form of the residential system. McArthur, op. cit., p. 251n.
Sarawak’s authority was to be established in Brunei, which could not be depended upon due to his age.\textsuperscript{51}

This, of course, left only one option – British protection. To the Sultan and his pengirans, “British protection would be less obnoxious…than loss of identity as a mere part of Sarawak or British North Borneo”, while McArthur believed that the country could pay its own way “were present abuses to be abolished”.\textsuperscript{52} There were other arguments in favour of British protection: the growing body of opinion in British circles that there was “little good in Sarawak and the Company”; the belief that the residential system then in operation in parts of the Malay Peninsula could work just as well in Brunei; and the possibility that the Sultanate could later serve as a base for a larger colony incorporating Labuan and perhaps Limbang.\textsuperscript{53} There have been suggestions that the discovery of oil on Pulau Berembang in Brunei Bay in 1903 contributed to the decision to establish direct British administration, but, as only four barrels per month usually flowed from this source, this hypothesis is highly improbable.\textsuperscript{54}

Once the decision was eventually taken to institute it, the form of the British residential system was dictated by Britain because of Brunei’s weak position. That position was highlighted by the warning that the Sultan received during the negotiations: “if he refused to accept the terms offered, the British government would leave him to his fate”, likely to be total absorption by Sarawak and the end of his dynasty.\textsuperscript{55} The agreement that resulted from these negotiations, the Supplementary Agreement of 1905 and 1906, read in part:

\begin{quote}
The Resident will be the Agent and Representative of His Britannic Majesty’s Government under the High Commissioner for the British Protectorate in Borneo, and his advice must be taken and acted upon on all questions in Brunei, other than those affecting the Mohammedan religion, in order that a similar system may be established to that existing in other Malay States now under British Protection.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

There was one major difference between Brunei’s new system and that of the Malayan states: the inclusion of Malay custom within the resident’s authority. This meant that the

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., paras. 104, 106, 112, 116, & 132.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., paras. 135 & 146.
\textsuperscript{53} Brown, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 156; Horton, \textit{The British Residency}, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{54} McArthur, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 250n.
\textsuperscript{55} Horton, “Preface”, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{56} Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 394.
\end{footnotes}
resident could abolish traditional land and taxation arrangements, powers that were used to provide revenue for the state, reduce taxes, and consolidate British control of the country.  

In all other major areas, the residential system in Brunei was similar to that of other Malay states. The Resident was the head of the new administration, with, initially, an Assistant Resident and a State Engineer to assist in the conduct of government business. The Governor of the Straits Settlements acted *ex officio* as High Commissioner for Brunei and was accountable to the Colonial Office in London for Brunei’s affairs. Legislation was enacted through the State Council, which was composed of the Resident, the Sultan, the wazirs, and various other leading members of Malay society. Hussainmiya has described the Council thus:

> In essence, the Council served the needs of the Resident, who needed to elicit local opinion. Whereas in the traditional consultative bodies the Pengiran Bendahara or other leading local potentates guided the proceedings with the Sultan at the helm, now the initiative to summon and to conduct the sessions lay solely in the hands of the Resident. With the backing of the Imperial Government, and armed with an omnipotent “advisory clause” in the Supplementary Agreement of 1905/06, the Resident controlled the Council.

This description over-emphasised the omnipotence of the advisory clause somewhat, because Britain preferred to use persuasion to achieve its ends in order to avoid unduly antagonising the local elite. This approach, as Horton has suggested, “produced subtle limitations on a Resident’s freedom of action”, limitations that a strong sultan could exploit. However, it is equally important to point out that the sultans who reigned before 1950 were not in a position to do this and that, consequently, the authority of the resident went largely unchallenged.

**The Early Years of the Residency**

With the introduction of the Residency, Britain gained a free hand in transforming Brunei’s system of government, and it was used to divest the *pengirans* of their power. Firstly, by guaranteeing that succession to the throne would henceforth follow Sultan...
Hashim’s line, they deprived not only the *wazirs* but also many others of the influence they had hitherto wielded in the selection of the sultan. Secondly, a land programme was instituted whereby the state bought out all *kerajaan*, *kuripan*, and *tulin* rights in order to provide revenue to the administration, which took the *pengirans’* traditional bases of power, their districts, away from them. The weakness of the State Council also contributed to this process, though it was counteracted to some extent when the *wazirs* were appointed as regents for two significant periods of time (1906–18 and 1924–31).  

It is not clear from the literature why this process was undertaken, though its purpose was most likely to eliminate the instability that multiple sources of power had created in the past. The British also found little to commend in the incumbent *wazirs*: McArthur, for example, wrote, “Of the *Bendahara* it is difficult to find anything complimentary to say. He seems greedy, cunning, unscrupulous and cruel”. Whatever the motivation, the policy transferred the *wazirs’* powers to the office of the sultan, a process facilitated by the fact that all government actions were taken in the latter’s name.

Brooke, of course, was displeased with Britain’s intervention, as he was fully aware that a British administration would be far more difficult to dislodge than the old order. He intrigued with the *Bendahara* and other disaffected parties in Brunei, renewed his offer to buy the Sultanate, and attempted to disrupt the accession to the throne of Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II (r. 1906–24). These schemes were derailed by the fact that the new order was tolerable “to all but those whose powers of extortion and oppression [had] been clipped”, as High Commissioner Sir John Anderson wrote. The commitment that the British Government showed to sustaining their new administration was also decisive in thwarting Brooke’s machinations.

Once Brooke’s intrigues had been overcome, the new regime’s priority was to create a revenue base to fund the administration, which they did through the land procurement

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62 McArthur, *op. cit.*, para. 68.
programme, the introduction of fixed import and export duties, and the redemption of the cession monies, monopolies, and taxation rights that had previously been mortgaged by their owners for cash. To accomplish all of this, loans totalling $439,750 had to be obtained from the Federated Malay States (FMS) between 1906 and 1911, which were not repaid in full until 1936. Some social services were provided by the government, including the establishment of the first western-style school in Brunei’s history and some medical services; most of the administration’s finances, however, were spent on public works, such as the construction of a wireless station at Brunei Town and the first of several dams at Tasek, as well as sundry public buildings and some roads.66

Relations between the new regime and the traditional élite were difficult at times, which is hardly surprising in light of the policy towards the pengirans. The land reforms in particular provoked conflict, as the young Sultan opposed the second Land Enactment in 1909 and the Resident had recourse to the advisory clause. The British believed that the regents had persuaded the Sultan to oppose the initiative, while Hussainmiya has raised the possibility that the Sultan himself may have instigated it. Whichever is the case, relations between the two regents and the British were never very warm, as the former boycotted official events and meetings of the State Council and the latter continued to sideline the wazirs. By contrast, the Sultan’s relationship with the administration improved markedly after the 1909 incident, which was demonstrated by the award of an imperial honour in 1914 and a knighthood in 1920.67

Despite these reforms and controversies, Brunei’s precarious financial position meant that the state continued to operate on an extremely austere budget until the 1930s. There was little capital investment in Brunei because of its isolation, excessive freight charges, labour shortages, and the absence of infrastructure. The only exports were coal (until 1924), cutch, and sago, while government attempts to develop cash crops failed. There were some local industries, but these contributed little to government revenues. Much of the state’s income

came from customs duties on imports, the opium monopoly, and various fees and charges. These revenues, for the most part, exceeded expenditure after 1910, which was clearly a tribute to the thriftiness with which the state was run.68

In the meantime, Brunei’s relations with Sarawak had gradually improved with the accession of Rajah Vyner Brooke in 1917, as he surrendered the commercial and land rights his father had exercised in Muara, Pulau Berembang, and Kota Batu. These rights had been a significant irritant in relations, as had the acrimonious history between the two territories. Perhaps as a sign of this increased goodwill, in 1917 Resident GE Cator suggested exchanging the districts of Tutong and Belait for Trusan and Lawas (bordering the Temburong district), an offer that the High Commissioner was persuaded by McArthur, still influential in Brunei affairs, to reject. By 1932, when Brunei’s oil began to be transported to Lutong in Sarawak for export, it was clear that relations had greatly improved.69

The discovery of this oil in 1929 was another seminal event in Brunei’s modern history. Exploration for hydrocarbon resources in the Sultanate had begun in 1899, continuing without success for thirty years due to insufficient capitalisation, lack of facilities, and the remoteness of the areas being surveyed. These problems were resolved when the British Malayan Petroleum Company (BMPC), a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, entered the field in 1923, eventually discovering the Seria oilfield in April 1929. Although oil was not exported until 1932 because of the Great Depression, Brunei’s annual revenue increased fourfold during the 1930s, surpassing $1.5 million by 1940. This new source of revenue enabled the debt incurred to the FMS early in the Residency period to be repaid by 1936.70 On the other hand, Brunei’s newfound wealth also led to disputes over what to do with these revenues, foreshadowing a new era of politicisation and nationalism.

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Conclusion

This chapter has explored the history of the Sultanate of Brunei up to the late 1930s in order to highlight certain points that are relevant to other parts of this thesis. When Brunei was a regional power, it ruled over large parts of Borneo and the Philippines, a past prominence that later permeated the views of both the nationalists of the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB) and the traditional élite concerning the role that Brunei should properly play in any federation of which it might become a part. It also influenced the way in which the Sultanate was regarded by its immediate neighbours, Sarawak and North Borneo, making them very reluctant to accept any federation in which Brunei might once more become dominant. Conversely, this past glory played a role in attracting elements in the Brunei Bay area outside the Sultanate, largely in Limbang, to support both a return to Brunei sovereignty and the Brunei Malay nationalism that the PRB so loudly espoused.

The cession of part of the territory now known as Sabah was also briefly explored because of the links that the PRB cultivated with proponents of the Filipino claim to Sabah in late 1962. This was the primary reason that the background to the claim was included here, but not the only one: it also played a pivotal role in the Philippines’ involvement in Konfrontasi, as well as affecting the Republic’s relationships with Malaya and Indonesia in the second half of 1962 and into 1963. In addition, the intricate negotiations and exchanges that are detailed in Chapter IX between Great Britain and the Philippines in response to the PRB leaders’ presence in Manila after the rebellion and the consequences that might emanate from that necessitated this exploration of Sulu’s claims to Sabah.

Another important event was the annexation of the Limbang district by Rajah Charles Brooke of Sarawak. Brunei continued to dispute the loss of this particular district until very recently, an attitude that influenced events during the Brunei Rebellion in various ways. There was a significant element in the district itself that supported Brunei’s claim at the time of the revolt, making Limbang an important source of recruits for the rebels and a major centre of resistance once the British Army arrived to quell the rebellion. The history of
acrimony between Brunei and Sarawak after the seizure of Limbang also made both states reluctant to accept the federation of northern Borneo proposed by the British in 1958, as well as affecting their respective attitudes to the proposed Federation of Malaysia.

The establishment of the British Residency in Brunei in 1906 also had multiple effects on events in the lead-up to the rebellion. The introduction of a western-style government and the way in which this system evolved was partly responsible for the sense of powerlessness that caused the PRB to revolt, because party politics based on the western model was not a natural part of that administration from its inception and the pre-eminent position of the sultan, long-established and well-entrenched, could not be easily superseded. In addition, the similarity between the modes of administration of the Residency and its successor government led to unflattering comparisons between the two that added to the discontent in the country before the rebellion. The British presence in Brunei also had the effect of re-affirming and strengthening Britain’s commitment to the Sultanate, allowing British troops to be deployed there in 1962. Finally, the British influence in Brunei created an administrative similarity with Sarawak, North Borneo, Singapore, and Malaya that drew the Sultanate into the various plans for the future of Britain’s Southeast Asian territories after World War II.

This chapter has also depicted the austere early years of the Residency, an essential background to the rapid growth in revenues after the discovery of oil at Seria in 1929 that is detailed in Chapter III. The sudden influx of money and the Residents’ reluctance to spend it, in particular on such areas as education and healthcare, led to the first real political activity in Brunei during the 1930s. In addition, this lack of economic and social development, coupled with the ravages of the Japanese Occupation and Allied bombing during World War II, significantly affected the way that Brunei evolved in the 1950s and 1960s. Finally, the stark contrast between the impoverished Sultanate of the pre-war years and the wealth that Brunei had so suddenly gained in the 1950s made a large contribution to the expectations that blossomed in the community about how that prosperity might be used to improve the lives of all, which had repercussions when these expectations were not met.
Part II
Chapter III: The Politicisation of Bruneian Society
This chapter will explore the gradual politicisation of Brunei society from the 1930s to the late 1950s, a crucial period if one is to understand the causes of the rebellion. The extension of political activity outside of the traditional élite was a major change in the polity of Brunei and a basic cause of the Brunei Rebellion, simply because there could be no revolt without the political party that led it and, equally, there could be no party without political development. In a wider sense, also, this politicisation encouraged greater community involvement in the political sphere, which, in turn, led to an increased ability and willingness to criticise the government and its policies, a pre-requisite for the development of organised, overt political activity of the kind that preceded the revolt.

Examples of the way this political development contributed to the causes of the rebellion include the effect that the gradual pace of this process had on the kind of nationalism that evolved in Brunei, how the Japanese occupation during World War II demonstrated that Great Britain’s involvement in the Sultanate was not immutable, and the significant influence that the form of the new constitution had on the shape of politics after its promulgation in 1959. These and other subjects covered here will show that politicisation was an important cause of the revolt, mostly in a basic, foundational sense but also in specific ways that will be detailed below.

**Education in Brunei, 1906–1962**

Prior to the introduction of the Residency, education in Brunei, in the western sense, did not exist, though there were, naturally, traditional and Islamic systems of disseminating knowledge. Even after 1906, the poverty of the state meant that there was no money to spare for social services; the first formal school was established independently by a Malay teacher in Brunei Town in about 1912. By 1918, other schools had opened in Muara, Tutong, and Kuala Belait. These schools were generally opened at the request of the

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community, with the government providing construction materials and some funding. A permanent building would only be built if the school remained viable after two years.³

Total government spending on education before World War II was never high: in 1916, only $379 was expended, with $1,671 disbursed in 1921 and $3,268 in 1926. There was an appreciable rise in expenditure during the 1930s: in 1931, for example, $9,603 was allocated towards education. The peak was reached in 1941, when $42,562 was spent. Despite this upward trend, expenditure on education only once reached 3% of total government spending before the war, in 1941, and more often amounted to less than 2%.

The funding deficiency was not the only handicap suffered by Brunei’s education system: the people were generally unenthusiastic about this foreign conception of education. This attitude was reinforced by economic necessity during the rubber boom of the early 1920s, as children were usually required to assist their families in tapping the trees. Perhaps the most compelling reason for the lethargic response of Bruneians was the nature of the education that students received: the *Brunei Annual Report* for 1940 remarked that “nothing [was] taught that might . . . tend to drive the Malays from their native trades and occupations”.⁴

Gunn has elaborated further upon the curriculum at the Malay schools in Brunei:

The curriculum for Malay vernacular schools was based upon that introduced in Malaya by R. O. Winstedt in 1917 and included literacy in both Jawi and—in a more revolutionary sense—Rumi, composition, arithmetic, geography, history, hygiene, drawing, and physical exercise. Notably absent from this curriculum were subjects touching upon scientific literacy.⁵

Perhaps a more significant omission was English, a language that most government servants required some knowledge of if they were to advance in their career.

The government did, however, attempt to improve attendance levels, through Enactment No. 3 of 1929. This law mandated that all boys between the ages of 7 and 14 residing within two miles of a school that taught in their own language must enrol. The Resident was also empowered to make education compulsory in any part of the state, with Brunei Town

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⁶ Gunn, *ibid.*, p. 73. *Jawi* and *Rumi* both refer to the Malay language, the former using modified Arabic and the latter Romanised characters.
becoming the first such area in 1929 and Kuala Belait joining it in 1933. As a result of these measures, enrolment at all Malay schools in the state rose dramatically from around 190 in 1928 to 672 in the following year.\(^7\)

Another significant step forward was taken in 1930, with the opening of the first Malay girls’ school in the state. There were 34 students enrolled, an impressive number considering the cultural and religious mores of the time. The school was forced to close in 1931 when its headmistress, and probably its only teacher, departed for Malaya, but it reopened in 1932 with 13 students. Sadly, it closed again in 1934, and then disappears from the literature entirely; presumably, it was never revived.\(^8\)

The Chinese community was, in most respects, left to develop its own education system. Its first formal school was established in Brunei Town in about 1916, essentially for the children of the town’s shopkeepers. Gunn noted that this school imported its teachers from China and taught in Mandarin rather than using any of the Chinese dialects. Initially called the Yik Chye School, by 1926 the school bore the name by which it is still known, the Chung Hwa School, and had an enrolment of 38. A second Chinese school was also opened in Labi in the Belait district to serve the rural agricultural community in that area. Though this school closed in 1927, another opened in its stead, probably in Kuala Belait, in 1931.\(^9\)

Both of these schools received small grants from the government, which helped each to achieve enrolments of approximately 50 in 1933. Gunn stated that the Chung Hwa School had nearly equal numbers of male and female students, so it is possible that the school in the Belait District was also co-educational. By 1941, there were 441 enrolled students at five Chinese schools in Brunei, one each in Brunei Town, Tutong, and Kuala Belait and two in Seria. It is important to note that all of these schools were at the primary level, so that those wishing to pursue a Chinese secondary education had to leave Brunei in order to do so.\(^10\)

\(^7\) Ibid., pp. 71-2.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 71.
\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 75-6.
English education had an even slower and shakier start than the other linguistic streams, beginning in 1919 with two places at the Labuan English school being made available for Bruneian pupils in return for financial support. Unfortunately, no student actually used this opportunity until 1929.\textsuperscript{11} The impulse for the establishment of an English language school in Brunei was provided by the British Malayan Petroleum Company (BMPC), which required a local labour force that could communicate with its expatriate staff. A school was established in Kuala Belait in 1931 with 21 enrolled students of both genders, operated by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, an Anglican missionary organisation, and supported by both the BMPC and the Brunei government. This support came with an understanding that the curriculum would be secular. The Roman Catholic Mill Hill Fathers opened a second English school in Kuala Belait in 1932, with 28 boys and 6 girls enrolled, no government funding, and a faith-based curriculum.\textsuperscript{12}

By 1941, there were 24 Malay schools with 1,746 students, including 312 girls, five Chinese schools with 441 pupils, and three English schools with 160 enrolled. The total of around 2,350 students enrolled at Brunei schools, though not impressive in a country with a population of about 30,135 at the previous census in 1931, was certainly a vast improvement on what had gone before. It should also be emphasised that enrolments were always limited by the number of teachers available. The majority of the teachers at the Malay schools were untrained former students, while the Chinese and English schools generally imported their teachers from abroad.\textsuperscript{13}

The Japanese invasion of Brunei in December 1941 disrupted this slow progress. The Japanese closed the Chinese and English schools, while the Malay schools remained open in an endeavour to co-opt the indigenous population. The most important change made to the Malay schools’ curriculum was the addition of the Japanese language. Local teachers were forced to learn to read and write \textit{katakana}, the simplest of Japanese scripts, so that they

\textsuperscript{11} Gunn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 79; Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{12} Gunn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{13} Beginning in 1929, two or three students were sent to the Sultan Idris Training College in Perak for training as teachers each year. Gunn, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 72, 76, 79, & 82; LW Jones, \textit{The Population of Borneo: A Study of the Peoples of Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei}, Opus Publications, Kota Kinabalu, 2007, p. 18.
could teach the students. Broadly, the curriculum at these schools covered Japanese, *Rumi*, arithmetic, hygiene, gardening, history, and music, though *Rumi* had been omitted in some schools by the end of 1943. Gunn has implied that the Japanese were primarily concerned with disseminating their language, even to the extent of requiring all government servants and some *kampong* people to attend classes in that subject.\(^4\)

In April 1942, a new school was opened in Kampong Kianggeh in Brunei Town to cater for those students whose education at the Labuan Government English School had been interrupted by the war. The Brunei High School was an English medium school that taught as many as 100 students until its closure in 1944. Another innovation of the Japanese was to send promising students overseas for further training; the most prominent of these students after the war were Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim, who was sent to study education at Hiroshima University, and AM Azahari, who went to Bogor in Java to study veterinary science.\(^5\)

As the tide of war turned against the Japanese, there was an exodus from the towns into the *ulu*, which depleted the schools to the point where there were more teachers than students; most schools had closed by 1945. Brunei was liberated by Australian forces in June 1945, to be administered by the British Military Administration (BMA) until July the next year. There is little information in the literature specifically about education during this time, apart from Horton’s comment that 18 Malay schools had re-opened by December 1945.\(^6\) It is probable that no new schools were opened and that no students were able to go abroad to study. At the most, those schools that had been established before the war may have been revived.

Once the Residency had been re-instated in 1946, it was recognised that things could not go on as they had before and a preliminary review of Brunei’s education system was conducted by Malayan Education Officer AW Frisby in that year. He highlighted the low level of education expenditure in Brunei (2.5% of other charges annually recurrent)

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\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 100-1; Hussainmiya, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
compared to that of Malaya (8%). Consequently, government spending on education increased fourfold between 1947 and 1950 to $201,041 and, perhaps more importantly, in 1949 a dedicated State Education Officer was appointed for the first time. In addition, more schools were built, more teachers trained (primarily at the Batu Lintang Teachers’ College in Kuching), and appropriate textbooks written.\textsuperscript{17}

The most important change after the war was the increasing realisation amongst the people that education was essential if their lives were to improve. Particular demands were made for the greater provision of English education, which was believed to be a prerequisite for advancement in the public service and thus a \textit{sine qua non} for independence. These calls were led by both the traditional élite, for example the Chief Kadi and the Pehin Orang Kaya Di-Gadong, and an emerging nationalist movement, initially through the \textit{Barisan Pemuda} (BARIP) and later through the \textit{Partai Rakyat Brunei} (PRB). The strength of these demands is perhaps best illustrated by their success: in 1951, the government opened an English medium school in Brunei Town, as well as another in Kuala Belait the next year.\textsuperscript{18}

Teacher training was also expanded, with places allocated for Bruneians at Kent College in North Borneo from 1954 and Kota Bahru College in Kelantan from 1958. A few Bruneians were also sent to the United Kingdom (UK) for further training during the mid-1950s. The major achievement was the establishment at the Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin School of a dedicated teacher training institute in 1956, which became the \textit{Maktab Perguruan Melayu Brunei} (Brunei Malay Teachers’ College) when its campus was opened in 1959. This institute offered only one course, for Malay primary level teachers, until 1963, leaving secondary level, English, and Chinese teachers to continue training abroad.\textsuperscript{19}

The main driver of change in the way education was delivered in Brunei during the 1950s was the First Five-Year Development Plan. Horton has described the Plan’s primary educational objectives:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 33; Horton, \textit{The British Residency}, p. 48.
  \item Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 33-4 & 50. The Chief Kadi was the pre-eminent religious official in the state and the Pehin Orang Kaya Di-Gadong was traditionally a non-noble official who was usually a senior advisor to the sultan. DE Brown, \textit{Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate}, Muzium Brunei, Brunei Town, 1970, pp. 114-5.
  \item Gunn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 163.
\end{itemize}
The Government aimed to provide free vernacular education for all indigenous children, with English taught as a subject in the upper classes; facilities for secondary education in English for selected pupils who had successfully completed the junior course in Government English schools; free vocational training at the BMPC school in Seria; provision for overseas scholarships; the introduction of a free midday fortified drink or balanced meal; and the institution of a school medical service. Top quality specialist teachers were recruited from overseas. The emphasis in the curriculum [sic] of vernacular schools, however, remained very much in the Winstedt tradition, with great importance attached to traditional Malay activities such as handicrafts and gardening.\(^{20}\)

The Chinese schools were not forgotten: the government provided funding for up to half of the independent schools’ costs, which allowed teachers to be paid higher wages and improved their job security. The primary aim of this assistance, however, was to gain some control over these schools in order to combat the perceived threat of communism.\(^{21}\)

The reaction to these changes was not universally positive:

With regard to education, parents complained that Malay schools were a dead-end and that not enough children were getting places in English secondary schools; that overseas scholarships were decided on the basis of favouritism; and that there was insufficient technical education to equip school-leavers with a trade. There remained a shortage of teachers and over-crowding in the classroom. Finally, there was resentment that most of the top jobs were held by outsiders, mainly British and Australian; and that the Government was not doing enough to prepare the people for self-government.\(^{22}\)

On the whole, however, these criticisms ignored the basic reality that each child needed a primary education in their own language before they could aspire to anything else.

Specific achievements of the Development Plan are difficult to isolate; by 1958, however, annual government expenditure on education had increased from approximately $200,000 in 1950 to over $4 million. In addition, there were 52 Malay primary schools, eight Chinese schools, eight Mission schools, and three English secondary schools. Total enrolment in all schools in 1958 was 12,929, including 993 students studying at the secondary level. The Mission and Chinese schools provided secondary level classes, and in 1955, for the first time, students from Brunei completed an external examination, the Sarawak Junior Certificate. Finally, eleven students had finished post-secondary or university training abroad, in the UK and Australia.\(^{23}\)

\(^{20}\) Horton, *The British Residency*, p. 49.

\(^{21}\) Ibid.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 52.

In 1959, Brunei’s first written Constitution was promulgated and the Sultanate regained self-government; consequently, a complete review of education in the state was conducted by two Malayan experts, Aminuddin Baki and Paul Chang. Their 1962 report recommended that a national system be established to provide free and compulsory education for all children in the state. The primary medium of instruction was to be Malay in order to promote a common identity. Though the Executive Council approved this report in October 1962, administrative inefficiency, teacher shortages, and the outbreak of the revolt all blocked the implementation of the new system.24

One way to quantify the impact of education in Brunei between 1906 and 1962 is through the growth of literacy, though such a measure is a blunt instrument at best. No figures for literacy are available until the census of 1931, when it was reported that 8% of the population was literate. By 1947, 26.1% of those aged ten years or over were literate, rising to 47.9% by the time of the 1960 census. Though, as Jones has noted, some of this improvement can be attributed to immigration, the fact that much of it occurred amongst groups that were of school age between the two later censuses can certainly be primarily credited to the growth of education in the state.25

Another way to assess the impact of education is through the formation of social and political organisations. As will be discussed below, much of the impetus for these organisations can be attributed to teachers and former students. The leaders of the PRB were themselves a demonstration of this premise: Azahari was educated at a Mission school in Brunei Town and in Java during the war; HM Salleh attended the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) during the 1930s and was headmaster of the Brunei Town Malay School before the war; and Zaini Ahmad studied at the London School of Economics in the late 1950s.26

25 Jones, op. cit., pp. 57 & 128-9. “Literate”, in all of these censuses, was generally defined as the ability to read and write a simple letter in any language.
26 Horton, The British Residency, p. 78; Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 106; Gunn, op. cit., p. 16. The Sultan Idris Training College was established in Perak in 1922 in order to train Malay teachers in the Winstedt tradition.
It is important to emphasise the extent of the achievement in the field of education during this period. If it is recalled that there was no western-style education at all in Brunei in 1906, the education system of 1962, even with its multi-lingual nature, was relatively sound, if not well developed. This success had many effects, including the expansion of literacy that resulted in more people being able to read newspapers, which, together with the increasing popularity of radio, meant that more Bruneians became aware of the world around them and thus more politically conscious. Fundamentally, also, increasing literacy enabled the government to employ more locals; more specifically, the gradual expansion of English education enabled more Bruneians to advance in the public service. Finally, increased opportunities for education and other social and economic advances, discussed below, raised expectations for even greater improvements, provoking frustration and anger when these hopes were not fulfilled as quickly as expected.

**Early Political Activity**

There is conflicting information in the literature about the early nationalist organisations, particularly regarding dates and other such basic information, which makes the following account somewhat vague. Most sources agree, however, that one of the earliest of these associations was the Kesatuan Melayu Brunei (KMB, Brunei Malay Union), modelled on similarly-named groups in Malaya and Singapore and formed sometime in the 1930s. The aims of this association are not clear, but it appears that it acted primarily as a pressure group to draw the government’s attention to the social and cultural needs of the Malays. Much of its importance appears to have been retrospectively assigned because its leader, Pengiran Muda Tengah Omar Ali Saifuddin, acceded to the throne in 1950, though one suspects, because of the dearth of specific information about it, that the KMB achieved little of note during its existence.27

Another of the early organisations was the Sahabat Pena (literally, Pen Friend), the Bruneian branch of a Malayan group whose object was to encourage social contact through

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27 Hussainmiya, op. cit., pp. 86-7. Hussainmiya refers to this association as the Persatuan Melayu Brunei, which also translates as Brunei Malay Union.
correspondence and other forms of communication. The Bruneian Sahabat Pena was founded in July 1936 and included members of the Malay elite, graduates of the SITC, and Malayan officers seconded for service in the Sultanate. Roff has described the Malayan Sahabat Pena as “a shared and politically safe outlet for a host of Malay anxieties and feelings of insecurity hitherto either mute or expressed in scattered and ephemeral local societies”: it was not a political association but a social group that often exchanged political ideas.\(^{28}\)

Similarly non-political in character was the Persekutuan Guru-Guru Melayu Brunei (PGGMB, Brunei Malay Teachers’ Association), an organisation established in 1937 and officially registered in 1939. The PGGMB was a welfare society that also promoted the role of education in the community, though, as Hussainmiya has observed,

> [g]iven the fact that the teachers were an élite group, who had had wide exposure to political and reformist teachings through reading contemporary Malay newspapers, and who had imbibed radical ideas through the returnees from the SITC, it was impossible that the BMTA could shy away from social and political issues.\(^{29}\)

The PGGMB achieved particular political prominence during the 1950s when some of its members were active in the State Council.

One organisation of which little is known is the Kesatuan Kaum Ibu Melayu Brunei (KKIMB, Union of Brunei Malay Women), formed after World War II and including both élite and non-élite women. The objective of this association was to improve the lot of Malay women, especially through education. Their representations to the government for the recruitment of more women as teachers resulted in Bruneian women being sent to the Malay Women’s Training College in Melaka from 1948.\(^{30}\)

The best-known organisation is the Barisan Pemuda (BARIP, Youth Front), which is generally regarded as the most important of the early associations. Founded in April 1946, BARIP was primarily formed in response to a perceived bias on the part of the BMA in

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\(^{29}\) AVM Horton, A New Sketch of the History of Negara Brunei Darussalam, AVM Horton, Bordesley, 1996, p. 25; Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 88. The acronyms PGGMB and BMTA are interchangeable, derived from the name of the organisation in Malay and English, respectively.

favour of employing English-speaking Chinese over Malays. More broadly, the association’s goals were, according to Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim, “to bring Brunei to independence” and to promote the “social and economic advancement of the Malay community”. At the height of its popularity, BARIP had branches in Labuan, Jesselton, and Papar and claimed close to 10,000 members, many of whom were Malay teachers, clerks, and junior public servants.

BARIP, like the KMB, received élite support, with Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II (r. 1924–1950) approving their initiative to compose a national anthem and participating in celebrations to mark the association’s first anniversary in 1947. Unlike the KMB, however, its significance was apparent while it was still active, as the manner of its demise in early 1948 demonstrated:

The British administration, irked by BARIP’s extreme nationalist activities and uneasy at the open patronage extended by the Sultan, and aware of BARIP’s potential threat to their interests, took both direct and indirect steps to ‘kill’ the movement by quickly transferring some government servants out of town, and by prohibiting the participation of public servants in politically oriented associations. Some leading BARIP activists, including Jamil Umar, whose education was interrupted by the war, were sent to continue their teacher training courses at SITC.

Hussainmiya has observed that it is easy to overstate the significance of BARIP as an early nationalist movement, mainly because of a tendency on the part of its former members, the primary sources of information about it, to conflate its activities with those of similar organisations in Malaya and Indonesia. It is important, however, not to discard BARIP entirely: it was clearly an expression of Bruneian fears about the future of their country and an attempt to influence the course of events. In addition, its role as a training ground for future political actors like HM Salleh, Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim, Jamil Umar, HB Hidup, and Yasin Affandy should be highlighted.

31 Quoted in Matassim, op. cit., p. 26; Gunn, op. cit., pp. 112-3.
32 Hussainmiya, op. cit., pp. 90 & 108. The purpose of these branches in North Borneo is not clear; it is likely that Bruneis living in these places created them in order to participate in BARIP’s activities.
33 Ibid., pp. 90-5; Gunn, op. cit., pp. 112 & 114.
34 Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 95.
It is clear from this brief survey of the early political associations that they were Malay organisations intended to promote Malay interests and, in the case of BARIP, overtly to elevate those interests at the expense of the Chinese. There is, in fact, no mention in the literature of any associations for the Chinese, Kedayans, or Orang Ulu in this period, which may mean that there were no such groups, though this appears improbable. This reflects the nearly exclusive focus of attention in the literature on the Malay ethnic group, as well as the nature of Brunei society: the Malays were politically dominant and are therefore regarded as more historically significant.

It is equally clear that, of the associations described above, only BARIP was truly political. The Sahabat Pena was a social group, the KMB and the KKIMB were lobby groups, and the PGGMB was a union. Though the KMB and the KKIMB had political functions, their objectives and character were not solely political. It would be more accurate to describe these four organisations as pre-political in nature: a distinction that would have little relevance were it not for the two decades that passed between their appearance and the establishment of Brunei’s first formal political party.

This leads to the question of how significant these associations were for the subsequent political development of Brunei. Much of their value lies in the experience that they gave to their members in political affairs, as is noted above in relation to BARIP. The involvement in these groups of later leaders like the future Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III, Marsal Maun, and HM Salleh stimulated their political thinking, equipped them with essential personal and public skills, enabled them to exchange ideas, and exposed them to the many pitfalls of political activity. These organisations also helped to prepare the ground for the PRB by introducing the concept of organised political activity to Brunei.

World War II

The outbreak of World War II did not initially affect the Sultanate, though the Brunei government donated $100,000 to Britain’s war effort on two occasions, in September 1939.

35 Orang Ulu translates as people of the ulu and is used here as a generic term for the various ethnic groups in the inland areas of Brunei, including, for example, Dusuns, Muruts, and Bisayams.
and March 1940. By July 1941, however, it had become clear that Japan intended to invade Southeast Asia, and it was decided that the oilfields at Seria and Miri should be destroyed in order to deny the Japanese what would inevitably be their primary objective in northern Borneo. The wells were filled with concrete in September and the refinery at Lutong and all other production equipment was destroyed on 8 December, after the Japanese attack on Kota Bahru in Kelantan. Northern Borneo was not actively defended by the British, apart from a rearguard action fought by the 2/15th Punjab Regiment, assigned to defend the airfield at Kuching.36

The Japanese, in the shape of 10,000 troops led by General Kiyotaki Kawaguchi, landed at Kuala Belait on 16 December and, within six days, controlled all of Brunei. The rest of northern Borneo soon followed: Labuan fell on 1 January, 1942, Jesselton on the 6th, and Sandakan on the 19th. Once the fighting was over, the 37th Army established a military administration over northern Borneo, in Brunei’s case with the agreement of the Sultan. Ibrahim Jahfar, previously the Resident’s private secretary, was appointed Chief Administrative Officer; many of the indigenous public servants worked under the Japanese to maintain the continuity of the administration and to soften the harshness of the new regime as best they could. The Resident and most of the other Europeans in northern Borneo were interned at the Batu Lintang Prisoner of War Camp in Kuching.37

The Japanese initially made Kuching their administrative headquarters, but they transferred this to the Sapong Rubber Estate in southwest North Borneo in late 1943 to defend against the possibility of an Allied counter-attack. Northern Borneo was split into five prefectures to facilitate administration; the Baram, Brunei, Limbang, Lawas, and Labuan made up the Miri prefecture. It is, however, important to note that the Japanese largely controlled the coastal and riverine areas of Borneo, virtually leaving ulu areas to govern

themselves: the remote Kelabit plateau in Sarawak, for example, rarely saw the Japanese. Economically, the Japanese concentrated on rehabilitating the oilfields, developing the dye industry, and improving the production of foodstuffs, minerals, and forest materials. Sixteen new oil wells were drilled at Miri and Seria and produced around 11,498,000 barrels of oil between 1942 and 1945, or nearly half of pre-war levels. Local food production also increased dramatically from 1943 as many townspeople fled into the ulu to cultivate crops on their own account in comparative peace.38

Generally speaking, the Japanese treated the Malay community relatively well, or, as Gunn puts it, they were “at least spared the most coercive aspects of labor and military mobilization”.39 As noted above, they were required to learn Japanese at schools, including the otherwise English medium Brunei High School, and in night classes; there was also a concerted effort to promote the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, an economic concept developed partly to justify Japanese aggression before and during the war. In addition, various groups, including community councils and women’s organisations, were created to give their members “a sense of self-sufficiency” and, perhaps more importantly, to facilitate Japanese efforts to garner some local support, however reluctant, for their presence.40

One organisation of which some details are known is the Kyodotai, the North Borneo Volunteer Corps, formed in October 1943 to train future leaders “to accept the Japanese occupation, absorb Japanese ideals and ideas and to work in harmony with the Japanese”.41 Whether those who volunteered for this group were forced to do so is not clear, but members were drawn from all indigenous communities of Borneo and numbered 1,280, of whom 180 comprised the Miri unit. It was initially intended that volunteers would receive training in basic military skills, Japanese literacy, agriculture, and construction over two years. In

38 Horton, The British Residency, pp. 35-8; Gunn, op. cit., pp. 95-6; Reece, The Name of Brooke, p. 143.
39 Gunn, op. cit., p. 96.
40 Horton, The British Residency, pp. 36-7; Gunn, op. cit., p. 100.
41 Harun, op. cit., pp. 14-5; Gunn, op. cit., p. 96.
reality, though, the volunteers were primarily used as drivers and farmers to offset persistent labour shortages.\textsuperscript{42}

Conditions in northern Borneo began to deteriorate in about 1943 as the tide of war turned against the Japanese; food and medicine stockpiles were exhausted, shipping routes to Borneo were severed by Allied bombing, the ‘banana money’ introduced at the outset of the occupation declined in value, and even such a simple action as repairing a fishing net became impossible. In addition, Allied bombing raids on the towns of Borneo became more frequent, particularly after October 1944; by the end of the war, every town in Brunei except Kampong Ayer had been flattened. The Japanese also became more aggressive, and the incidence of executions and torture increased as their situation worsened. Because of these tribulations, the towns of Brunei gradually emptied as more and more people sought the sanctuary of the \textit{ulu}.\textsuperscript{43}

The 9\textsuperscript{th} Australian Division landed simultaneously at Labuan, Muara, and Brunei Bluff on 10 June, 1945 and had liberated all of northern Borneo within three weeks. The surviving Japanese retreated into the \textit{ulu} but met with little mercy from either its inhabitants or the jungle. Once the surrender had been formally signed on 15 August, Brunei came under Australian military administration until January 1946, when the 32\textsuperscript{nd} Indian Infantry Brigade of the Allies’ Southeast Asia Command relieved the Australians.\textsuperscript{44}

The transitional interlude between the liberation of Brunei and the resumption of the Residency is generally referred to as the British Military Administration (BMA) period, despite the fact, already noted, that this authority was initially staffed largely by Australians. The purpose of the BMA was to establish a simple administration, provide relief and supplies to the population, and restore the economy; basically, the BMA aimed to return Brunei to normal conditions. Horton has described the extent of the task that the BMA faced:

\begin{quote}
The oilfield had been set to the torch by the retreating Japanese and the spectacular fires could not be brought under control until September 1945. The people were suffering from malnutrition and endemic disease, and many might have died of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{42} Harun, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 14-5.
\textsuperscript{43} Horton, \textit{The British Residency}, pp. 37-8; “British Administration in Brunei”, p. 369. Kampong Ayer translates literally as \textquotedblright Water Village	extquotedblright; it is located in the Brunei River in Brunei Town and is the ancient capital of Brunei.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Time}, “Turn of the Wheel”, 9 July, 1945; Horton, \textit{The British Residency}, pp. 38-9; Gunn, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 97.
starvation had the war lasted much longer: this, too, at a time of unprecedented
world shortage of food (especially rice) and shipping. There were insufficient
materials to rehouse the homeless. Economic activity had virtually ceased. Finally,
the Civil Affairs staff themselves were severely under-manned and, apart from
headquarters personnel, inexperienced. To make a difficult situation even worse, the
Australian Military Authorities refused to delegate any power to the ‘Chief Civil
Affairs Officer’, Brigadier Macaskie.45

The BMA also faced the first industrial strike in Bruneian history in mid-1946, by artisans in
Seria “frustrated that the pre-war prosperity had not been restored immediately”; the dispute
was settled amicably by a Labour Advisor brought in from Selangor.46

One of the first priorities of the BMA was to restore the oilfield at Seria to full capacity:
this was achieved by October 1945, while the refinery at Lutong was re-opened on Christmas
Day, having been entirely re-built and expanded. This was the only construction that the
BMA authorised, due to financial constraints and, as Horton puts it, an “unwillingness to
bequeath a building programme which might not be approved by the restored civilian
administration”.47 Their primary achievements were the aid that they so successfully
provided for the people, the re-establishment of the public service and police force, and, as
noted above, the re-opening of some schools.48

Brunei’s experience of the war affected later events in many ways; for example, the
destruction of its towns in Allied bombing raids rendered a programme of physical
reconstruction necessary after the war, which delayed substantive economic development for
some seven years. The ease with which the Japanese seized northern Borneo proved that
British control was neither pre-ordained nor permanent, an object lesson for both the
nationalists and the traditional élite. In addition, the failure of the British to even defend
Brunei, despite the promise of security given in the 1888 Protectorate Treaty, caused some
resentment and contributed to the anti-British feelings of some members of the PRB. At the
same time, however, as Angel has observed, the return of the British after the war was very

sincerely welcomed in the wake of the miseries and hardships inflicted by the Japanese occupation.\textsuperscript{49}

The BMA period is most notable, in terms of Brunei’s political development, for the resentment it caused within the Malay community. The inability of many of its officers to speak \textit{Bahasa Melayu} meant that the BMA tended to employ those who could communicate in English; as is noted above, few Malays had had the advantage of English education, so the BMA recruited most of its junior officers from amongst the Chinese community. The discontent that this produced was exacerbated by the imprisonment of some leading Malays for collaboration with the Japanese. The most prominent of these was HM Salleh, gaol for six months for the enthusiasm with which he had performed his duties with the Japanese propaganda unit. Upon his release, Salleh was given a “hero’s welcome” and immediately elected president of BARIP.\textsuperscript{50}

The discontent that the BMA evoked was part of the reason why BARIP became so popular: without this resentment, the organisation would not have gained any momentum. In addition, the imprisonment of HM Salleh, viewed as unjust, increased his personal status, and transformed him into Brunei’s first popular leader. Finally, the BMA’s perceived pro-Chinese bias was a manifestation of a tendency amongst many Malays to rate their claims to preferment in the public service, as the dominant ethnic group, above all others: a sense of entitlement to power and control that always underlay the worldview of the PRB and coloured its response to issues like the constitution and the Federation of Malaysia.

\textbf{The Reconstruction of Brunei}

An essential foundation for all that occurred during the reconstruction period was the rapid expansion in oil production and revenues after the war. Once the oil wells had been rehabilitated, annual production soared from 1,689,963 tonnes in 1947 to 4,990,194 tonnes in 1953; in 1938, by contrast, only 685,257 tonnes had been exported. Coupled with this increase in production were an upward revision in the rate of royalty that the government

\textsuperscript{49} Angel, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{50} Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 92-3; TS Monks, \textit{Brunei Days}, The Book Guild Ltd., Lewes, 1992, pp. 117-8.
received from the BMPC in 1949 and the introduction of a company income tax in 1950 of 20% on profits, rising to 30% in 1953; the vast majority of the taxation revenue was collected from the BMPC. The consequence of these changes was an astonishing rise in government revenue from $4.3 million in 1947 to $98 million in 1953. In addition, the Brunei government had accumulated investments worth around $144.5 million by 1952.51

Financial security did not, of course, solve all of Brunei’s problems: physical reconstruction, for example, was hampered and delayed by shortages of all that was needful, including labour, machinery, and material. These deficiencies were exacerbated by the fact that what little there was tended to be monopolised by the BMPC. Ulu areas were especially disadvantaged because of the unwillingness of contractors to work outside the towns due to higher transport and labour costs. Despite these problems, much was achieved during the reconstruction period, including the creation of town plans for Brunei Town in 1947, Kuala Belait in 1949, and Seria in 1950. These provided for roads, buildings, and open spaces, the repair of sea and river walls, and the reclamation of land for construction. Perhaps the best reflection of the success of the physical reconstruction programme is a comment made in *The Borneo Bulletin* in June 1958:

... rarely has a place changed its appearance so quickly as Brunei Town. Gone are most of the shacks – apart from the seemingly permanent hovels of Kampong Ayer – of former years and, in their places, have arisen the steel and concrete buildings of a modern age – offices, shops, restaurants and similar enterprises.52

The financial security flowing from the increase in government revenues, the rising expectations amongst the community that this money should be used and not saved against the day when the oil should run out, and the need for modernisation all led to the creation of the First Five-Year Development Plan, a comprehensive scheme that aimed to expand welfare programmes, improve communications and infrastructure, and further develop the economy. A Commissioner of Development, Eric Bevington, was appointed to oversee the implementation of the Plan and $100 million allocated to it for the life of the programme. Of

this amount, 59.78% was allocated to infrastructure spending, 21.77% to social services, 7.81% to administration and equipment, 3.93% to agriculture, and the remaining 6.71% to basic surveys and myriad other purposes.\(^{53}\)

The problems that hindered reconstruction efforts, already mentioned above, also hampered the effective implementation of the Development Plan: as Bevington later remarked, “the money was there, but nothing else”.\(^{54}\) Horton has described some of its other deficiencies:

Generally speaking, the amleness of funds “removed only one of the factors limiting development”; and, quite simply, there was too much work to be done and not enough time in which to do it: the Resident complained that speed, rather than efficiency, often had to be the criterion for political reasons. Attempts to diversify the economy failed. The planned deep-sea port at Muara – which might have attracted light industry and would have reduced prices by eliminating Labuan transshipment costs – was postponed and not completed until 1972.

Government schemes supposed to assist ordinary folk were often disappointing. The irrigation project at Mulaut and investigations into the mechanical production of rice – hopefully to eliminate the back-breaking labour involved – produced results which are not easily discernible. Subsidies to encourage smallholders to replant rubber certainly produced a temporary increase in [plant] population, but the long-term results were unimpressive – the export of rubber from Brunei had virtually ceased by the 1970s. The ‘river clearing’ scheme was abandoned before completion; and there was a disinclination on the part of youth to undergo a long apprenticeship in the traditional craft industries.\(^{55}\)

The Development Plan was, nonetheless, successful in many ways: apart from the advances in education already addressed above, a concerted campaign to combat the effects of malaria virtually eliminated the incidence of the disease, while public confidence in the medical treatment provided by the government was visibly increasing as a result of improvements made in health services. In the realm of public hygiene, a water purification plant was opened in Brunei Town in 1954, and 75% of houses in the Kuala Belait region were supplied with piped water by 1957. The primary social contribution of the Plan was the provision of non-contributory monthly pensions for the elderly and the disabled, including those suffering from blindness, tuberculosis, leprosy, and some mental illnesses. Achievements in infrastructure included the construction of roads, bridges, and electric

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\(^{54}\) Horton, “British Administration in Brunei”, p. 371.

\(^{55}\) Horton, The British Residency, p. 51.
power stations, the installation of telephone and broadcasting facilities, and the development of the fisheries industry.\footnote{Horton, "A Note on Post-War Constitutional Change in Brunei, 1944–1948", \textit{Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society}, Vol. LXIII, No. 1, 1990, pp. 39-44; The British Residency, pp. 41-2. The three territories being the Protectorate of Brunei and the Crown Colonies of Sarawak and North Borneo. Labuan, formerly a Crown Colony, was incorporated into North Borneo in 1946.}

The reconstruction period also brought developments of a more political complexion, most prominently the cession of both Sarawak and North Borneo to Britain as colonies in July 1946. Changes were intended for Brunei as well, in the form of a new treaty that would give the British greater authority. In addition, the Colonial Office post of Governor-General, Malaya was created in order to better co-ordinate British policy throughout Southeast Asia. The overall purpose of these changes was to promote closer co-operation between the three Borneo territories and prepare them for eventual self-government.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 48-50; Hussainmiya, \textit{Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin}, p. 121; Angel, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 141.}

Sir Harold MacMichael was despatched to Malaya to negotiate new treaties with the sultans there, the intention being that he would visit Brunei once Southeast Asia Command had relieved the Australians. However, MacMichael had been recalled to Europe by that time and the idea was deferred until the new Governor-General could advise on the question. The adverse reaction in Malaya to the new treaties encouraged the Colonial Office to exercise caution in Brunei, and the Governor-General, Malcolm MacDonald, remarked that it would be inadvisable to attempt any alteration in the existing treaty relationship, since such a step would tend to arouse opposition in Brunei.\footnote{Horton, The British Residency, pp. 42-3. For a concise description of the events in Malaya and the controversy surrounding the Malayan Union, see Barbara Watson Andaya & Leonard Y Andaya, \textit{A History of Malaysia}, Palgrave, Houndmills, 2001, pp. 264-9.} At the same time, Mr MacDonald considered that Brunei was too small to stand on its own feet, and should be brought into association for administrative purposes with Sarawak, since it was surrounded by Sarawak territory.

The consequence of MacDonald’s recommendation was that in 1948, the Governor of Sarawak became \textit{ex officio} High Commissioner for Brunei and senior officials came from the Sarawak service rather than from the Malayan Civil Service, as had previously been the case. There was some minor opposition to this change initially, but careful explanation of the limits of the change, emphasising that Brunei was not to be politically subject to Sarawak, dispelled these doubts. Despite this success, however, the link with Sarawak proved to be a
constant source of friction in Brunei’s relations with Britain due to “a total distrust of all things Sarawakian” in the Sultanate.\footnote{ANA, File 3032/3/1, Extract from The Crown Colonist, “State of Brunei’s Links with Sarawak”, April 1948; Horton, “A Note on Post-War Constitutional Change”, p. 50; “British Administration in Brunei”, p. 369. The Colonial Office post of Governor-General, Malaya and the Foreign Office post of Special Commissioner in Southeast Asia were combined into the office of Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia in May 1948, in which capacity MacDonald served until 1955.}

Internally, also, there was friction between the traditional élite and the British administration, as there had been before the war. The cession of Sarawak to the UK without reference to Brunei caused some disappointment, with Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin remarking, “If the Rajah wants to give the country away, why does he not give it back to me?” and, more colourfully, “Sarawak was not a Kebun Getah [Rubber Estate] to be sold off by the Rajah”.\footnote{Reece, The Name of Brooke, p. 270.} There was also some friction over the erection of a new istana for the Sultan, with the latter removing himself to Kuching and threatening to boycott his own silver jubilee celebrations in 1949 in protest at the slow pace of its construction.\footnote{Hussainmiya, op. cit., pp. 50-2. The istana had taken a direct hit during Allied bombing of Brunei Town in early 1945. Bob Reece, Datu Bandar – Abang Haji Mustapha of Sarawak: Some Reflections of His Life and Times, Ampang Press, Kuala Lumpur, c. 1993, p. 120. For a brief description of the friction during the reign of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, see Hussainmiya, op. cit., pp. 46-9.}

A more contentious issue was the Sultan’s attempt to wrest some control over Brunei’s finances from the British administration by threatening to invite the American Standard Oil Company into the Sultanate. The Sultan wrote in a letter addressed to Gerard MacBryan in June 1950, which, Reece has stated, was most probably typed and composed by the latter:

I have been very ill for a long time at the way the oil fields of Brunei have been conceded without consideration of myself or of the interests of my people. But I have been helpless because of the Treaties between myself and Great Britain which have forced me to do whatever I was told in all matters. . . . My sole desire is that from a financial point of view a reasonable source should be available to me to relieve the distress and suffering of my own people in the particular way I think right and not in the way that the British Residents and High Commissioners and agents think right.\footnote{Quoted in Bob Reece, “‘The Little Sultan’: Ahmad Tajuddin II of Brunei, Gerard MacBryan, and Malcolm MacDonald”, The Borneo Research Bulletin, Vol. 40, 2009.}

It is difficult to say whether this threat was genuine, but it appears to have had some effect: the Sultan was invited to visit London in June 1950 to discuss changes in Brunei’s relations with Britain and the possibility of an increase in oil royalties, after repeated requests for such a meeting had previously been refused.\footnote{Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 54. It is not clear when the initial requests were made or the successful one granted, so the link between the threat and the journey to London may not exist.}
This visit to London was also the occasion for further conflict, as shortly before his departure the Sultan appointed MacBryan, a controversial Sarawak civil servant, as his political advisor. MacBryan had endeared himself to the Sultan at the time of some abortive negotiations in 1941 regarding the Limbang issue by supporting his plans for his daughter, his only child, to succeed him. MacBryan’s appointment was greeted with dismay by local British officials because of his propensity for political intrigue and his suspected mental instability. Their fears were not realised, however, because the Sultan died in Singapore en route to London on 4 June, preventing the conference from occurring and effectively ending MacBryan’s alleged hopes of wielding power from behind the throne.  

This reverse did not stop MacBryan from publicly pushing the claims of the Sultan’s daughter to succeed him, by telegraphing King George VI and, later, corresponding with The Times in London. There was no support, however, for Pengiran Anak Puteri Norihsani from those who really mattered, the pengirans and other traditional advisors. Had there been any real backing for her claims, the Resident could not have proclaimed the Pengiran Bendahara sultan so swiftly and apparently without opposition. MacBryan’s failure reportedly induced a nervous breakdown and he was certified to be of unsound mind and deported to Singapore for treatment.

The accession of a new sultan did not change the situation in Brunei immediately; there was still conflict between the traditional élite and the British administration. For example, in September 1951, The Straits Times published an interview with Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III (r. 1950–67) in which he laid claim to Limbang and Labuan. This was apparently “received with consternation in Sarawak and North Borneo” and appears to have upset the Governor of Sarawak so much that MacDonald had to smooth things over by denying the

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65 Poulgrain, op. cit., p. 97; Gerard MacBryan, “Letter to the Editor: Britain and Brunei”, The Times, 26 October, 1950; Hussainmiya, op. cit., pp. 93-4; Reece, The Name of Brooke, p. 279. For a description of the process of selecting a sultan in the 19th and 20th centuries, see Brown, op. cit., pp. 101-4. Poulgrain (p. 94) has claimed that the Pengiran Bendahara “usurped power” in the following manner: “Known to have the backing of Resident Pretty, Omar Ali Saifuddin confronted the ruling circle in closed session. With his kris in hand, he claimed the throne, demanding of those present to state their opposition or remain silent.” He did not give a source for this assertion and it is odd that there is no mention of such a dramatic event elsewhere. On the other hand, the establishment of a group that opposed the Pengiran Bendahara’s accession, and the group’s ability to attract approximately 600 members during the 1950s, does suggest that his reign was not universally popular, as does, of course, the revolt itself. Singh & Sidhu, op. cit., p. 97.
veracity of the report.\textsuperscript{66} It is likely, however, in the light of the Sultan’s subsequent pursuit of the Limbang claim, that the article was, in fact, correct.

The new Sultan also agreed with his predecessor’s views on financial issues: he, too, tried to wrest some control over Brunei’s finances from the administration. He started, as his brother had, by raising his own living standards, partly as a way of maintaining his status, as Hussainmiya has suggested, but it was, perhaps, the easiest way to gain a foothold: the Resident could not argue that this issue was none of his business, and once he had won this battle it might be more difficult to sideline him in the future. He was certainly successful in this area: his personal salary was increased from the $42,000 his brother received annually at the time of his death to $90,000 in 1952, his \textit{istikana} received various improvements though it had only recently been built, and his personal staff was expanded.\textsuperscript{67}

The first major victory that the Sultan and his supporters achieved occurred in April 1953 when the State Treasurer (Incorporation) Enactment was defeated in the State Council. The object of this bill was to give the State Treasurer the legal ability to manage government expenditure and to regularise the existing situation. When it was discussed in the Council, however, Ibrahim Jahfar, appointed member of the Council and private secretary to the Sultan, suggested that the bill would strengthen the Treasurer’s control over expenditure too much and instead proposed that all financial matters be debated by the Sultan-in-Council. When a vote on the bill was taken, only the Resident and the Treasurer supported it, leaving the \textit{status quo ante} in place.\textsuperscript{68} This victory effectively transformed the State Council into the main arena of conflict between the administration and the local élite and marked the beginning of the end of substantive British authority in Brunei.

The reconstruction period was a time of transition that shaped Brunei’s subsequent development in many ways. For example, the astronomical rise in government revenue that

\textsuperscript{66}Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 64; Harun, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{67}Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 63 & 68-9.
\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., pp. 70-1. Membership of the State Council varied considerably from its establishment in 1907 to its abolition in 1959; for a representative sampling of its composition, see BA Hussainmiya, “‘Manufacturing Consensus’: The Role of the State Council in Brunei Darussalam”, \textit{Journal of Southeast Asian Studies}, Vol. 31, No. 2, 2000, pp. 326-7.
occurred during this period excited expectations of a corresponding improvement in the lives of all Bruneians; the disappointment and frustration that was felt when these expectations were not met was naturally equally substantial. The Development Plan had created a sense of forward movement in the economy that also infused the general mood in the state, which only intensified these expectations. The shortcomings in the implementation of the Plan contributed to the resulting frustration at the apparently slow pace of this change. In addition, the end of the Plan coincided with a decline in oil production at Seria, magnifying these concerns as well as wider fears about the future of Brunei. Politically, the link with Sarawak, as noted above, was an irritant in relations between the Brunei élite and the British that exacerbated the effect of other disputes and, on occasion, could be used as an excuse by the former to further their other objectives. This period also brought the first major victory for the Bruneians in the battle for control over the Sultanate’s affairs, setting the template for succeeding skirmishes and strengthening the élite’s hand.

**The BRUFICO Affair**

The dawn of mass political activity in Brunei is synonymous with the return of AM Azahari from abroad in October 1952, the Japanese having sent him to Bogor in Indonesia for further education during the war. Since then, he had participated in the Indonesian struggle for independence from Holland and entered business in Singapore. The significance of his arrival lies in a combination of his life experience and his personality, as Hussainmiya has explained:

> By Brunei’s standards, he was a well-educated and articulate person, able to communicate effectively in both English and Malay. Brimming with idealism, and able to thrill his audience with his silver tongue, he easily attracted a large following. More importantly, his participation in the Indonesian struggle for independence gave him a special aura of respectability and honour in the eyes of like-minded young men of Brunei who were enamoured of the exploits and sacrifices made by the nationalists. 69

Upon his return, Azahari proposed that the Brunei Film Production Company (BRUFICO) should be established in order to illustrate that there was no provision in local

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law for a Bruneian to register a business. A film company was likely chosen because of the glamour and excitement associated with such an entity, which, it was hoped, would attract more support than would a more mundane business. Funds were to be raised through a public share offer to the value of $250,000. The High Commissioner, Sir Anthony Abell, described his activities thus:

He returned recently to Brunei and started almost immediately to stir up trouble, preaching an anti-Colonial and pro-Indonesian creed. His persuasive tongue and superior education gained him considerable support, particularly among the young rank and file of the Police and the junior grades of the Civil Service; even His Highness [the Sultan] and some of his Ministers at one time showed some interest in the film project.

However, it soon became clear that Azahari was using his influence to undermine the authority of the Sultan whom he described as a stooge of the British. He and his followers are said to have founded a secret society which demands of its members the taking of an oath on the Koran and enjoins secrecy and loyalty to a movement for ‘merdeka’ (freedom). When rumours of this subversive movement reached the authorities, the Resident made enquiries into the activities of the Film Company and found that it was without financial backing or experience and was, in fact, no more than a swindle and a cover for Azahari’s other activities and, of course, a means whereby he could collect funds either for himself or for political purposes. The Sultan and [the State] Council therefore declared the Film Company an illegal association.70

Azahari then encouraged his supporters to demonstrate against this “oppression” in Brunei Town. 71 Around 200 people marched from the house of Azahari’s father in Jalan Tutong to the main government offices in the town centre on 23 January, 1953 to give the Resident a petition calling for the re-consideration of the company’s application for registration. Abell described subsequent events:

In spite of warnings by the Magistrate, these processions refused to disperse and the police were eventually called upon to arrest the ring-leaders for being members of an unlawful assembly. The police on this occasion were not led by an [expatriate] officer and they failed to obey the orders of the Malay inspector in charge. In fact, they showed a disquieting reluctance to take any action whatsoever against the crowd which was in an excitable mood and contained many of their friends and a certain number of well known Government servants. I might add that the Resident had agreed to see Azahari with three of his supporters but not when they were supported by an illegal gathering. 72

70 TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 8, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 32 Saving, 10 March, 1953, paras. 2-3; Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, pp. 101-4; Poulgrain, op. cit., p. 99.
72 TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 8, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 32 Saving, 10 March, 1953, para. 4; Zariani, op. cit., p. 127; Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, p. 102; TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 1, Letter to Dr WLF Nuttall from RE ‘Hector’ Hales, Enclosure to Letter to WBL Monson from Dr WLF Nuttall, 11 February, 1953, p. 2. The size of the demonstration is disputed: what might be described as pro-PRB sources claim that at least one thousand people attended. The lower figure given by both Hales and The Straits Budget is preferred here as far more likely in Brunei’s relatively small and politically undeveloped society at that time. Zariani, op. cit., p. 128; Poulgrain, op. cit., p. 100; CO 1022/396, Item 1, Letter to Dr WLF Nuttall from RE ‘Hector’ Hales, Enclosure to Letter to WBL Monson from Dr WLF Nuttall, 11 February, 1953, p. 2; The Straits Budget, “A Trial in Brunei”, 12 March, 1953.
Brunei’s first political demonstration was not violent: the crowd, according to *The Straits Budget*, “stood around” for almost four hours and “went quietly away” when it was over.\(^{73}\) Eight people regarded by the police as ringleaders, including Azahari, were later arrested.\(^{74}\)

When the case was heard before the Magistrate’s court a week later, Azahari and his co-accused were charged with being “members of an unlawful assembly, the common object of which was to overawe by criminal force or show of criminal force, the Government of the State” and with being “members of an unlawful assembly, knowing they had been ordered to disperse”.\(^{75}\) All were convicted and received sentences ranging from a fine to a year’s imprisonment.\(^{76}\) The severity of the sentences was presumably motivated by the political nature of the incident and the subversive activities described by Abell.

The seven who received prison sentences appealed to the High Court and had their terms reduced to six months for Azahari and three months for the others. In the weeks before the appeal was heard on 4 March, however, Brunei was flooded with rumours of impending strife, including unlikely stories of mass desertions from the police force, a gaol break at Kuala Belait, and the capture of Seria by 10,000 Indonesians. The state of the police force particularly concerned the administration, Abell singling out the junior ranks as “thoroughly unreliable” and “considerably influenced by Azahari’s teachings”.\(^{77}\) Two days before the appeal was to be heard, six constables from the Seria detachment deserted to join “the resistance forces in the jungle”.\(^{78}\)

Hector Hales of the BMPC described the most serious of these rumours:

> Lots of rumours began to be spread about to the effect that Azahari had plenty of support in the foilfields [sic], and a few days ago a rather fantastic report reached our ears through the Police, that an armed uprising was being planned here in Seria.

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\(^{73}\) *The Straits Budget*, op. cit.

\(^{74}\) Ibid.

\(^{75}\) Ibid.; Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin*, p. 102. Azahari’s seven co-defendants were his three brothers, Nikman, Osman, and Mohammad Mahmud, HB Hidup, Mohammad Haji Manggol, Tuah Puteh, and Abdullah Jahfar. The latter was fined $150 because he returned to work early in the day. The remaining seven were sentenced to one year’s imprisonment. Azahari also paid a $500 fine for possession of a *kris* in court. Five of those convicted were government servants and were subsequently dismissed. *The Straits Budget*, op. cit.; Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin*, p. 102; Zariani, *op. cit.*, p. 128.


\(^{77}\) TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 8, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 32 Saving, 10 March, 1953, paras. 4-6; *The Straits Budget*, op. cit.; CO 1022/396, Item 7, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 13, 12 March, 1953, para. 2; CO 1022/201, Item 36, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for February, 1953, No. 2/53, c. March, 1953, para. 2; CO 1022/396, Item 2, Letter to WBL Monson from Dr WLF Nuttall, 6 March, 1953, para. 1.

\(^{78}\) TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 8, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 32 Saving, 10 March, 1953, para. 6.
Knowing something of the very immature organization existing in this Indonesian-Malay movement, both Government and ourselves were reluctant to attach much credence to the story, but the threat itself was ominous enough, as it envisaged mobbing the Police Stations, taking over arms stored there, and subsequently rounding up the entire European community.\(^79\)

This uprising would presumably create the jungle forces referenced by the deserting police constables.

These rumours and the state of the police force caused the administration to request urgent reinforcement from Brunei’s neighbours, with the Sarawak Constabulary sending a detachment of 20 officers and the North Borneo Police one of 60. In the event, the only incident occurred in Seria on 5 March when two men attempted to disarm security guards at an oil installation, but fled when they were challenged. Abell credited this calm to the presence of the additional police in Brunei Town and Seria. The situation had improved enough by 12 March for the North Borneo contingent to be sent home, while the Sarawak detachment remained in Seria to assist their Bruneian counterparts.\(^80\)

That was by no means the end of the trouble, though. In the months following the appeal, there was, as one intelligence report put it, “a background of rumour, and evidence of [an] intention to create incidents”.\(^81\) Azahari’s support was also growing, as there was no shortage of the sort of people who tended to join his movement, one British official describing them as “young, enthusiastic and ill-educated”.\(^82\) The movement itself was termed by its members as the Gerakan di bawah Tanah, or underground movement, which was anti-colonial in its intent but, according to participants, non-violent in its projected methods.\(^83\)

The government’s information about the movement disagreed with this assessment:

> ...when the signal for the uprising had been given all members of the organisation were to arm themselves; Police stations were to be attacked and seized; certain prominent members of the Government were to be arrested and others were to be assassinated; after the seizure of power AZAHARI was to be proclaimed Sultan and his lieutenants would assume major appointments in the Government. Instructions

\(^79\) TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 1, Letter to Dr WLF Nuttall from RE ‘Hector’ Hales, enclosed in Letter to WBL Monson from Dr WLF Nuttall, 11 February, 1953, pp. 2-3.

\(^80\) TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 8, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 32 Saving, 10 March, 1953, paras. 7 & 9-10; Item 2, Letter to WBL Monson from Dr WLF Nuttall, 6 March, 1953, para. 1; Item 7, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 13, 12 March, 1953, para. 2.

\(^81\) TNA, CO 1022/201, Item 49, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for August, 1953, No. 8/53, c. September, 1953, para. 2.

\(^82\) ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Memorandum from the Office of the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, 26 August, 1953. Enclosure to Letter to the Secretary, DEA from the Australian Commissioner for Malaya, Singapore, 8 September, 1953, para. 6.

were issued that all members of the organisation should provide themselves with jungle-green uniforms and a certain number of such uniforms were subsequently discovered by the Police.\textsuperscript{84}

This plan is very similar to what actually occurred during the 1962 revolt, suggesting that intelligence information on the intentions of the underground movement was far more accurate than the ex-members’ claims.

The administration responded to the threat by again requesting reinforcement from Sarawak, with a second police platoon arriving on 14 July. Then, in August, seven people were arrested and charged with “conspiring to overawe the Government by means of a show of criminal force”.\textsuperscript{85} Of the seven, three confessed and gave evidence and three were tried and convicted; the seventh was presumably released without charge. Mohammad Haji Manggol received a sentence of two years’ imprisonment, while Mohammad Garip Haji Manggol and Jais Karim received a year apiece. These convictions marked the end of the turbulence following the BRUFICO Affair, with Azahari choosing to concentrate on his new transport business and his supporters appearing to lose both hope and interest.\textsuperscript{86}

This sudden explosion of political activity in Brunei, though clearly linked to Azahari’s return, is also related to the advances made during the reconstruction period, as Hussainmiya has observed.\textsuperscript{87} The rebuilding of Brunei’s physical infrastructure and the economic activity that followed in its wake, the vast increase in government revenues since the war, and the recent advances made in education all led to expectations of greater improvement in the lives of ordinary citizens. The politics of the wider world, most prominently the growing anti-colonial movement, also influenced events in Brunei. All of these changes caused a latent discontent that was ripe for exploitation by a natural-born political agitator like Azahari.

\textsuperscript{84} TNA, CO 1022/201, Item 49, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for August, 1953, No. 8/53, c. September, 1953, para. 5.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., para. 5; CO 1022/396, Item 15, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Chief Secretary, Sarawak, No. C29, 17 July, 1953, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{87} Hussainmiya, \textit{Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin}, p. 113.
Azahari himself, as will become clear as this thesis progresses, was the outstanding leader of popular politics in Brunei from the very moment he returned to the Sultanate. It was his personality and worldview that shaped the PRB: its attitude towards the Sultan’s government and its links with Britain were almost certainly a product of his early experiences in Indonesia, as was its willingness to turn to violence when other methods failed. It is doubtful, in fact, that political activity would have begun when it did and that subsequent events would have unfolded as they did, even with the discontent already mentioned, had he not returned to Brunei in 1952.

It is also important to emphasise the similarities between events in 1953 and 1962. The description of the underground movement’s intentions given above, including attacks on police stations, capturing public servants, and seizing the government of the country, could almost have been written for the rebellion itself. Though the plan behind the revolt was naturally more sophisticated, the two events were clearly planned by the same core group of people. This point is especially significant because the lessons learnt from the first event were applied by the PRB leadership to the second, including improved security, more detailed contingency planning, and more effective leadership. More importantly, it demonstrates that the core of the Party leadership was always open to the idea of using violent means if constitutional methods were failing.

The way that the political movement petered out is also important. Once the underground movement had been exposed, both Azahari and his supporters seemed to lose interest in politics, if only temporarily. The Sultan’s announcement in May that Brunei was to receive its first written constitution and the decision to implement a $100 million development plan in July, to be discussed below, both played a role in this, answering some of the concerns of Azahari’s supporters and illustrating that some progress was being made towards self-government. Overall, the willingness of Azahari and his supporters to abandon their political agitation at the first real hurdle suggests that they were not ready for the exigencies of politics and that they needed more time to mature.
The BRUFICO Affair is significant, most obviously, because it was the first overtly political movement in the Sultanate. It also set the pattern for the way that politics developed in Brunei, establishing the ideology, attitude, and worldview that would characterise the PRB. Another important feature of the events of 1953 is the volume of information that was leaked to the government about the underground movement, a lack of security that would recur in 1962, demonstrating the kind of indiscipline that doomed the rebellion to failure. Finally, and most importantly, it affected relations between Azahari’s supporters and the traditional élite, beginning with a willingness to co-operate and ending with a complete estrangement not unnatural in light of the intentions of the underground movement. This rift would have a far-reaching impact on Brunei’s history.

The Promulgation of the Constitution

In the midst of the BRUFICO Affair, the Sultan announced his intention to promulgate a constitution “by means of which proper provision can be made for the government and well-being of our State of Brunei”. He also proposed that District Councils be established to advise him and to “assist [him] in the administration and development” of the four districts. These councils would initially be appointed by the Sultan and would send observers to the State Council; “in due course” they would become elective. The Sultan then declared that a committee would be created to consult the views of the people “of every rank, occupation and standing” about the form of these proposals.

The growing frustration with Brunei’s manner of government amongst the traditional élite, described above, was partly behind these plans, as Abell suggested:

He [the Sultan] is most anxious to obtain a revision of the treaty whereby he can be given greater responsibilities for the internal affairs of his State, and I too have no doubt that an early revision of the treaty is essential if we are to keep the good will of the growing educated element in the State. I have insisted that a revision of the

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88 TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 12, Announcement by the Sultan of Brunei, Enclosure to Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 54 Saving, 13 May, 1953, p. 1.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
treaty cannot be contemplated until His Highness has established a constitution on
democratic and acceptable lines.\footnote{TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 12, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 54 Saving, 13 May, 1953, para. 2.}

The lengthy negotiations that followed centred on the question of what these acceptable lines were.

The changing political situation in Brunei was, as Abell said, the reason that he and other local British officials supported the idea of modifying Britain’s relationship with the Sultanate. The battle for control over Brunei’s government made it necessary for the British to strengthen their hand by removing the ambiguity of the advice clause through which they administered the Sultanate. Britain’s commitment to promoting self-government in its dependent territories was also a factor, reinforcing the effect of Azahari’s agitation. Hussainmiya has, in addition, suggested that the legal position of the administration in Brunei was doubtful, as legislative powers had never been formally delegated to the resident by any sultan and it was consequently suggested that a constitution be promulgated to resolve this situation by defining the resident’s powers once and for all.\footnote{Hussainmiya, \textit{Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin}, pp. 128-31.} The Sultan and his advisors, on the other hand, accepted the concept of a constitution as another step in their campaign to regain power in Brunei, as Abell noted. It may also have been a concession intended to satisfy Azahari’s calls for democracy, though rather more slowly than he may have wished.

Had Brunei been a colony, a democratic constitution could have been created as Abell had envisaged and passed into law with little trouble. As this was not the case, it was necessary to negotiate with the Sultan and his advisors, a protracted process that affected the political situation in Brunei in many different ways. As the details of these negotiations are not relevant to this thesis, only those aspects that are pertinent, such as interim changes to the governance of the state, the failure of the Local Council Enactment, and the nature of the final product, will be highlighted here.\footnote{See Hussainmiya, \textit{Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin}, Chapters 6 & 7 for a more detailed description of this process.}
The first fruit of the constitution-making process was the establishment of District Advisory Councils (DACs) in September 1954, intended, as the Sultan had announced in May, to assist and advise his government. The members of these councils were selected through people’s choice and government appointment, with all candidates being approved by the Sultan. The result of this process was that nearly half of all the seats on the four councils were occupied by traditional leaders like ketua-tua kampong and penghulu, while the BMPC controlled three seats in the Belait council. Each council selected between one and three of its number to represent it as an observer at the State Council, and these members were granted a right to speak on matters related to their district and when specifically requested to do so.\(^95\)

The DACs were immediately successful as public forums for grievances against the government, particularly concerning the improvement of communications, water supplies, and social services. A less welcome development, from the Resident’s point of view, was their tendency to discuss matters that were properly the province of the State Council. This kind of nationalist enthusiasm also spilt over into the latter council, with several of the observers, including Marsal Maun, Pengiran Ali Pengiran Mohd. Daud, and Abdul Manan Mohamed, using the State Council to criticise the administration’s policies. Hussainmiya described the new situation:

> Council meetings were open to the public, and the observers addressed the gathering unmindful of the Resident’s presence. Abell complained that ‘as now constituted the Council is difficult to summon frequently and when in session is often obstructive’. Moreover, the State Council made ‘repeated attempts . . . to take out of the Resident’s hands many executive matters upon which prompt decisions are desirable and which he alone decided in the past’.\(^96\)

Hussainmiya later continued:

> A disturbed Abell wrote that ‘since the admission of the seven “observers” there has been a growing tendency for the Sultan and the Malay Members “to play to the gallery”’. In short, just as the British were trying to root out the objectionable features of the State Council, a new menace had appeared: the Malay members were treating it as an effective means to exert pressure on the British administration.\(^97\)

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\(^96\) Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, pp. 152-3.

\(^97\) Ibid., p. 154.
The second important event from this period was the failed attempt to introduce local government in Brunei. The intention of the Local Councils Enactment was to familiarise Bruneians with the process of government; the new councils would be a “logical extension to the consultative process begun with the District Advisory Councils”, as Wijeweera has noted. 98 Four district-level Local Councils and a separate Town Council for the capital would be established with members to be appointed by the Sultan-in-Council. The State Council passed this enactment in February 1956, which was soon followed by an enquiry to test public reactions to the policy. 99

It quickly became clear that the new councils were unpopular: it was feared that they would increase taxes and diminish the authority of traditional officials like ketua-tua kampong and penghulus. The most significant factor was, as the Brunei Annual Report for 1956 pointed out, that the people did not have “a true understanding of the function and meaning of the proposals[,] which was in part due to the lack of staff to undertake continuously the duties connected with the initiation and development of local Government”. 100 The PRB, then newly-formed, also opposed the policy as “another symptom of colonialism” due to its nominated character and instead demanded that three-quarters of the seats on the State Council become elective and, even more ambitiously, a target date be set for Brunei’s independence. 101

A third significant point to emphasise is the effect of Britain’s advocacy of the formation of a northern Borneo federation, to be discussed further below, on the constitution-making process. The British did not believe that any of the Borneo territories could stand alone in a hostile world riven by the Cold War, concluding that a federation of the three states had a better chance of survival, especially if this entity could later join a federation of Malaya and Singapore in a larger confederation. This belief shaped their views on the form that Brunei’s

101 Horton, The British Residency, p. 56.
constitution should take, so that some of their proposals mirrored recent changes in North Borneo and Sarawak.\textsuperscript{102}

Another significant aspect of this period was the PRB’s many vain attempts to become directly involved in the negotiations. Its most striking attempt to do so occurred in September 1957 when a delegation was sent to London to petition the Colonial Secretary for changes to the proposed constitution, similar to the Merdeka Mission conducted by the Malayan Alliance that had successfully negotiated independence for Malaya. In stark contrast to the Malayan experience, the PRB failed spectacularly, winning no concessions or changes and instead receiving unsolicited advice to co-operate with the Sultan and work within the new constitution when it was enacted.\textsuperscript{103}

This leads indirectly to the next point that needs to be highlighted, which is the impact of Bruneian disunity:

> It might have been easier for the British to respond had Brunei asked in one voice for self-government. Instead, conflicting approaches, such as the PRB demand to share power, were juxtaposed with less extreme demands from other sections who merely wanted internal freedom under continued British protection.\textsuperscript{104}

The example of Malaya again suggests itself for comparison: the Merdeka Mission mentioned above was composed of both Alliance politicians and Malay royalty, illustrating the kind of consensus that was critically absent in Brunei.\textsuperscript{105} Had there been some measure of agreement between the traditional aristocracy and the PRB, a more democratic constitution might have been obtained more quickly.

The final aspect of this period that will be discussed is certainly the most important: the constitution itself, which was promulgated on 29 September 1959. Various other documents, including a new agreement with Britain and an agreement separating Brunei’s administration from that of Sarawak, were also ratified on the same day. This was an historic day for Brunei, one of transition from the unpopular Residential system to a new era of self-government and internal sovereignty. The character of this new administrative system is very

\textsuperscript{102} Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, p. 151.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., pp. 183-4.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., p. 166.

important, both for itself and in relation to later events, and will thus be explored in detail here.

The constitution began by referring to an intention “to govern in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the laws of the State and, by progressive steps hereafter, to introduce further representative institutions into the government of the State”. This was followed by a reference to the Sultan having obtained “the advice and consent of OUR traditional advisers” on the provisions of the constitution. The introduction ended with this passage: “WE, by the rights and powers of OUR Prerogatives as Sultan of the State of Brunei and all its Dependencies do HEREBY PROCLAIM in OUR name and on OUR behalf and for and on behalf of OUR Successors as hereinafter follows”.108

The first substantive subject covered was executive authority, with Part III vesting supreme state power in the sultan and declaring that this authority would be “exercised by the Sultan directly or by officers subordinate to him acting in his name and on his behalf”.109 Then, the position of Mentri Besar was created and described as being “responsible to the Sultan for the exercise in the State of all executive authority”. This minister would be assisted by a State Secretary, Attorney General, and State Financial Officer, who would be in charge of administrative, legal, and financial affairs, respectively. All four of these officers would “hold office during the pleasure of the Sultan”.110

Part IV established a Privy Council to advise the sultan on the exercise of the prerogative of mercy, the bestowal of titles and honours, the amendment of the constitution, and any other matter referred to it by law or the sultan. This council was to consist of six ex officio members, including the two wazirs, the Mentri Besar, and the State Secretary, as well as the British High Commissioner, the regents, if applicable, and any other member the sultan may wish to appoint.112

107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid., pp. 159-60, Part III, Section 4, Sub-sections 1-2.
110 Ibid., pp. 159-60, Part III, Section 4, Sub-section 3. “Mentri Besar” is usually translated as Prime Minister, though the term “First Minister” may be more appropriate.
111 Ibid., pp. 159-60, Part III, Section 4, Sub-sections 4-7.
112 Ibid., pp. 160-1, Part IV, Section 5, Sub-sections 2 & 6.
The next part dealt with the Executive Council, to comprise seven ex officio members
(the wazirs, Mentri Besar, State Secretary, Attorney General, State Financial Officer, and
Religious Adviser), seven unofficial members (six of whom were to be elected members of
the Legislative Council and the seventh a nominated member of the same council), and the
British High Commissioner. The sultan was to preside over the council and any regents were
to be appointed as temporary members.\textsuperscript{113}

The role of the council was to advise the sultan on “the exercise of his powers and the
performance of his duties”, except when he was required by law to consult another body or
the matter in question was too urgent, too sensitive, or not important enough for him to refer
to the council.\textsuperscript{114} Only the sultan and the Mentri Besar could submit issues to the council for
discussion, though members could request the latter do so if they wished.\textsuperscript{115} The sultan was
entitled to disregard any advice the council gave him, if he recorded his reasons for doing so
in the minutes.\textsuperscript{116}

Part VI covered the Legislative Council, mandating that there would be eight ex officio,
six official, three nominated, and sixteen elected members. The first category would
comprise the wazirs, Mentri Besar, State Secretary, Attorney General, State Financial
Officer, Religious Adviser, and another government official to be nominated by the sultan.
The official members would be public servants selected by the sultan, while the nominated
members would be non-government officials also chosen by the sultan, at least two of whom
were to “represent important interests which, in the opinion of the Sultan, are not adequately
represented by the Elected Members”.\textsuperscript{117} The last category would comprise elected members
of District Councils voted on to the Legislative Council; for a period of two years, however,
the sultan was empowered to appoint these sixteen members.\textsuperscript{118} The sultan was also to

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 164, Part V, Section 11, Sub-sections 1 & 4.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 169, Part V, Section 18, Sub-sections 1-3.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p. 169, Part V, Section 18, Sub-section 4.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 170, Part V, Section 19, Sub-section 1.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p. 171, Part VI, Sections 24-8.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 171, Part VI, Section 27.
appoint a speaker from among the members of the council or from outside it; if there was no speaker, the Mentri Besar would act in this capacity.\textsuperscript{119}

To qualify for election to the council, a person had to be a Brunei of at least twenty-one years of age. British subjects who had been resident in the state for at least two of the previous three years, as well as those who qualified for election, could be appointed as official or nominated members. The constitution defined a Brunei as a person generally accepted to be from the Belait, Bisayah, Dusun, Kedayan, Malay, Murut, or Tutong ethnic groups and who had either been born in the state or whose father was a Brunei at the time of their birth. There was also a requirement that Malays must profess Islam and conform to Malay custom “as practised in the State”.\textsuperscript{120} This definition of a Brunei would be valid until a nationality enactment became law.\textsuperscript{121}

The functions of the council were delineated in Part VII, beginning with this provision: “It shall be lawful for the Sultan, with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council, and subject to the provisions of this Constitution, to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the State”.\textsuperscript{122} Any member of the council could introduce bills, propose motions for debate, or present petitions on any subject, except on most financial matters, treaty obligations, or public security.\textsuperscript{123} All questions requiring a decision from the council were to be determined by a majority of the members who were present, with the speaker given the casting vote.\textsuperscript{124} All bills passed by the council required the sultan’s assent before they became law, while the monarch also had the power to declare bills or motions debated in the council but not passed to be valid if he considered it expedient “in the interests of public order, good faith or good government” to do so.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., pp. 178-9, Part VI, Section 37, Sub-section 1.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p. 171, Part VI, Section 29. There is a crucial difference between the meanings of the nouns “Bruneian” and “Brunei”: a Bruneian is any person who regards themselves as being from Brunei, while a Brunei is someone recognised by others as being from the indigenous peoples of the Sultanate, listed in the constitution and quoted above. There is an unspoken assumption that the only Bruineis of any consequence are Malay and, indeed, when the term is used in this thesis, it generally refers exclusively to the Malays.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p. 171, Part VI, Section 29, Sub-section 2.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 179, Part VII, Section 39, Sub-section 1.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., pp. 179-181, Part VII, Section 40, Sub-section 1 & Section 42, Sub-section 1.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 181, Part VII, Section 43, Sub-sections 1-3.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., pp. 181-3, Part VII, Section 45, Sub-section 1 & Section 47, Sub-section 1.
The constitution stipulated that the council was to meet at least once every year. It also granted all members the right to “express his opinion freely in the Legislative Council upon any matter which comes before it” as well as protection from any legal repercussions for doing so. In addition, the sultan was given the right to address the council at any time on any subject. The power to dissolve and prorogue the council at any time was also entrusted to the sultan, though he was required to dissolve it three years after its first meeting.

Part VIII dealt with finances, beginning by declaring that “no tax or rate shall be levied by or for the purposes of the State except by or under the authority of law”. The Consolidated Fund was to comprise “all revenues and moneys howsoever raised or received by the State from whatsoever source” and was to be used for most state expenses, as well as all financial obligations incurred by the British High Commissioner. Annual estimates of state revenue and expenditure were to be laid before the Legislative Council, while the legislature was granted the right to approve supply bills, supplementary supply bills, and the creation of a contingencies fund.

Part XI dealt with matters not covered elsewhere, beginning with a provision intended to harmonise existing legislation with the constitution and to assist in implementing the new system. The functions and powers of the Attorney General were then delineated, including the authority “to institute, conduct or discontinue any proceedings for an offence” apart from those already before Muslim Courts and Courts Martial. The official language of the state was declared to be Bahasa Melayu, though English could be used for all official purposes for five years after the constitution came into force. In addition, English could be used in the Privy, Executive, and Legislative Councils with the leave of the person presiding. Official English language copies of all government documents were also required. Bills before the Legislative Council and all laws were to be printed in both Bahasa Melayu and English, with the English version to prevail in times of doubt in all cases except those of the Succession.

126 Ibid., p. 184, Part VII, Sections 52-3.
127 Ibid., p. 185, Part VII, Sections 54-5.
128 Ibid., p. 185, Part VIII, Section 56.
129 Ibid., pp. 185-6, Part VIII, Sections 57-9.
130 Ibid., pp. 186-7, Part VIII, Sections 61-4.
131 Ibid., pp. 192-6, Part XI, Sections 80-1.
and Regency Enactment and the constitution itself, where the Bahasa Melayu copy would be dominant.\textsuperscript{132}

The constitution granted the sultan the power to declare a state of emergency whenever “an occasion of public danger exists whereby the security or economic life of the State, or any part thereof, is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or internal disturbance, actual or threatened”.\textsuperscript{133} Such a proclamation of emergency would be valid for no longer than two years, though a new declaration could be issued at any time. The sultan could make orders under such a proclamation that “he considers desirable in the public interest” and prescribe penalties for violating these orders providing that no offender could be punished without trial.\textsuperscript{134} The sultan was also given the power to make all financial arrangements necessary during the emergency. The Legislative Council was empowered to rescind emergency orders with the sultan’s assent. Finally, all emergency orders and their associated instruments were to “have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in this Constitution or in any written law”.\textsuperscript{135}

It was then stipulated that “[t]he Government of the State shall be regulated in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution”, provided that “nothing in this Constitution shall be deemed to derogate from the prerogative powers and jurisdiction of the Sultan”.\textsuperscript{136} The latter was also empowered to append additional parts to the constitution at any time. The constitution ended with a list of those who witnessed “the granting and confirmation of this Constitution and of the concurrence and assent of the Traditional Advisers”, including the Pengirans Bendahara, Pemancha, and Shahbandar, the Mentri Besar-to-be, two of the Sultan’s brothers, Pengiran Ali Pengiran Mohd. Daud, Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim, and Marsal Maun.\textsuperscript{137}

Several other documents were ratified on the same day as the constitution, including the Succession and Regency Enactment, intended to resolve issues surrounding the succession to

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., pp. 196-7, Part XI, Section 82.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 197, Part XI, Section 83, Sub-section 1.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., pp. 197-8, Part XI, Section 83, Sub-sections 2-3.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., p. 199, Part XI, Section 83, Sub-sections 5, 7, & 10.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., pp. 199-200, Part XI, Section 84.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., pp. 206 & 199-200, Part XI, Section 84.
the sultanate once and for all. Whereas Her Majesty’s Government had previously been empowered to settle any disputes by the 1888 Protectorate Treaty, the new enactment made no reference to outside involvement and was governed by Brunei law. Essentially, succession to the throne was to occur upon the death of the reigning sultan or upon the “occurrence of any other event by reason of which the reigning Sultan, shall cease to occupy the throne of Brunei”, including abdication and mental and physical incapacity.\(^{138}\) The eldest male child of the reigning sultan was to succeed, providing that he was Malay, Muslim, and born of a lawful royal marriage. Such a candidate could be disqualified if convicted of certain offences under the Penal Code. A Council of Succession would determine the rightful heir under this enactment; no one could succeed without their approval. Provision was also made for the proclamation of a regency and the establishment of a Council of Regency, primarily intended for a situation in which the sultan was aged less than eighteen years at the time of his accession.\(^{139}\)

The Brunei and Sarawak (Administration Separation) Agreement, 1959 was also signed on 29 September, in order to sever the link between the two governments. Associated with this agreement was the Brunei Overseas Officers Agreement, 1959, the purpose of which was summarised in this statement:

> Until locally domiciled persons who, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, are suitably qualified, are available, the key posts specified in the First Schedule hereto shall be filled by officers nominated by the Secretary of State and appointed by the Sultan or by officers nominated and appointed by the Sultan with the approval of the Secretary of State.\(^{140}\)

The key posts concerned were the State Financial Officer, Attorney General, State Engineer, State Education Officer, State Medical Officer, Chief Police Officer, and Officer-in-Charge of Special Branch. Certain officers were to be transferred from the Sarawak service to that of Brunei, chosen in the first instance by Brunei and approved or declined by Sarawak. Those

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\(^{140}\) TNA, CO 1030/942, Item 18, Brunei Overseas Officers Agreement, 1959, pp. 1-2, Section 2, Sub-section (a); Item 18, Brunei and Sarawak (Administration Separation) Agreement, 1959.
officers already serving in Brunei who were required by neither Sarawak nor Brunei would be retired.\textsuperscript{141}

The final document signed on this day was the Agreement between the United Kingdom and Brunei on Defence and External Affairs, 29 September 1959. This agreement gave exclusive jurisdiction over Brunei’s foreign relations and defence to the British government and required the Brunei government to ensure that all “legislative and executive action” that was “necessary for the purpose of Her Majesty’s exercise of Her control” over these areas would be taken.\textsuperscript{142} A Standing Advisory Council comprising representatives of both governments would be established to implement this agreement in relation to “defence against any grave internal menace to the peace or tranquillity of the State”.\textsuperscript{143}

The Brunei government also agreed to

receive, and provide a suitable residence for, a High Commissioner to advise on all matters connected with the government of the State other than matters relating to the Muslim religion and the Custom of the Malays as practised in the State, and agrees to accept the advice of the High Commissioner.\textsuperscript{144}

The Brunei government also committed themselves to “provide for and to encourage the education and training of the local inhabitants of the State so as to fit them to take a full share in the economic progress, social welfare and government of the State”.\textsuperscript{145} Finally, the 1905-6 Agreement was revoked and all other agreements between Britain and Brunei modified “in so far as they are inconsistent with this Agreement or in so far as they contain provisions relating to the succession to the Sultanate of Brunei”.\textsuperscript{146}

Another document also contributed to this transformation of Brunei’s system of government, though it was not a public agreement along the lines of those described above. This was an exchange of letters between the Colonial Secretary and the Sultan that limited the areas in which the advice clause contained in the 1959 Agreement, quoted above, would apply. These areas were currency and banking, the maintenance of public safety and order, the efficiency of the police force, the reinforcement of local security forces when necessary,\textsuperscript{146}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{141} TNA, CO 1030/942, Item 18, Brunei Overseas Officers Agreement, 1959, p. 3, First Schedule & p. 2, Section 3.
\textsuperscript{142} Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, Appendix 8, pp. 396-7, Section 3, Paragraphs 1-2.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., Section 3, Paragraph 5, Sub-section (a).
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., Section 4, Paragraph 1.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., pp. 397-8, Section 8.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., pp. 397-8, Section 9.
\end{footnotesize}
the implementation of measures required to protect the Sultanate from actual or potential
danger, and the need for the high commissioner to provide advice on the sultan’s
constitutional powers to check and enforce legislation on these matters.¹⁴⁷

To summarise this new system of government, the most significant aspect was the pre-
eminence of the sultan, in whom supreme state power was vested and at whose pleasure all
public servants served. This included the Mentri Besar, State Secretary, Attorney General,
and State Financial Officer, who replaced the resident and heads of department at the apex of
the new administration. The State Council was superseded by the Privy, Executive, and
Legislative Councils, with the latter to have a minority of elected members when an
appropriate electoral process had been constructed. Britain still retained jurisdiction over
external affairs and national security, as well as the formal power to advise the sultan in all
areas of government except Malay custom and religion. This advice clause was, however,
informally limited to the extent that Britain could no longer intervene in day-to-day
administration or in many areas of normal government activity.

The six aspects of the constitution-making period discussed above are significant in
different ways. The first, the introduction of District Advisory Councils in September 1954,
derives its primary importance from the role that the councils played in training their
members in both politics and administration; the best example of the efficacy of this
preparation is the pressure that the DAC observers at the State Council so successfully
applied to the British administration. Secondly, the failure of the Local Government
Enactment was an effective demonstration of the fact that many Bruneians disagreed with
this policy, a definite sign of political development: a politically unsophisticated people
would not be aware of their ability to prevent the enactment of unpopular legislation. The
third issue highlighted above, the effect of Britain’s advocacy of a federation of northern
Borneo, is significant in this context because of the hostility to Sarawak in government

¹⁴⁷ TNA, DO 169/561, Item 1, Letter to the Sultan of Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 3 April, 1959, Annex
circles, which adversely influenced the attitude of some to these proposals. More importantly, the active promotion of this federation also affected the negotiations themselves, through the willingness of the British to make concessions on the constitution in order to foster a more favourable attitude towards closer association.148

The fourth topic that was discussed was the PRB’s failure to insert itself into the negotiating process, the primary effect of which was to leave the field clear for the Sultan and his advisors, removing the distraction that the Party could have represented and improving the élite’s ability to achieve its goals. The failure of the PRB’s Merdeka Mission, in particular, was mentioned because of the marginalisation that the Party suffered as a result of this disappointment. Supporters lost faith in the ability of the PRB to achieve its goals and drifted away, depriving the Party of its power base. The end result of this marginalisation was a constitution that transferred sovereignty to the sultan rather than the people.

The fifth aspect discussed above, Bruneian disunity, had the effect of forcing Britain to choose between an élite entrenched in power that it had supported for decades and a young political party that it regarded as unreliable, which was effectively no choice at all. On the other hand, this lack of consensus also resulted in alternative proposals for various constitutional provisions being made, usually in the form of overly ambitious suggestions from the PRB intended to push the Sultanate farther along the road to democratic self-government. These proposals made the more conservative ideas put forward by the aristocracy more acceptable to the British.

Finally, the new system of government was important because it changed the political situation in Brunei significantly, offering the first tangible proof of progress towards independence as well as creating new avenues of activity for the PRB and other political actors. It also brought Britain’s ability to intervene in Brunei’s internal affairs to an end, which left the traditional aristocracy and the radical nationalists confronting each other without the benefit of a mediator, greatly exacerbating the intensity of this contest. In addition, the administrative link with Sarawak had been severed, which necessitated an

The influx of Malayan government officers to replace those from the Sarawak service who had departed; this was a disappointment to those in Brunei who had expected to be promoted to fill these desirable positions. The presence of these Malayans, perceived to be stealing Bruneian jobs, was to become even more of a problem once the formation of Malaysia was proposed in May 1961.

The primary importance of this new system of government lay, however, in the transfer of state sovereignty to the sultan. The description of the constitution above often refers to the sultan’s power to appoint officials, prorogue the Legislative Council, assent to legislation, and so many other things; the most important of these provisions was that vesting supreme state power in the sultan. Though the sultan’s constitutional position was somewhat similar to those of the monarch and governor-general in Australia, in Brunei there was no distinction between the symbolic power granted by the constitution and actual power exercised in reality. The sultan thus became the ruler of Brunei in a material as well as symbolic sense. It was this pre-eminence, combined with the PRB’s inability to change this situation swiftly, that was the primary cause of the Brunei Rebellion, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter V.

The Closer Association Proposal

The northern Borneo federation proposal, more commonly referred to as closer association, had its origins in Britain’s wartime planning for its Southeast Asian possessions. As previously noted, after World War II, Britain intended to introduce changes in Brunei along the lines of the MacMichael treaties in Malaya, which required the sultans to cede sovereignty to Britain. This increased control would facilitate greater co-operation amongst the three Borneo territories and, it was hoped, eventually lead to an independent, unified northern Borneo. Even further in the future was a possible confederation with Malaya and Singapore. This plan was temporarily derailed by the controversies surrounding the cession of Sarawak and the creation of the Malayan Union, though the severance of the
administrative link with Sarawak and the co-ordinating role of the new Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia were intended to advance this scheme.

The first Commissioner-General, MacDonald, promoted closer association enthusiastically during his term in office, partly through such organisations as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Sarawak-North Borneo-Brunei, or Inter-Territorial, Conference (ITC). The CPA was a regional branch of a larger organisation that comprised representatives from the legislatures of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, and Sarawak, the purpose of which was to foster regional solidarity and goodwill. The ITC was an expansion of the Council of the Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak, which had met since 1949 to discuss ways of enhancing the co-ordination of administration and policy in northern Borneo. The first meeting of the larger conference was held in Kuching in April 1953, with the Sultan of Brunei and the Governors of the two colonies in attendance. The ITC met biennially until September 1961, when it appears to have been superseded by developments surrounding the Malaysia proposal.149

MacDonald encouraged the press to speculate about the consequences of the first meeting of the ITC in order to promote the idea of closer association publicly, and The Straits Times obliged by writing that “it is possible to see in the Conference the embryo of federation”.150 The Sultan reacted to this by denying that federation had been suggested at the ITC, an early sign of his opposition to the idea of closer association.151 In spite of this setback, the publicity generated by organisations like the CPA and ITC was a very important way of creating and reinforcing the perception that a northern Borneo federation was both viable and inevitable, one of the most decisive factors influencing the success of any such concept.

The goal of enhancing co-operation amongst the Borneo territories was primarily achieved by sharing services and personnel: for example, the Supreme Court of Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei was established in December 1951 and the Batu Lintang and

Duchess of Kent Teachers’ Training Colleges, in Kuching and Jesselton respectively, were joint projects. Other areas of co-operation included police, shipping, health, geological survey, museums, fisheries, telecommunications, civil aviation, and agriculture. These co-operative efforts were not always successful: the proposed integration of the Sarawak and Brunei Police Forces was abandoned due to Brunei’s perception that it was being treated as the *de facto* sixth division of Sarawak.\textsuperscript{152}

The closer association proposal began to regain momentum in 1955 as Malaya accelerated its pace towards independence; the official thinking was that this advance might excite demands for similar progress in the Borneo territories. Malaya’s unexpectedly rapid development also created concerns that “the threat of being eaten up by Malaya” would discourage Borneans from supporting the idea of a confederation with Malaya and Singapore.\textsuperscript{153} This increased impetus eventually culminated in the moment that represents the zenith of closer association: the twin speeches broadcast by Sir Anthony Abell and Sir Roland Turnbull, the Governors of Sarawak and North Borneo, on 7 February, 1958.

Angel has described these broadcasts thus:

The speeches of the two Governors were designed to initiate public thought and discussion on the question of the possible closer association of Sarawah [sic], Brunei and North Borneo. As this was the first time the question had been brought officially to the notice of the public, the speeches did not contain very detailed proposals and did not attempt to provide a clear blueprint for the association. They proposed the principle of closer association and gave some indication of what the acceptance of the proposal could involve. As a result, the speeches were rather vague and tentative on many points.\textsuperscript{154}

The federation that the Governors described was, broadly speaking, similar to the situation then prevailing in northern Borneo, with each territory largely retaining the form of government it possessed in 1958. There would be a governor or governor-general of the new federation, the extent of whose powers in state matters was unclear, but whose role in the federal government would be similar to that previously performed by the governors of North Borneo and Sarawak in the two colonies. This officer would also be high commissioner for Brunei, supervising the administration of the British resident as before. The main change that


\textsuperscript{154} Angel, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
was proposed was the sharing of powers between the state and federal governments, with the federal government to take charge of defence, foreign affairs, and those areas of administration already entrusted to joint departments, such as the joint judiciary, civil aviation, and the geological survey. All remaining powers would, at least initially, reside with the states.\textsuperscript{155}

Angel has made some particularly telling remarks about the public response to the governors’ speeches:

> As all three territories lacked organised means for public opinion to be expressed, it is extremely difficult to generalise about the public reaction with any accuracy. Various bodies, official and private, held discussions, some passing resolutions, others being unable to reach agreement. Newspapers carried editorials, letters from readers and reports of interviews or speeches given by various leading figures. What made the picture particularly complicated was the fact that many individuals claimed to speak for communities without really being qualified to do so. It should also be remembered that, for most people, the proposal was incomprehensible.\textsuperscript{156}

This last point requires special emphasis: if the majority of Borneans did not understand the implications of that which was being proposed, they could hardly be expected to form a constructive or informed opinion of the merit of the concept.

Nevertheless, there are still some indications of the nature of the public reaction to the proposal. Angel has described the views expressed by organisations, community leaders, newspapers, and government agencies in detail, which cannot even be summarised here because of its length, but it does leave an impression of perplexity mixed with very cautious in principle support for closer association. Angel’s own assessment was that there was “neither widespread support nor widespread opposition” for the federation, reflecting both the political unsophistication of those expressing their opinion and the vagueness of the proposal itself.\textsuperscript{157}

Reaction in Brunei was initially confined to two expressions of support, from the PRB and the Brunei Chamber of Commerce. The former’s approval of the proposal was natural, as the Party had advocated a northern Borneo federation even before the Governors’ speeches had been made, though its support for this proposal remained in principle only until

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., pp. 253-87. For a detailed discussion of the proposed form of the federation, see ibid., pp. 253-314.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., p. 342.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., pp. 342-60.
more details were available. The Chamber of Commerce, as with many other such chambers throughout northern Borneo, supported the idea of federation in the hope of wider commercial opportunities. *The Borneo Bulletin* conducted two short surveys of opinion that indicated that many in Brunei would support a federation, though only Azahari would put his name to this view.158

This was, more or less, the extent of public reaction in Brunei. This near silence mirrored the response of the Brunei government, which chose not to express an official view of the proposal. It was, however, reported in *The Borneo Bulletin* that “informants close to the Government revealed that the State Council almost to a man was opposed to any form of federation with the other territories”.159 Oblique confirmation of this rumour was provided by the Sultan in a public broadcast over Radio Brunei shortly after the March 1958 meeting of the ITC:

The Sultan said that the inter-territorial conferences in which Brunei participated, did not mean that the three territories would become a federation, nor did these conferences contemplate forming a federation . . . The Sultan pointed out that Brunei was not bound by any treaty to take part in these meetings but did so by mutual agreement. Individual territories were not bound by resolutions of these conferences. The Sultan pointed out that Brunei had never been a British Colony and was only bound by a treaty agreement with Britain whereby Britain undertook to protect Brunei. He asked his people to remember that Brunei was not a colony and ‘to preserve the country’s position with patience and determination so that the State will progress even further’.160

The Sultan made his position crystal clear in October 1958, when he granted an interview to *The Straits Times* in which he effectively vetoed Brunei’s participation in the northern Borneo federation:

Most educated Bruneians would like to see an even closer association between the two territories now that Malaya is independent. Many favour joining the Federation of Malaya, while at the same time rigidly opposing any suggestion of federation with the colonial territories of Sarawak and North Borneo. They believe a federation of the three Borneo territories would delay achievement of independence and result in Brunei’s assets being tapped to subsidise less wealthy neighbours. “Officially I know nothing about Brunei federating with any other territories,” the Sultan said. “I cannot comment upon it.”161

158 Ibid., pp. 347 & 350.
159 Ibid., p. 350.
160 Ibid., p. 358.
161 William Fish, “Sultan says: We would like to see closer links with Malaya now: Brunei Ready to Help: Sir Omar speaks of religious and racial bonds”, *The Straits Times*, 20 October, 1958, p. 1.
These last two sentences provided an avenue of retreat from both his opposition to the northern Borneo federation and his apparent inclination for a closer association with Malaya, should either course prove necessary.

North Borneo and Sarawak were naturally outraged at the Sultan’s insinuation concerning finances: The Sarawak Times, for example, remarked that “if Brunei really felt that Sarawak and North Borneo would like to tap her oil assets through federation, then there was no further usefulness to be secured in talking about a closer association as this could only result in more fear and suspicion”. Relations were further damaged by an attempt by the Brunei Information Office to dispel the controversy, which needlessly drew attention to the fact that the two colonies had formerly been part of the Brunei Empire. Finally, the decision of the Brunei government to grant a $100 million loan to the Federation of Malaya on very generous terms in November 1958, when contrasted with their marked reluctance to do the same for North Borneo and Sarawak, generated further ill feeling.

Brunei’s lack of interest effectively thwarted closer association, despite the fact that no official announcement of its position was ever made. As Angel has observed,

Had the Sultan rejected the proposal outright and had the Brunei Government not tried later to deny that the interview meant that Brunei would not join a British Borneo federation, Sarawak and North Borneo would probably have accepted this fact and would have proceeded without Brunei. As it was, however, the Sultan’s interview had a discouraging effect at a crucial stage in the discussions. It caused a fatal hesitation at a time when hesitation should not have occurred.

In addition, the absence of a definitive rejection kept the possibility of a northern Borneo federation alive, which prevented the colonial governments from actively promoting the alternative idea of an association of North Borneo and Sarawak alone. There were moves in this direction, including exchanges of visits by legislative council members and the formation of a free trade area in January 1962, but nothing of moment had been achieved before closer association was finally superseded by the Malaysia proposal.

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162 Angel, op. cit., pp. 359-60.
164 Angel, op. cit., p. 441.
The rationale behind Brunei’s opposition to closer association is complex. The issue that the Sultan himself raised, the distribution of Brunei’s revenues post-federation, was partly responsible for its rejection, because many in the Sultanate were reluctant to share Brunei’s wealth with its neighbours. This was not as selfish as it initially appeared, as Chalfont has noted in relation to Brunei’s refusal to join Malaysia:

In the twentieth century it had become clear that the ultimate guarantee of this independence, and thereby of centuries of Bruneian tradition and culture, was the country’s oil revenue. Brunei was prepared to share this good fortune, but it was unthinkable that the Sultan should surrender the guarantee of the country’s integrity.\(^{165}\)

Another issue was the fact that Brunei was a protectorate and North Borneo and Sarawak were colonies, a crucial difference that coloured the Bruneian perception of the merits of closer association. In order to federate with the two colonies, Brunei would have to accept a colonial head of government and formally become a British colony. In addition, the prevailing system of government, including the position of resident, would remain for an indefinite period, perhaps until the new federation attained independence. Such a regression, when internal self-government was within reach, was never likely to be acceptable to a traditional élite that was even then trying to wrest power from the British.

The timing of the public announcement was another factor: after Malaya, with its nine sultans, had become independent and in the midst of the negotiations for a new constitution that was to make the Sultanate self-governing once again, the Sultan of Brunei could hardly accept becoming subordinate to a colonial official. In addition, as Hussainmiya has suggested, the supervisory role of the head of the federation would deprive him of the “\textit{de facto} sovereignty” that he already exercised.\(^{166}\) The PRB had also been advocating a northern Borneo federation since its formation, which prevented the Sultan from supporting it, too: he could not so blatantly follow the Party’s lead without damaging the personal authority that helped to sustain his rule.

The Sultan’s comments regarding the possibility of a closer relationship with Malaya raise the interesting question of whether he was seriously considering entry into the newly

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independent Federation. There were certainly many affinities between Brunei and the states of Malaya, while the Federation’s independent status was preferable to the Sultanate’s position as a protectorate. On balance, however, it is unlikely that the Sultan actually intended to seek membership of Malaya, because, in doing so, Brunei would probably be compelled to become a constitutional monarchy, as the other Malayan states were. The Sultan had already rejected a smaller sacrifice in the case of the northern Borneo federation, so he was unlikely to agree to this greater one for the dubious reward of gaining an earlier, but far lesser, independence.

So why, then, did the Sultan suggest such a possibility? Firstly, it was clearly a signal to Britain that the northern Borneo federation did not interest him in the slightest. At the same time, however, it was not a definitive answer that could not be rescinded should circumstances demand it at a later stage. It was also a useful diversion: less pressure in favour of closer association would be exerted when Brunei’s traditional leaders were so obviously opposed to the idea. In addition, a *rapprochement* with Malaya created an environment in which Brunei was able to look to the Malayan government for moral support against the British, as well as assistance with the recruitment of public servants to replace those who had previously been supplied by Sarawak.

The significance of closer association lies primarily in the PRB’s previous advocacy of a similar idea. Though the Party’s support for the concept proposed by the Governors of Sarawak and North Borneo was in principle only, this convergence increased the PRB’s popularity somewhat and allowed the Party to appropriate the issue to some extent. Having promoted a northern Borneo federation since its inception in January 1956, the PRB could claim the concept as its own and thus influence the debate more than it might have done had this not been the case. A second point to emphasise is that closer association prepared the ground for the Malaysia proposal by causing many in northern Borneo to think for the first time about their future after Britain’s departure. Finally, the story of closer association is essential background to the Malaysia proposal, without which certain aspects of the discussion about the wider federation would be incomprehensible.
The Formation and Early Years of the Partai Rakyat Brunei

The failure of the underground movement that grew out of the BRUFICO Affair did not deter Azahari and his followers from returning to the political arena once the dust had settled. As early as December 1954, it was reported by the Special Branch that they had been attempting for the previous three months to create an organisation to be known as the Labour Party that was to include such diverse people as Public Works Department labourers, farmers, and “Chinese communist sympathisers”. The nationalists also deployed a tactic they would adopt again in 1956, using an organisation that was already registered, in this instance the Belait Islamic Association, as a front in case their party was not accepted by the government. In the event, there was not enough public interest in the proposed party for the attempt to proceed and the effort was abandoned in March 1955.

Azahari and his followers were not abashed by this second failure, with the release from gaol in April of two of the three people convicted for their participation in the underground movement acting as the catalyst for a renewal of the nationalists’ political efforts. Azahari and Zaini Ahmad attempted to canvass for support in North Borneo in the course of that month but were denied entry to the colony, probably because rumours were circulating that they intended to purchase firearms from the pirates of the Sulu Sea.

The nationalists also continued to hope that a united front with left wing Chinese could be formed in opposition to the Brunei government. Their political agitation was shown to have made some progress amongst the young when several Bruneian students at the Batu Lintang Teachers’ Training College were expelled for insolence and disobedience, with the Special Branch attributing their behaviour to the “rising nationalist outlook and the desire of students to have their own college in Brunei”.

169 TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 36, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for April, 1955, No. 4/55, c. May, 1955, para. 4.
consolidation of support and gathering of funds, including the subscription of over $1,000 to establish shops in rural areas; the purpose of this latter initiative was presumably to improve living conditions in these places, as well as to fund future political activities.\textsuperscript{171}

The momentum leading to the foundation of a political party began to accelerate towards the end of the year, with Azahari travelling to Kuala Lumpur to attend the general assemblies of both the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and the \textit{Parti Rakyat Malaya} (PRM). At the UMNO meeting, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Chief Minister of Malaya, invited Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo to enter the Federation. Azahari responded in this manner in \textit{Utusan Melayu}:

\begin{quote}
Responsible political leaders in Malaya, he said, should not hesitate or be afraid to declare that \textit{north Borneo should be merged with the Federation immediately}. Azahari also called upon the Federation to sponsor a united front to demand independence and the incorporation of northern Borneo in the Federation of Malaya.\textsuperscript{172}
\end{quote}

At the PRM congress, Azahari met the party’s leaders, Burhanuddin Helmy and Ahmad Boestamam, and was inspired by their anti-colonialism, socialism, and pan-Malay aspirations.\textsuperscript{173}

Upon his return to Brunei, Azahari organised a meeting at the residence of HM Salleh in Brunei Town on 22 January, 1956, with the intention of establishing a political party on the model of the PRM. Both the Resident and the police were informed of the purpose behind the gathering before it occurred; two Special Branch officers were consequently among the approximately 150 people who attended the meeting. Apart from provisionally establishing the PRB, the gathering approved a constitution, manifesto, and ideology for the new party and elected a Branch Standing Committee that included Azahari, HM Salleh, Yasin Affandy, Zaini Ahmad, and Abdul Manan Mohamed.\textsuperscript{174}

The new party’s manifesto, published by \textit{The Borneo Bulletin} shortly after the meeting, illuminates the policy objectives and worldview of the PRB to some extent:

\textsuperscript{171}TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 44, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for August, 1955, No. 8/55, c. September, 1955, para. 4.


To oppose all forms of Colonialism in the political, economic and and [sic] social spheres.
To safeguard the position of His Highness the Sultan and his heirs as heads of the Government.
To acknowledge fully the rights of the Brunei Royal Family, economic and political.
To fight for freedom of the Malay homeland and nationality in an orderly and constitutional manner, and bring about the formation of one Malay nation and state covering the whole of the Malay Archipelago.
To guard the security and prosperity of the people.
To voice the thoughts and opinions of the people on every political problem which exists inside and outside the State from time to time.
To make the people politically aware by sponsoring their political education in accordance with the aims of the party.
To urge the formation of a Parliament formed of the people’s elected representatives, and to co-operate with all political parties in Malaya and Borneo for the same cause . . .
To work for freedom of speech, the written word and the right to assemble in an organization and other democratic rights.
To encourage and lead the people in commercial, agricultural and other activities.
To urge wider education of the people in industry and commerce.
To urge that a proportion of the wealth of the State be used for the prosperity of the People.
To promote the right of workers to strike and demonstrate.¹⁷⁵

Several of these ideas were to remain at the core of the PRB’s worldview until the rebellion, most prominently anti-colonialism, Malay nationalism, democracy, and socialism.

At the end of January, the PRB submitted an application for registration to the Registrar of Societies, which was swiftly rejected because of the Party’s formal links with the PRM. Because people continued to join the new party, the public were officially informed of the PRB’s unregistered status and public servants warned that they could not actively participate in politics. The party organisers responded to this rejection in mid-February by abandoning the PRB’s formal affiliation with the PRM, becoming instead a Brunei-based party with branches proposed for North Borneo and Sarawak. This change appears to have created some disagreement in government circles, with the Resident suggesting that this proposal was more acceptable, while the Sultan refused to countenance activity outside of Brunei. Zaini has suggested, probably correctly, that the latter’s opposition to closer association motivated this refusal. Party organisers were informed of this decision in early July, and,

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Brown, op. cit., p. 125.
after some discussion and with some reluctance, the PRB’s activities were finally confined to Brunei alone. The Party was formally registered on 15 August.\textsuperscript{176}

While the registration process was underway, the PRB was not, of course, idle: it reactivated old organisations (the \textit{Ikatan Buroh Tjitak}) and registered new ones (the \textit{Kedai Sharikat Patani Melayu}, Malay Workshops Company, and \textit{Persekutuan Bumi Putera Belait}) as potential fronts should the Party’s registration not be approved; Azahari was reported still to be in contact with local communists; and, as was noted previously, it opposed the introduction of local government, in the view of the Special Branch because it would be unable to capture the new councils whilst their members were selected by the State Council. The Party was also, naturally, recruiting new members, one of its tactics being to intimate that the Sultan supported its objectives; the release of a proclamation announcing that such an insinuation was “distasteful” to the latter “alienated a good deal of public support which might otherwise have been forthcoming”, as was remarked in one Special Branch report.\textsuperscript{177}

Once the PRB had been officially registered, there was a period of consolidation, with Party leaders concentrating on recruitment, organisation, and the establishment of some credibility with the people. This latter goal was evident in a PRB circular issued by Azahari and Assistant Secretary-General HB Hidup in August 1956 that

\begin{quote}
called for a high standard of discipline and behaviour, asserted that the Party must not admit undesirable elements, would expel members who were involved in brawls and directed that disputes between members should be settled by the Executive Committee.\textsuperscript{178}
\end{quote}

The conviction of two Party members for separate assaults in September demonstrated that there were those with far less concern for the Party’s reputation.\textsuperscript{179} PRB leaders were sometimes similarly careless of the Party’s integrity: Azahari spoke several times of “the

\textsuperscript{176} Zaini, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 2-4; TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 56, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for February, 1956, No. 2/56, c. March, 1956, para. 5(a); Item 58, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for March, 1956, No. 3/56, c. April, 1956, para. 5.

\textsuperscript{177} TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 58, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for March, 1956, No. 3/56, c. April, 1956, para. 5; Item 56, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for February, 1956, No. 2/56, c. March, 1956, para. 5 (b); Item 66, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for June, 1956, c. July, 1956, para. 5; Item 68, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for July, 1956, c. August, 1956, para. 6.

\textsuperscript{178} TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 70, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for August, 1956, c. September, 1956, para. 6; Item 74, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for October, 1956, c. November, 1956, No. 10/56, para. 4.

\textsuperscript{179} TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 73, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for September, 1956, c. October, 1956, para. 6.
necessity for collecting information regarding anti-party individuals and ‘traitors’”, as well as making disparaging remarks about the police force.\textsuperscript{180}

By early 1957, the PRB claimed to have 16,000 members, or approximately 75% of the adult male population of Brunei. Though there is ample reason to mistrust the size of this figure, the Party’s impact on the Brunei scene was certainly significant enough to excuse this kind of hyperbole: Abell wrote in February 1957 that the PRB “now assumes the proportion of a national movement”.\textsuperscript{181} The extent of this impact is further demonstrated by a report in \textit{The Borneo Bulletin} of the intention, never realised, of some Chinese to form a political party in order “to safeguard the interests of local Chinese in [the] face of increasing Brunei Malay nationalism”.\textsuperscript{182}

The PRB held its first annual congress at the end of March in Brunei Town, attracting around 500 delegates, some from as far afield as Sibuti and Sipitang. Parti Rakyat leaders from Malaya and Singapore had also been invited to attend, but were not permitted to enter Brunei because, as Abell reported, “their presence had been considered undesirable”.\textsuperscript{183} The purpose of the congress was to formally elect the Executive Council and ratify the Party’s policies for the coming year. \textit{The Borneo Bulletin} described some of these resolutions:

The Brunei People’s Party hopes to send a delegation to London in September this year to discuss at the Colonial Office “the political future of Brunei, and the fixing of a date for the introduction of self-government”. More immediately, the Party wants Trade Unions to be established in Brunei, the State and Religious Councils to be reconstituted to include 75% popularly-elected membership, and – most drastic of all – a Federation of the three British Borneo territories of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo into one State, presumably Malay-Dominated.\textsuperscript{184}

As has already been noted, much of the political momentum that the PRB generated in this early period of its existence was invested in its unsuccessful attempts to influence the structure of Brunei’s first written constitution. The most outstanding of these efforts was, of

\textsuperscript{180} TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 80, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for December, 1956, No. 12/56, c. January, 1957, para. 4.


\textsuperscript{182} ANA, File 3032/2/1, Part 1, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Third Secretary, Australian Commissioner’s Office, Singapore, 21 January, 1957, Memo No. 158, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{183} TNA, CO 1030/659, Item 3, Letter to JB Johnston (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 13 May, 1957, para. 3; Zaini, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{184} ANA, File 3032/2/1, Part 1, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Third Secretary, Australian Commissioner’s Office, Singapore, 10 April, 1957, Memo No. 813, pp. 1-2.
course, the Merdeka Mission to London in September 1957, the failure of which has already been noted. The significant role that this episode played in the PRB’s temporary eclipse, however, requires that it be revisited in more detail. Preparations for the journey began in May, with the announcement of the appointment of Walter Raeburn as the PRB’s legal and constitutional adviser. Raeburn assisted Party leaders to draft a memorandum summarising the PRB’s constitutional proposals for submission to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and advised the delegation during its sojourn in London.\(^{185}\)

The Merdeka Mission consisted of Azahari, Yasin Affandy, and Zaini, accompanied by Raeburn, and, in the course of its mission, met the Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on 26 and 30 September respectively. The former, Sir John Martin, informed the delegation that

> The basic question was one of pace and stages. Up till now the people of Brunei had no experience of democratic government. Our feeling was that the memorandum mapped out a course which a political party might take as their long-term programme; but it went much too far in one jump. It was not in the Malay tradition to go too fast. They should remember the Malay proverb “Biar lambat, asal selamat” (slow but sure).\(^{186}\)

Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Secretary of State, said much the same thing, adding that “the Party should set out to work [within] the Constitution in whatever form it emerged and press for any further amendments they desired from within, and by constitutional means.”\(^{187}\)

The minutes of the second meeting record this particularly telling passage:

> Mr Azahari said that the Party Raayat has tried to find a method of communicating with the Sultan but had been unable to do so. They had therefore decided that the only way of making themselves heard was to come to London. The matter had to [be] looked at from several angles. The Memorandum represented very moderate requests. He hoped that the Secretary of State would consider the introduction of a constitution as desired by the Memorandum. In answer to the charge that the Party Raayat desired to boycott the constitution, this was done to show they had strength. It was the only way to show the aspirations of the people.\(^{188}\)

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\(^{186}\) Zaini, op. cit., p. 120.

\(^{187}\) Ibid., p. 124.

\(^{188}\) Ibid., p. 125.
This passage highlights the gulf between the PRB and the Sultan: if the latter refused even to listen to the views of the former, there was little incentive for the Party to persist with constitutional methods.

The PRB thus came away from their Colonial Office meetings with virtually empty hands, a failure that was reflected in the delegation’s immediate reaction, recalled by Zaini thirty years later in these terms:

It changed A.M. Azahari’s belief in the process of consultation. He proudly and frankly told his two colleagues of his doubts about British sincerity [sic] to give the people of Brunei their freedom and independence by constitutional means. Then agitated, A.M. Azahari talked about ‘revolution’ as the only way to seek political changes. It was the first time that A.M. Azahari and his two colleagues saw ‘revolution’ as the only alternative for the PRB. Repeatedly the theory of ‘anarchy, chaos and new order’ began to dominate their discussion. It might not be wrong to say now that, [sic] that was when the embryo of the 8 December Revolution came into being.189

In Brunei, the administration feared that the PRB’s failure would cause serious disturbances, with the delegation’s return thought to be the likely occasion for such an outbreak. Police reinforcements were again brought in from Sarawak and resources concentrated in Brunei Town to deal with any problems. The Resident also warned Party leaders that “any disturbance would not only be followed by individual prosecutions, but by action against the Party and probably by cancellation of its registration under the Societies Ordinance”.190 The effect of these measures is difficult to gauge: there was no riot or violence of any kind, but the lack of enthusiasm that greeted the Merdeka Mission on its return may have been more a product of the discontent caused by its abject failure than of anything the government did. Hugh Ellis, who was Chief Secretary of Sarawak and visiting Brunei at the time, observed that “the general feeling appeared to be one of disappointment and indeed some resentment at the mission’s failure”.191

The PRB’s problems were compounded by their decision to boycott the projected District Council elections. The government had announced in March that new District Councils would be selected “in accordance with traditional methods”, which would lead to fully

189 Ibid., pp. 13-4 (emphasis in original).
190 TNA, CO 1030/658, Item 5, Minute by the Chief Secretary, Sarawak, Enclosure to Letter to Sir Gerald Whiteley (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 4 December, 1957, para. 3.
191 Ibid., para. 4.
elected councils when appropriate electoral machinery was in place.\(^{192}\) The PRB chose to boycott this process, with Azahari describing it to the press as a “primitive change” and “a mockery of democracy”\(^ {193}\). These elections were never held, however, because the Sultan refused to make any changes in Brunei’s system of government until certain unresolved constitutional issues were settled. As the Resident of the time wrote in his Annual Report:

> Had this party supported the elections, and had these elections taken place, they would probably have got certain District Councils and been able to air their views [in] the constitutional and proper manner. The fact that they . . . decided to boycott the elections . . . probably [did] them more harm than good.\(^ {194}\)

This lost opportunity presaged the PRB’s decline, which saw its popular support dwindle, its coffers dry up because “even keen supporters are no longer gullible enough to provide further funds for the pleasure of a handful of Party leaders”, as Resident Dennis White wrote in 1959, and several of its committee members prosecuted and fined for minor financial irregularities.\(^ {195}\) To compound its difficulties, Vice-President HM Salleh was imprisoned for three months for perjury and left the party soon afterwards. This financial and political position prevented the PRB from sending another delegation to the next set of constitutional negotiations, held in London in early 1959; it was forced to ask Zaini, who had quit the Party before going to Britain to study, to convey its views to the Colonial Office, but his efforts were in vain.\(^ {196}\)

The PRB’s protests against the constitution after its promulgation were just as unavailing, as was, perhaps, to be expected. Horton has summarised the essence of the Party’s criticism:

> The Partai Rakyat declared that control of the country remained in British hands. There was no provision for a general election to choose a Government because “Britain and a few important personages were determined to keep power in their own hands”. The Partai Rakyat had not been consulted in the drafting of the Constitution: the British Government, “through fear of weakening its hold on the State”, had turned down the 1957 Raeburn memorandum. Hence, the party was “determined to press for recognition for independence to the bitter end”. The provision for elections was “insincere and not binding”; and the party would not be “fobbed off with gifts of candy”, urging instead that the Constitution be changed.

\(^{192}\) ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Public Relations Officer, Australian Commissioner’s Office, Singapore, 12 March, 1957, Memo No. 533, para. 4.  
\(^{193}\) ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Public Relations Officer, Australian Commissioner’s Office, Singapore, 28 March, 1957, Memo No. 581, paras. 1 & 3.  
\(^{194}\) Quoted in Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, pp. 186-7; TNA, CO 1030/658, Item 5, Minute by the Chief Secretary, Sarawak, Enclosure to Letter to Sir Gerald Whiteley (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 4 December, 1957, para. 8.  
\(^{195}\) TNA, CO 1030/658, Item 13, Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the British Resident, Brunei, Enclosure to Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 3 January, 1959, para. 2; Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, p. 191.  
\(^{196}\) Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin, pp. 191 & 209; Matassim, op. cit., p. 34.
into “an instrument more in keeping with present international trends and regards for human rights”.\(^{197}\)

The nature of the new system, as Hussainmiya has observed, however, left the PRB with little choice but to “protest meekly in press releases”.\(^{198}\)

Conversely, the new regime also created the opportunity for the revival of the PRB, with the Malayan officers who replaced the mainly British public servants of the previous administration swiftly becoming unpopular with the local people. It had been hoped that the use of officers with a similar cultural and lingual background would improve the functioning of the new government, as a temporary measure until more Bruneians were trained and ready to take their places. Local people, however, believed that these positions should rightfully belong to Bruneians, whatever their qualifications, and, by tapping into this reservoir of nationalistic feeling, the PRB was able to regain some of its former support.\(^{199}\)

The potency of the PRB’s campaign on this subject was intensified by the reappearance of the possibility of Brunei joining the Federation of Malaya. The Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, had revealed to an audience of Malayan and Bruneian students at an informal gathering in London in June 1960 that he had reached an “implicit understanding” with the Brunei government that the Sultanate would soon join the Federation.\(^{200}\) The Sultan denied this, saying that “the Tunku has never discussed such a plan for merger with me”, while the Mentri Besar spoke of Brunei’s intention to join the Commonwealth when it became independent.\(^{201}\) This reaction was a reflection of the prematurity of the Tunku’s revelation and of the lack of public support for the idea. Had the Brunei government been able to prepare the people for such a great change, the plan may have been feasible, but, this not being so, it quickly sank without trace.

The PRB’s revival, driven by these issues, is vividly demonstrated by the 3,000 people who attended its anniversary rally in January 1960, compared to the 800 who had patronised

\(^{197}\) Horton, *The British Residency*, p. 61.
the corresponding event the previous year. The Party used some of this momentum to establish a trade union movement, the *Barisan Buroh Bersatu Brunei* (Brunei United Labour Front, BULF), which was created in May and registered in October 1960. The BULF was made up of four smaller unions whose members also happened to be Party supporters; as a result, the BULF “pledged to support all agitation made by the PRB”. The efficacy of the Party’s new strategy was enhanced by Brunei’s continuing economic problems, the responsibility for which could be attributed quite easily to the government, the “major employer and the source of social welfare”, as Jones has pointed out.

The PRB’s position was further entrenched when the first District Council election was postponed to enable nationality legislation to be finalised. It has already been stated that the constitution had allowed for a two-year period when the sultan was able to appoint the 16 Legislative Council members who would otherwise be selected from the elected District Councils. Before these elections could occur, it was necessary to construct the appropriate electoral machinery, including legislation that would establish criteria for citizenship and thus determine who was eligible to vote. The process of creating that enactment was protracted, partly because of administrative inefficiency and partly due to disagreement within the government on the question of who should become a citizen of Brunei.

Under the constitution, only people recognised as Bruneis were allowed to stand for election and were, consequently, eligible to vote; this definition deprived several groups of this right, most notably the Iban and the more numerically significant Chinese. The original draft of the Nationality Enactment allowed people born in the state but not already subjects of the sultan to register as citizens if they had spent a total of twelve of the previous fifteen years living in Brunei. People not born in the state could apply for naturalisation if they had spent at least 20 of the past 25 years residing in Brunei. Both groups would be required to prove that they could speak *Bahasa Melayu* with reasonable skill. Both the media and the PRB criticised the legislation on the grounds that the exclusion of indigenous Borneans from

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203 Ibid., p. 18; Hussainmiya, *Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin*, p. 26. The BULF is discussed in more detail in Chapter V.
205 This summary is based on the contents of three TNA files: CO 1030/1402-4.
automatic citizenship and the length of time required before immigrants could apply for naturalisation were unfair and unjust.\textsuperscript{206}

The government responded to these criticisms by formally inviting the public to suggest amendments and creating a select committee to consider these proposals. The Party made a submission representing its position, while the Chinese and Indian communities naturally supported the PRB’s call for less onerous residential requirements.\textsuperscript{207} The primary result of the select committee’s deliberations was the extension of the status of subjects of the sultan to people belonging to groups indigenous to North Borneo and Sarawak who were born in Brunei and whose parents had also been born in the Sultanate. This concession would, as White remarked, “largely deal with the non-Chinese elements, such as Dayaks, etc., but no alleviation of terms for the Chinese has received any support at all”.\textsuperscript{208}

Throughout the debate about the Nationality Enactment, there was a group within the government that consistently advocated a hardline approach to Chinese citizenship, in an endeavour to safeguard Brunei’s Malay culture and language from people whose loyalty, it was believed, would always belong exclusively to China. This group, described by White in one report as “a strong Malay Nationalist clique” that had the Sultan’s support, was probably the reason that residential requirements were so burdensome and were certainly the primary advocates of the language test, pushing for a high standard of both knowledge of and proficiency in speaking Bahasa Melayu.\textsuperscript{209}

There were also, however, those within the government who supported the PRB’s contention that generous treatment of the Chinese in the matter of citizenship was the best way of winning their loyalty to Brunei. High Commissioner White, in his \textit{ex officio} role on


\textsuperscript{207} TNA, CO 1030/1402, Item 19, “Brunei’s Nationality Bill: Govt Welcomes Views From Public”, Extract from \textit{The Sarawak Tribune}, 8 November, 1960; CO 1030/1403, Item 31, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 14 December, 1960, para. 2; Item 30, Extract from the Brunei Political Intelligence Report, November 1960, c. December, 1960, para. 2. The term “Dayak”, though it can sometimes be used as a generic term for all non-Muslim indigenous Borneans, in this instance specifically referred to the Iban people.

\textsuperscript{208} TNA, CO 1030/1403, Item 34, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 1 February, 1961, para. 2.

\textsuperscript{209} TNA, CO 1030/1403, Item 22, Extract from the Brunei Political Intelligence Report, October 1960, c. November, 1960, para. 5; Item 30, Extract from the Brunei Political Intelligence Report, November 1960, c. December, 1960, para. 4; Item 31, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 14 December, 1960, para. 3.
the Executive Council, communicated the British government’s own opposition to stringent citizenship conditions, a position made more potent by the fact that many of those to be excluded were, at the time, classed as British protected persons, making the British government responsible for them. This responsibility was reinforced by a commitment made by the Brunei government during the constitutional negotiations to consult the British on the form of the Sultanate’s nationality legislation.\textsuperscript{210}

The conflict between these two groups caused the deliberations of the select committee to drag into February 1961, when the compromise described above was finally reached. Once this was done, however, little progress was achieved, apparently because the proposed bill had “disappeared into the ‘Royal cold storage’”, as the Attorney General remarked to White.\textsuperscript{211} The High Commissioner speculated that this delay was partly caused by the Malayan Prime Minister’s suggestion that Brunei might become part of an expanded federation, leading Eugene Melville of the Colonial Office to make this comment:

\begin{quote}
the Sultan intends to get ahead with a merger with the Federation of Malaya before elections are held, i.e. before (in the views of Azahari and followers) there is a substantial elected Party Ra’yaat \textit{sic} element in the Legislative Council against whose wishes the Sultan would find it difficult to act.\textsuperscript{212}
\end{quote}

The delay of the Nationality Enactment made a postponement of the election, due before the end of September 1961, virtually inevitable, a situation well known to all in Brunei because \textit{The Borneo Bulletin} had devoted a front-page article to the question in March. No real surprise was consequently felt when the government announced at the end of July that the elections would be postponed by a year, until 18 October, 1962 at the latest. There were two reasons given for this delay: firstly, that the government was waiting for the 1960 Census statistics to be finalised so that the number of seats for each District Council could be calculated and secondly, that the task of considering the public submissions on the original draft of the Nationality Enactment had taken longer than expected. This postponement

\textsuperscript{210} TNA, CO 1030/1403, Item 22, Extract from the Brunei Political Intelligence Report, October 1960, c. November, 1960, para. 5; Item 26, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from Eugene Melville (CO), No. 162, 25 November, 1960, para. 1; Item 27, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, No. 163, 25 November, 1960, para. 2.
\textsuperscript{211} TNA, CO 1030/937, Item 20, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 30 May, 1961, para. 2; CO 1030/1403, Item 35, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch No. 60, 8 February, 1961.
\textsuperscript{212} TNA, CO 1030/1447, Minute from Eugene Melville (CO) to Sir John Martin (CO), 27 July, 1961, para. 3; CO 1030/937, Item 20, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 30 May, 1961, para. 2.
necessitated a constitutional amendment, which had to be approved by both the Privy and Legislative Councils before it could be promulgated at the end of October.\^\footnote{The Borneo Bulletin, “The big question we all want to know: Will Brunei elections be held this year?”, 11 March, 1961, p. 1; TNA, CO 1030/1404, Item 63A, “Elections”, Enclosure to Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 12, 20 August, 1961, p. 1; CO 1030/1447, Item 68, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 23, 29 July, 1961, para. 4; CO 1030/937, Item 22, Supplement to the Government Gazette, Part II, No. 53, Notification No. S 121, The Constitution (Amendment) Proclamation, 1961, 18 November, 1961.}

Though this announcement had been expected, there was an unusual atmosphere of turmoil in Brunei that caused this statement to be released, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters IV and V. Briefly, however, a combination of labour strife, public anger caused by the inefficiency of government administration, controversies provoked by the Malaysia proposal, and the general political situation all led the government to postpone the elections formally, in order to calm the situation down, buy some time for further preparations, and remove the oxygen from the PRB’s election campaign, which had been gaining momentum steadily since the beginning of 1961.\^\footnote{This summary is an impression gained from reading TNA, CO 1030/1447.}

There are several aspects of the establishment of the PRB and its early years of existence that are especially interesting, including the effect that the nature of Brunei’s polity had on the development of the Party’s worldview. The Malay dominance of Brunei society, for example, was inevitably reflected in the PRB’s political outlook, as well as in the composition of its leadership and membership; the Party was thus always a Malay party, despite its pretensions to represent all facets of Brunei society. Another significant characteristic of the PRB was the youth of its leadership and many of its members: of its primary leaders, only HM Salleh had completed his education before World War II.\^\footnote{Singh & Sidhu, op. cit., pp. 38, 110, & 125. AM Azahari, Yasin Affandy, and Zaini Ahmad being the Party’s other primary leaders in this instance.} This youth affected the maturity of the PRB’s worldview and decision-making process, an important factor in the Party’s propensity to speak and act without carefully weighing the consequences.

The most important tenet of the PRB’s worldview was always its commitment to democracy, which was virtually the only principle it maintained throughout its existence.
This aspect of its ideology is especially significant because, in Brunei’s monarchical system, political parties had no formal role and, as a result, the PRB’s *raison d’être* was to foster the growth of democracy until it could create a position for itself. It was also the primary point of difference between the respective worldviews of the nationalists and the traditional élite and was thus the central, underlying issue in every public debate in the period leading up to the revolt. Indeed, the Party’s failure to make any progress towards a truly democratic system in Brunei was the primary cause of the rebellion.

The PRB’s commitment to the concept of federation was another constant in their worldview, though this belief lasted only until it was superseded by the creation of Malaysia. The size of the federation that the Party favoured may have changed, but their support for the idea of it never wavered. Central to their conception of such a federation was the necessity of Brunei having a leading role, which was the primary reason the PRB abandoned any thought of supporting a federation comprising not only northern Borneo, but Malaya, Singapore, and Indonesia as well; there could be no possibility of Brunei being anything more than a minnow amongst sharks in such company. The Malaysia concept, too, offered little prospect of power for Brunei, even if it entered at the head of a northern Borneo bloc: the peninsular states would always outnumber the Borneo territories. As a result of these realities, the northern Borneo federation was the Party’s most viable option.

The PRB’s fluctuating popularity is another interesting subject for discussion, principally because this popularity was the engine of its political influence: the PRB was nothing without the support of the majority of the people. This is best illustrated by the Party’s loss of influence after the failure of the Merdeka Mission in 1957, which was clearly precipitated by the waning confidence of the PRB’s supporter base in the leadership. Though there were other causes for this slump, such as the perception that the Merdeka Mission was a total waste of funds, its failure to have any influence on the constitutional negotiations, and its legal and financial troubles, the Party’s loss of influence clearly underlay these other reasons and was thus the fundamental cause of its waning popularity.
The PRB’s decline in popularity after the failure of the Merdeka Mission reflected the Party’s political inexperience and was thus an important lesson that informed its later success. A more seasoned political party may have been able to mitigate the effects of the disappointment in London, or even turn the episode to its advantage, but the PRB, being less than two years old, was unable to do this. It was, of course, constrained by the necessity to refrain from criticising the actions of the Sultan too much, in public at least, which would be entirely counter-productive in a society where the monarch was trusted to guide his people to the best of his ability.

Conversely, the PRB’s recovery after the promulgation of the constitution in September 1959 was clearly owed to circumstances, though political skill also played a role. The widespread resentment felt in Brunei towards the Malayan officers was the primary catalyst for the Party’s revival, with the first signs of government incompetence also contributing to this resurgence. Having said that, these favourable circumstances would not have been of much use had the PRB not been able to take advantage of them, demonstrating that the Party had learned something during their slump.

The controversy surrounding the postponement of the District Council elections is equally significant, primarily because of the role it played in the PRB’s recovery of popular support. Though, as has already been noted, government incompetence and dissatisfaction with the performance of the Malayan officers were the primary reasons that the Party regained public support, the PRB’s role as self-appointed champions of those indigenous Borneans who would have been disenfranchised by the original nationality legislation also contributed to this revival. In addition, the government’s decision to delay the elections was itself a factor in this recovery, because it added credibility to the PRB’s arguments in favour of more democratic and transparent government institutions.

There were also several interesting points about the process leading up to the postponement of the elections, including the important role that the PRB played in shaping the legislation determining citizenship requirements. The pressure that the Party, in conjunction with the media, exerted on the government in favour of broadening Brunei’s
citizenship base, as well as the public support it gained for its position, was decisive in forcing the government to reconsider its narrow definition of nationality. The PRB’s position also broadened the Party’s appeal among non-Malay groups in Brunei, which was especially important in view of the approaching elections.

Connected with the PRB’s role in the controversy surrounding the nationality legislation was the significant part that public opinion played. Without community support for the Party’s calls for broader citizenship rules, the government could have passed the original version of the nationality enactment with no trouble, vanquishing the PRB once again. Having said that, it is impossible to say that there would have been no public support for the concept of stricter Malay language tests, because there was undoubtedly a significant number of Malays who tended to view the Sultanate as a Malay country that needed to restrict citizenship in order to protect that identity. Equally, however, there were many who would agree with the PRB’s view that welcoming non-indigenous groups was a better way of winning their loyalty and thus protecting the security of Brunei than deliberately pushing them away would be.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored Brunei’s political development, the first of the major causes of the Brunei Rebellion to be discussed in this thesis. The significance of this process as one of these causes is difficult to overstate: without politicisation, there would have been no PRB and, thus, no revolt. More specifically, the pace of this process influenced the kind of political culture that developed in Brunei, with the slowness of this change causing a sense of frustration with the British for their failure to accelerate the process, especially when contrasted with concurrent events in Malaya and Singapore. This is probably the origin of the strong streak of anti-British feeling in the PRB’s worldview, which was itself partly responsible for the Party’s tendency to blame the British for nearly all of Brunei’s problems, even after the resumption of internal self-government in 1959.
One of the reasons that politicisation occurred so slowly was the equally tardy growth of education in the Sultanate, which emphasises the fact that education is one of the fundamental drivers of political development. The gradualness of this expansion was partly responsible for the nature of Brunei’s post-war polity: had education been more widespread before the war, a more moderate brand of nationalism may have had time to develop and produce a populace less susceptible to the populist kind of politicking that was common in PRB discourse. This more mature political scene may also have produced other popular parties, diversifying the public debate and ensuring that a broader range of opinion was represented. Finally, this moderate political activity would dramatically decrease the number of radicalised people who were willing to use violence to achieve their objectives.

Brunei’s education system, despite this slow expansion, did succeed in improving the rate of literacy in the Sultanate, as has already been noted. This more widespread literacy enabled a broader based nationalism to evolve, away from simple loyalty to the monarch and towards a greater appreciation of the common desires and problems of the ordinary people of Brunei. Increasing literacy levels and expanding English education also allowed more Bruneians to advance further in the public service, a prerequisite for independence. In addition, this improved literacy increased the readership of *The Borneo Bulletin* and other mass media, furthering the cause of political development and enhancing access to the wider world for the ordinary citizen.

The first tangible sign of the progress that politicisation had made was the establishment of several pre-political groups during the 1930s, which prepared the ground for the Sultanate’s first political party by introducing the ordinary people of Brunei to the concept of popular politics. These organisations also provided their members with essential political experience, stimulated their thinking on public affairs, and facilitated the exchange of ideas. In addition, they demonstrated how limited such pre-political groups were in their goals and effectiveness, encouraging those who hoped for more to advance further on the path to politicisation.
In the course of the discussion above about these pre-political organisations, it was remarked that the Malay ethnic group was dominant in Brunei society, a historical reality that, inevitably, also became part of the Sultanate’s political culture. This political ascendancy was reflected in the leadership and worldview of both the traditional élite and the PRB, shaping the way that Brunei’s polity developed and influencing the reactions of both groups to issues like closer association and Malaysia. Indeed, Brunei’s intensely Malay character was part of the reason for the reluctance in their more ethnically diverse neighbours to support the idea of closer association. Most importantly, this Malay dominance created a sense of entitlement to power amongst politically active Malays that allowed the PRB to seriously contemplate seizing that control forcibly when peaceful methods had failed.

Brunei’s experience of World War II aided political development in one very important way: by vividly demonstrating that Britain’s involvement in the Sultanate was only transitory. There had been no suggestion of imminent change before the war, so the sudden, forcible removal of the Residency by the Japanese brutally highlighted the fact that, ultimately, Brunei was responsible for its own destiny. This reality, though obscured by the restoration of the British administration after the war, was a significant catalyst for later Bruneian efforts to regain both self-government and independence. Also, as has already been noted, Britain’s failure to protect Brunei from the Japanese invasion caused some understandable resentment within the PRB: the Sultanate had relinquished its independence, one of its most prized possessions, to save itself from the belligerence of powers like Japan and was thus entitled to feel betrayed when this bargain was so blatantly ignored.

One of the features of the post-war period, as was remarked above, was the rising sense of expectation that had been caused by the explosion in government revenue during the reconstruction period. The knowledge that Brunei had become a rich country led many ordinary people, not unnaturally, to expect immediate improvements in their own lives and in the Sultanate’s infrastructure. This expectation, however, was made unrealistic by Brunei’s level of development, educational limitations, and small population. The resulting
disappointment fuelled the growth of the PRB and contributed to mounting discontent with the inadequacies of the government, a sentiment that is explored in detail in Chapter V. In addition, the manner in which Brunei became wealthy was not conducive to immediate and widespread economic development, leading some people to blame the foreign interests that controlled the Seria oilfield for this failure and thus promoting the xenophobic strain of nationalism that always coloured the PRB’s worldview.

What is most immediately noticeable about this chapter is the central role that Azahari played in politics upon his return to Brunei in 1952. As has already been noted, Azahari was always the natural leader of the Sultanate’s democratic movement, which the state of Brunei’s political scene after the rebellion vividly demonstrated: without Azahari, the advocates of democracy had neither leadership nor drive and were, as a result, largely unsuccessful. Azahari’s dominance naturally meant that the PRB’s other leaders were eclipsed somewhat, resulting in personal conflict and internal tensions, which at least partly explains HM Salleh’s decision to quit the Party in 1958. Balancing this disadvantage, however, was the fact that Azahari’s qualities as a leader did much to make the PRB the dominant force that it was, to the extent that it is difficult to believe that the Party would have become as popular as it did without him.

Azahari was not, however, universally popular, as has previously been remarked; the strong streak of anti-monarchism all too evident amongst the nationalists created a rift with the Sultan and his traditional officials that only widened as time went on. The significance of this gulf cannot be emphasised too highly: it was one of the most basic sources of conflict within Bruneian society, making it a fundamental cause of the revolt. Because this rift was a reflection of the differences between the worldviews and interests of the two factions, neither side was willing to compromise on the issues in question, thus intensifying the conflict.

There are two points that need to be made about this struggle for control between the radical nationalists and the traditional élite, not entirely relevant to each other or to what has gone before, but they are, nonetheless, inherently important in themselves. Firstly, it is necessary to emphasise that neither side was motivated entirely, or even primarily, by self-
interest or by either the perpetuation or acquisition of power; both factions were inspired by a common aspiration to make Brunei a better place. For the traditional élite, their tenure in power was a way to protect Brunei from the ravages of an inexperienced and, in their view, potentially dangerous political party, while the nationalists were pursuing their dream of giving the Sultanate a more democratic and transparent system of government.

Secondly, it is important to emphasise that the relationship between the two factions was not always adversarial; there were many instances of cooperation and cordiality and some issues upon which they all agreed. The atmosphere in Brunei was not one of constant crisis or disharmony, which is best demonstrated by the shock with which the rebellion was nearly universally met: had there been more acrimony and ill feeling between the two factions, the outbreak of violence would have been much less of a surprise. It is equally important, however, to acknowledge the friction that naturally existed in the relationship between the two sides, which were competing for the right to govern Brunei. The radical nationalists’ resort to making plans for extra-legal action on more than one occasion also demonstrated the hostility and desperation that their continuing failure to prevail created, while the traditional élite tended to be distrustful and condescending towards their opponents.

A significant portion of this chapter was devoted to exploring issues surrounding the promulgation of the constitution, one of the most important of which was the fact that the end of the Residency era left the traditional élite and the radical nationalists in conflict with each other without the benefit of a mediator. Though, as has just been remarked, this did not mean that the struggle for control was relentlessly negative or bitter, it did have the effect of removing from the scene the actor who could usually persuade both factions to accept compromise, thus increasing the intensity of the conflict. The end of Britain’s influence in everyday affairs also forced both sides to accept varying degrees of responsibility for Brunei’s destiny, neither group being able plausibly to blame the British for the Sultanate’s problems any longer, despite the PRB’s continuing tendency to do so.

The other significant issue that arises from the discussion of the constitution is even more crucial to an understanding of the causes of the rebellion, and that is the supreme state power
that the new system of government vested in the sultan, making him the head of both state and government. This monarchic system was far from the democratic administration that the PRB had envisioned while the constitution was being created, and, in fact, contained no role for the Party until the District Council elections were eventually held. Even then, the Legislative Council would not have an elected majority, leaving even a party that held all of these seats at the mercy of the government members. The PRB thus had ample opportunity to become frustrated by their subordinate position.

Quite apart from this point, is the impact that the Sultan’s new position had on his personal popularity and authority. The responsibility that the Sultan now bore for all government decisions, good and bad, popular and unpopular, meant that their popularity or lack thereof tended to attach itself to him and, consequently, he could be blamed for those policies that were viewed by the people as egregiously wrong. Tempering this unfortunate side effect of absolute power was the fact that, generally speaking, the Sultan was protected from widespread public opprobrium by the respect and admiration that his people felt for him, thus shifting the obloquy onto his government and its officials. There were many in the PRB, however, who were ready and willing to hold the Sultan responsible for his administration’s policies, increasing their frustration with the government and contributing to their decision to revolt.

Lastly, the Sultan’s position at the apex of government, combined with the unwillingness of the public to criticise him unduly, made the PRB’s situation even more frustrating. Its inability to either win power in an election or to hold the Sultan publicly accountable when it believed his decisions to be wrong left it with no way to change its position within the constitution, short of waiting for the promised democratisation when the Sultan believed his people to be ready. As will be discussed in the next chapter, this latter option became impossible when it appeared that Brunei would certainly join Malaysia, narrowing the PRB’s options even further, to revolt or utter defeat.

The federation proposal that preceded the Malaysia concept, closer association, was particularly notable as an illustration of the divergence of interests between the radical
nationalists and the traditional élite. On the one hand, the PRB had made the idea of federation with Sarawak and North Borneo, at the very least, a central part of their policy from its inception. On the other, the traditional élite were opposed to a federation that would degrade Brunei’s status to that of a colony at a time when it was on the cusp of regaining internal self-government. The idea of federation was clearly, then, one of the Party’s fundamental principles, whereas it was never something that the traditional élite willingly embraced.

This begs the question of why the PRB was so committed to the concept of federation. There was never a time in the Party’s existence until Malaysia was formed when it did not advocate some type of federation; only the number of territories involved changed. Singh has suggested that the primary impulse behind this commitment was its “dream of resurrecting the glories of the Brunei empire”, an analysis that is supported to some extent by the Party’s ardent Brunei nationalism.\(^{216}\) There were, however, other factors involved, most obviously these security, economic, and anti-colonial considerations: Brunei would be safer from external threats if it were to join a larger federation; there would be many benefits accrued through tariff reductions, economies of scale, and market rationalisation in one country; and the end of colonial influence throughout the region had always been one of the PRB’s most fundamental goals.

The traditional élite, on the other hand, demonstrated little real interest in the concept of federation at any time, as will become even more apparent in Chapter IV. Their primary objection was the fact, neither acknowledged nor accepted by the PRB, that Brunei would always be a small part of any federation, significant only for its hydrocarbon resources. Such a relegation would be unacceptable for the proud aristocracy of the centuries-old Sultanate of Brunei, especially when they were so close to regaining control of their own affairs. The northern Borneo federation, in particular, also promised to be a retrogradation, from the status of protectorate to colony, which was equally intolerable. The Party’s security concerns were not a factor for the traditional élite because they had confidence, despite their

experience during World War II, that Britain would uphold their defense obligations under the 1888 Protectorate Treaty.

The establishment of the PRB was the last subject discussed in this chapter, in the course of which it was noted that the Party was constrained by the necessity of avoiding criticism of the Sultan and his decisions because of the esteem in which he was held by his people. This restriction was one of the causes behind their tendency to blame the British for many of Brunei’s problems, even after they relinquished responsibility for the Sultanate’s everyday affairs. This constraint reduced the efficacy of the legitimate criticisms of government policy that the Party raised, thus decreasing its effectiveness as Brunei’s de facto opposition and exponentially increasing its sense of frustration. It also had the effect of shielding the Sultan from public criticism, granting him a certain level of immunity from the consequences of his decisions but, conversely, also deepening the resentment of those who were willing to hold him responsible for his policies.

Another interesting point made in passing about the PRB’s relationship with the traditional élite was contained in a statement made by Azahari to the Secretary of State for the Colonies during the Merdeka Mission, to the effect that the Party had been unable to get the Sultan to listen to its views on the constitution. This communication problem extended to most other areas of the PRB’s activities, with a few exceptions that usually occurred when the Party had the support of the majority of the people, as had occurred with the nationality legislation. These exceptions rarely related to the PRB’s primary interests and occurred too infrequently to be of more than passing assistance to its cause, adding to the Party’s frustration and damaging its credibility with the people by ensuring that it could do little else than criticise the government.
Chapter IV: The Federation of Malaysia

Proposal
The aim of this chapter is to explore the proposal to form the Federation of Malaysia, which was one of the central political issues in Brunei from mid-1961 until the new nation was established, without the Sultanate, in September 1963. Fundamentally, the serious threat that the Malaysia concept posed to the Partai Rakyat Brunei’s (PRB) own federation proposal was the primary reason that it was one of the main causes of the Brunei Rebellion, since there could be no northern Borneo federation if any of the Borneo territories chose to enter Malaysia. The PRB, too, was threatened by the Malaysia proposal, with the incumbent government of Malaya quite obviously no friend of the Party and little prospect of radical change in that respect in the near future. Internally, the Malaysia concept was both a potent catalyst for change and a lightning rod for political discourse and contention throughout the Borneo territories, which, in Brunei, only intensified the already fierce contest for power between the radical nationalists and the traditional élite.

The Tunku’s Speech

The Malaysia proposal first became a live political issue in May 1961, though the idea of uniting all British possessions in the area had been discussed in British circles since 1887, if not earlier. The main catalyst for this change was a brief remark that the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, made in the course of a speech to the Foreign Correspondents Association of Southeast Asia in Singapore on 27 May:

Malaya today as a nation realizes that she cannot stand alone and in isolation. Outside of international politics, the national one must be broadly based. Sooner or later she should have an understanding with Britain and the peoples of the territories of Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak. It is premature for me to say now how this closer understanding can be brought about, but it is inevitable that we should look ahead to this objective and think of a plan whereby these territories can be brought closer together in political and economic cooperation.¹

Though this was not the first time that the Tunku had made a pronouncement along these lines, as was noted in Chapter III, it soon became apparent that this occasion was very different.

To summarise the background to the Tunku’s proposal briefly, since the end of World War II, Britain had favoured a confederation made up of two units, a federation of Malaya and Singapore and another of Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo. This was always viewed as a long-term project, primarily because of the vast differences that existed between the levels of development of the two blocs. Malaya’s first independent government, led by the Malay nationalists of the United Malays Nationalist Organisation (UMNO), on the other hand, never welcomed the idea of a merger with the predominantly ethnically Chinese and left-leaning Singapore. The Borneans, as was remarked in Chapter III, were vaguely in favour of Britain’s programme, provided that it did not occur too soon.

This situation began to change in the months before the Tunku made his speech, as it became ever more likely that the socialist People’s Action Party (PAP) government of Singapore would fall to the machinations of the island’s communists. The still-fresh memories of Malaya’s own conflict with home-grown communists and the ongoing Cold War made this possibility intolerable to Kuala Lumpur, especially considering the fact that many Malayan Communist Party cadres were still at liberty in the border area between the Federation and Thailand and could potentially combine with their counterparts in Singapore to renew their attempts to seize control of Malaya. Britain’s tenuous position on the island made this situation all the more urgent, as the now declining colonial power could not crush the communists without arousing the very potent ire of anti-colonialists the world over.²

It was against this background that the Tunku made his speech, though it is clear from his language that this was more of a trial balloon than a policy statement: if the reaction in Malaya and Borneo proved to be too unfavourable, the Tunku could retreat from the idea without losing face. The immediate response to his speech reflected this, with The Straits Times characterising the Malayan reaction as cautiously welcoming but awaiting further

² Sopiee, op. cit., pp. 125-40 and Jones, op. cit., pp. 61-6 offer differing accounts of Kuala Lumpur’s motivations.
information. The response in Sarawak and North Borneo was similar, though many of those who gave a view on the question preferred that a federation of the three Borneo territories be established before the formation of a Malaysian confederation could be considered.³

The Borneo Bulletin reported the initial reaction in Brunei thus:

In Brunei State itself, political leaders urged the Government to show more interest in uniting the Borneo territories. Interviewed by the Bulletin, Party Raayat vice-president A.A. Hapidz Laksamana said: “We are not in favour of becoming another state within Malaya, but favour a partnership of equals.” He said he supported the idea of a federation of the Borneo territories. “It is my party’s aim and always has been.” He added that the Tengku’s idea was also the eventual wish of Party Raayat and its 19,000 members.⁴

This was the only public comment made directly in response to the Tunku’s proposal, largely because the Officers’ Affair, discussed below, soon intervened.

The Sultan’s initial reaction, in contrast, was summarised thus by George Douglas-Hamilton, the Earl of Selkirk and the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia: “The Sultan of Brunei generally appeared to be less happy or at least less ready to comment than either of the other two [of his visitors that day, the Tunku and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew], and said we must wait and see”.⁵ The Tunku himself, in conversation with Sir Geofroy Tory, Britain’s High Commissioner to Malaya, characterised the Sultan’s view in this manner:

[The] Sultan of Brunei had told him he would be glad to bring Brunei in on [the] same basis [as the existing states of the Federation]. Indeed he would according to [the] Tunku not be prepared to come in otherwise. [The] Sultan felt that incorporation as a Malayan state would alone give him [the] “protection” he needed (presumably of his purely Malay way of life and religion). [The] Tunku admitted that another factor weighing with [the] Sultan was [the] prospect which integration would offer him of eventually becoming Yang Di-Pertuan Agong.⁶

The Sultan’s views had evidently changed since the previous June:

The Tunku then came again on another tack which was: what would be our attitude if the Sultan of Brunei asked to join the Federation, and he added as an afterthought that the Sultan had shown some nervousness himself at this, the Tunku thought because it might cost him money. I would gather from this that the Tunku has in fact

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³ Sopiee, op. cit., pp. 140-1; The Straits Times, “Mighty ‘Malaysia’: Welcome for the plan in principle”, 29 May, 1961; The Borneo Bulletin, “Far East focus on Brunei follows Tengku’s suggestion to unite: “We don’t want to be a state of Malaya””, 3 June, 1961, p. 1.

⁴ The Borneo Bulletin, “Far East focus on Brunei follows Tengku’s suggestion to unite”, 3 June, 1961, p. 1 (emphasis in original). “Tengku” was changed to “Tunku” in the 1970s when the Romanised spelling of some Bahasa Melayu words was altered to reflect pronunciation better.

⁵ ANA, File 221/6/2A, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from CR Ashwin on behalf of the Senior External Affairs Representative, Australia House, London, No. 909, 30 May, 1961, para. 4.

⁶ TNA, PREM 11/3418, Item 6, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 399 Secret, 3 June, 1961, para. 2.
at some time pressed him quite hard to be a member of the Federation and that the Sultan has held back, even though there was held in front of him the possibility of his one day being Yang di-Pertuan Agong.\footnote{7 TNA, PREM 11/3418, Item 2, Note of Lord Perth’s Talk with Tunku Abdul Rahman, 10 June, 1960, p. 1.}

The official reaction in Britain to the Tunku’s speech was just as cautious as it had been elsewhere, with Prime Minister Harold Macmillan expressing this view in reply to a question in parliament on 20 June:

I have observed with interest the recent constructive suggestion of the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya that sooner or later the Federation should have an understanding with us and the peoples of Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak on a plan which would bring these territories into closer political and economic association. Tunku Abdul Rahman’s statement is already stimulating discussion in these countries and Her Majesty’s Government will wish to take their reactions into account in their own consideration of the suggestion.\footnote{8 TNA, PREM 11/3418, Item 8, Extract from Hansard, 20 June, 1961, columns 1171-2.}

The Tunku despatched a memorandum to Macmillan shortly afterwards outlining his government’s vision of the shape of the federation, which essentially entailed the entry of the Borneo territories into Malaysia “enjoying the same rights and privileges as the States which presently form the Federation of Malaya” as the first step in the process.\footnote{9 TNA, PREM 11/3418, Item 10, “Integration of British North Borneo Territories and Singapore with the Federation of Malaya”, Enclosure to Letter to the Prime Minister from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, 26 June, 1961, para. 4.} Singapore would join the expanded federation “with rights to determine fully its internal affairs, except with regard to matters of national importance” at a later date, but before 1963, when constitutional talks on Singapore’s future were scheduled to take place.\footnote{10 ibid., para. 5.} Significantly, the memorandum also observed that “[i]t would be better of course if Sarawak could be returned to Brunei, at least the northern part of Sarawak, where the population is mainly Malays and Dyaks”, an assessment that Ghazali Shafie has stated originated from the Tunku alone.\footnote{11 ibid., para. 4; Ghazali, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34.}

There is much discussion in the literature concerning the formation of Malaysia on the question of what Malaya’s motivation was for making the suggestion, though this subject is not especially relevant to this thesis.\footnote{12 See, for example, Sopiee, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 125-46; Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 61-70; DS Ranjit Singh, \textit{Brunei, 1839–1983: The Problems of Political Survival}, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1991, pp. 153-5.} The primary issue here is why the Borneo territories were such an integral part of the concept, to the extent that Kuala Lumpur made the inclusion
of northern Borneo a condition of Singapore’s entry into the Federation. The complexities of the Borneo territories made the process of forming Malaysia so much more protracted and difficult than a simple merger with Singapore would ever have been, which begs the question: why was Malaya so eager for their inclusion?

To summarise a very complex argument, the primary reason that Kuala Lumpur needed to include northern Borneo in its expanded federation was to make the acceptance of Singapore possible. Though the island state was politically and economically similar to Malaya, its culture and demography were too different for the prospect of a merger to be attractive. The addition of the three Borneo territories, perceived to be more culturally alike, would balance out the disadvantages of Singapore’s inclusion and thus make the entire concept more acceptable to the people of Malaya. It was, of course, expressed differently at the time, in terms of so-called racial arithmetic, where the 4.1 million Chinese would be outweighed by the 4.5 million Malays, counting all of Borneo’s indigenous people as Malay, whether they were or not.13

These kinds of perceptions about the political and cultural characteristics of northern Borneo encouraged the tendency of leaders in Malaya to make patronising statements and judgments about the territories, which often meant that they underestimated the effect that the individuality and complexity of the territories had on the process of creating Malaysia. For example, the Tunku appeared to labour under the misapprehension that Dayaks, in this context referring to virtually all non-Malay indigenous Borneans, were merely Malays who had yet to embrace Islam, which belittled the cultural identity of a large proportion of the populations of Sarawak and North Borneo. Such an insult could only have a negative effect on his efforts to woo Borneans to his cause.

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13 These figures are taken from a graph that was appended to the Malayan memorandum quoted above, TNA, PREM 11/3418, Item 10, “Integration of British North Borneo Territories and Singapore with the Federation of Malaya”, Enclosure to Letter to the Prime Minister from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, 26 June, 1961, Annexe A.
The Officers’ Affair

It may be recalled from Chapter III that, upon resuming self-government, the Brunei government had employed several Malaysians in important positions in order to replace the mostly British and Australian public servants with people who shared a similar cultural and lingual background. By mid-1961, Malaysians in government service included the State Secretary, the Attorney General, the State Forest Officer, several other department heads, various lower level civil servants, mainly in the medical department, customs, and police, and, finally, teachers who had been trained in Malaya at Brunei’s expense. Many in Brunei resented this influx, believing that the Malaysians were stealing attractive jobs from deserving local candidates. There were also concerns about the competence of some of these officers and the effect this had had on the functioning of the administration.14

The resulting tension finally boiled over barely a fortnight after the Tunku had made his proposal, when three of Azahari’s brothers assaulted the State Forest Officer, Mohd. Yakin Haji Long, on 12 June because he refused to extend a timber licence that had been granted to one of them. Though the assault itself was relatively minor, there was a further verbal altercation at the police station afterwards that included the use of statements like “we will show these Malaysians we are not monkeys with tails” and “[w]e will run them out of Brunei.”15 Yakin initially declined to press charges and requested that the incident receive as little publicity as possible.16

This relatively minor incident was swiftly blown out of all proportion because of the resentment generally felt towards the Malayan officers. The essence of this situation was described by British High Commissioner, Dennis White, in January 1961:

The Malayan Heads of Departments are far more often the victims of this maladministration than the British [i.e. being over-ruled on routine decisions by the

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15 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Memorandum to the Mentri Besar from the Commissioner of Police, Enclosure to Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 28 June, 1961, p. 2; Item 76, “An Appreciation of Recent Events in Brunei”, Report by the Special Branch Officer, Enclosure to Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Saving No. 10, 22 July, 1961, p. 2.
16 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Memorandum to the Mentri Besar from the Commissioner of Police, Enclosure to Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 28 June, 1961, p. 2.
Sultan] and this not only tends to discourage them from doing efficiently [sic] and cheerfully the jobs which they have come here prepared to do, but also to exacerbate their relations with the remaining British Heads of Departments. The local Brunei Civil Service (the Malay members of it) and the Brunei Malay public make little attempt to disguise their resentment of the Malayans who have taken the top jobs, in spite of the fact that no locals are qualified to do the job themselves, and the Malayans, feeling unwanted and disliked, are increasingly anxious to return to Malaya, where the shortage of staff is acute and promotion is certain and easy to come by. Their restlessness is naturally increased by the fear of being passed over for promotion in their own country during their absence. The situation is, therefore, a serious one.17

The Malayans were not blameless, however: White also noted “their, perhaps unintentional, but none the less [sic] noticeable, air of patronisation of the locals”.18

In this atmosphere of ill feeling, ten of the most senior Malayan officers decided to use the assault on Yakin as an excuse to resign their positions, giving notice of their intention to do so only two days after the incident occurred. Forty-two Malayan teachers trained in Malaya at Brunei’s expense and seconded to the Sultanate also indicated their desire to resign. The State Secretary and Attorney General then went to Kuala Lumpur to request of the Tunku that all Malayan officers be withdrawn from Brunei and to suggest that the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong’s visit to the Sultanate, scheduled to begin on 1 July, be postponed or cancelled. It was rumoured that the Tunku “personally appealed to the Malayans to withdraw their resignations and stay, but the 10 refused”.19

In the meantime, Yakin had been given time to consider whether he wanted to press charges against his assailants and he eventually decided that he wished to consult a lawyer in Malaya rather than to rely on the advice of the Attorney General. It appears that that officer, Ali Hassan, and the State Secretary, Ahmad Omar, advised Yakin to pursue the matter in the courts to ensure that their resignations came across as more credible, an analysis that the Special Branch Officer substantially agreed with. Yakin, in any case, did not advise the

17 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 5, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 30 January, 1961, para. 12.
18 Ibid., para. 13.
19 The Straits Times, “10 top Malayans quit posts in the Brunei Govt”, 22 June, 1961, p. 1; TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Memorandum to the Mentri Besar from the Commissioner of Police, Enclosure to Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 28 June, 1961, p. 4; Item 28, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 11, 16 June, 1961, para. 1; Item 36, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 15 June, 1961, p. 1; Item 76, “An Appreciation of Recent Events in Brunei”, Report by the Special Branch Officer, Enclosure to Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Saving No. 10, 22 July, 1961, p. 6. The author of this latter report commented that the teachers had “only asked to be returned as a result of pressure being brought to bear on them and when interviewed said they were prepared to stay on. Subsequently further pressure was brought to bear on them to reverse their decision”. TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 76, “An Appreciation of Recent Events in Brunei”, Report by the Special Branch Officer, Enclosure to Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Saving No. 10, 22 July, 1961, p. 6.
police of his decision, so they were forced to issue summonses for the three brothers on 20 June. The case was heard by the Stipendiary Magistrate, Charlie Foo Chee Tung, the next day.20

Nikman, Osman, and Mohammad Mahmud all pleaded not guilty to the charge of voluntarily causing hurt to Yakin and requested that the case be postponed until they could construct a defence. The prosecutor then asked that Yakin’s evidence be recorded because he intended to leave Brunei for Malaya that afternoon. The magistrate said that if Yakin’s evidence were recorded, he would need to guarantee that he would return to Brunei so that the defence counsel could cross-examine him, which Yakin refused to do. Magistrate Foo pointed out that the case would then “hang over the accused indefinitely” and persuaded all parties to agree to compound the case and shake hands.21

The mutual ill feeling deepened even further when Yakin returned to Malaya and gave a sensational interview to The Straits Times:

“We lived in fear and humiliation. I have served in Force 136 against the Japanese and I have fought in the jungles during the Emergency, but I have never experienced such terror,” he said.
“I am afraid of being beaten up if I stay on in the service. This is also the same fear that my fellow officers have,” he said.
“Anyone of them can be beaten up on the flimsiest of excuses. None of us have any peace of mind. We can never do a simple act without being threatened.”

Yakin’s version of events in this interview differed widely from that given by the Commissioner of Police, AN Outram, in his report to the Mentri Besar, which appears to have been written in response to Yakin’s claims. Outram described Yakin’s allegations as

20 TNA CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Memorandum to the Mentri Besar from the Commissioner of Police, Enclosure to Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 28 June, 1961, pp. 3-4; Item 76, “An Appreciation of Recent Events in Brunei”, Report by the Special Branch Officer, Enclosure to Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Saving No. 10, 22 July, 1961, p. 7. The main evidence for this interpretation lies in this statement from the Special Branch Officer: “On the afternoon of 19.6.61 the investigation paper was returned by the Attorney General with what was considered to be a most unhelpful minute in which he laid the onus on the police to decide what action was to be taken, and that he should not be bothered again with trivial cases of this nature.” TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 76, “An Appreciation of Recent Events in Brunei”, Report by the Special Branch Officer, Enclosure to Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Saving No. 10, 22 July, 1961, p. 4. This passage, taken together with the reports given by the Commissioner of Police and the Special Branch Officer of events after the assault, leads one to the conclusion that the Attorney General had, at the very least, advised Yakin not to compound the case. There is no evidence linking the State Secretary to this action, but it is likely that the Attorney General would have asked the State Secretary for advice, at the least, if not acted in concert with him. The Special Branch Officer believed that the Attorney General was the “prime mover” behind the officers’ part in this affair.
“false in many particulars and highly imaginative”, as well as commenting that they had “thrown ‘petrol on dying embers’” by bringing the PRB “unnecessarily into the picture”.\(^{23}\)

The Party had not, up to that point, made any comment on the incident, because the Mentri Besar, Ibrahim Jahfar, had asked Azahari not to in order to forestall violent incidents. Yakin’s inflammatory comments, however, caused the PRB to issue a pamphlet intended to refute the claims that he had made. *The Borneo Bulletin* summarised its contents thus:

Tengku Abdul Rahman was to blame, said the pamphlet, for sending “persons who practise colonialism and act in a superior way.” They took for granted that Brunei people were their colonised subjects, said Party Raayat, then asked: “Are such persons earnestly required by the Sultan? Are there not in Malaya many efficient and sincere officials who could be sent to serve Brunei?”

Brunei people were angry because Yakin told the Straits Times that Malayan officials had no safety and that a Gurkha Reserve Unit should be sent. Party Raayat called these “stupid words” from which the secret had leaked out that the Tengku hoped to make Brunei a Malayan colony and subjugate the Brunei people.\(^{24}\)

The Officers’ Affair rumbled on into July, when Tunku Abdul Rahman accompanied the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong on his official visit to Brunei and failed utterly in his attempts to resolve the issue. His attitude, as expressed in conversation with White, certainly was not calculated to soothe Bruneian feelings: “People in Brunei needed [a] firm hand, and perhaps a hammering, to cut them down to size and he was sure he could do it”.\(^{25}\) He first requested that a statement be broadcast over Radio Brunei on 4 July in an attempt to explain the Malayan officers’ presence in the Sultanate:

> “Personally I feel sorry for all that has taken place because the Malayan officers came here by command of the Sultan of Brunei who wanted their help for the benefit of the Government of Brunei by paving the way for future Brunei officers themselves. In a command from His Highness the Sultan to me it was said that however unsatisfactory the Malayans might be he would prefer them to anyone else because they belonged to the same race.”

> The Tengku told the people of Brunei: “For your information, these officers have also been told to imbibe the spirit of nationalism because the Malay people are so small in number and they have for a long time been dominated by colonialism.”\(^{26}\)

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\(^{23}\) TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Memorandum to the Mentri Besar from the Commissioner of Police, Enclosure to Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 28 June, 1961, p. 5.  
\(^{24}\) *The Borneo Bulletin*, “Tengku accused of colonialism”, 1 July, 1961, p. 11; TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Memorandum to the Mentri Besar from the Commissioner of Police, Enclosure to Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 28 June, 1961, pp. 2-3.  
\(^{25}\) TNA CO 1030/1447, Item 43, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 16, 3 July, 1961, para. 5.  
\(^{26}\) *The Borneo Bulletin*, “Malayans were told to ‘imbibe spirit of nationalism’: Brunei hears Tengku talk on Govt. crisis”, 8 July, 1961, p. 18.
The Tunku then informed the Sultan that he was going to withdraw all Malayan officers from Brunei and suggested that locals could be promoted to fill the vacancies, with Britons recruited for the technical roles.\(^{27}\)

The Tunku had not finished antagonising the people of Brunei, however:

IN BRUNEI TOWN: “The aim of my Mighty Malaysia proposal is to bring together all the Malays in the three Bornean territories.”
IN SIBU: “The British suggestion, that the five territories have their own different governments when the great Confederation is formed, is not in line with my plans.”
IN KUCHING: “The three Borneo territories will have equality with the 11 other states now in the Federation of Malaya.”
IN SINGAPORE: “A country which cannot afford to play its part in world affairs cannot very well have independence.”
IN KUALA LUMPUR: “It is nonsense for a state with a population smaller than that of Perlis to talk about independence.”\(^{28}\)

The latter statement also appeared in modified form in *The Malay Mail*:

Questioned about [the] Brunei Party Rakyat’s call for Brunei independence before forming a confederation the Tengku said: “The party has a few Government daily-rated workers as members.

“At any rate the place itself is something like Perlis, or smaller than that. It is not worth talking about it.”\(^{29}\)

As though that had not been enough, the Tunku then chose to offend the Brunei Government directly:

“The Sultan,” he told Malayan pressmen, “is a very enlightened ruler and one who feels that Brunei is identified with other States of the Federation.

“He himself would perhaps like to see Brunei join the Federation.” . . .

“I suppose,” he said, “if you were to ask the Brunei Government if they wanted to join, they would say ‘Yes.’”\(^{30}\)

Finally, it was reported in *The Straits Times* on 24 July that he had described the Iban language as a dialect of Malay and the Iban people themselves as Malays, drawing the peoples of Sarawak and, to a lesser extent, North Borneo into the circle of those who had been offended.\(^{31}\)

Much of the public reaction to the Tunku’s undiplomatic pronouncements focussed on his insistence that a confederation was unnecessary, rather than on his more offensive comments. *The North Borneo News and Sabah Times*, for example, remarked that

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\(^{27}\) TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 53, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch No. 7, 4 July, 1961, paras. 4-5.


“To us, although people may say that we lack political consciousness, Merdeka is as important as it was to Malaya and it is natural that we should want to have Merdeka as a National entity . . . Malaya’s proposal that we should join as the 12th, 13th and 14th States savours of “imperialism,” [sic] of the desire by Malaya to turn us into Malayan Colonies. “We too have our pride, dear Tengku, and even though we are only Colonies it is natural that we should want to obtain our own independence: to join Malaya while we are still colonies can only mean one thing – that we would merely cease to be British Colonies and become Malayan colonies instead”.32

The Brunei government’s reaction to all of these events was, initially, as silent as ever. They made no public comment, apart from a brief letter to The Borneo Bulletin correcting certain factual errors in the newspaper’s coverage of the resignations, until the Sultan spoke of the officers’ “earnestness and perseverance” in performing their duties and the “strong bonds based on mutual help” that had formed with their local counterparts during the Agong’s visit.33 The Mentri Besar then broadcast a speech over Radio Brunei to clarify his government’s aim in employing the officers:

The intention of having Malayan officers to serve in this country is that it is very much easier for the ra’ayat to meet these officers and learn from them what the Government is doing. This could not be done with [the] British officers due to [the] language difficulty. Furthermore, the officers now seconded to serve in our country are mostly Malays, who understand the customs and environment of our people who are of the same race as themselves.34

The PRB, in the meantime, had joined forces with political leaders from North Borneo and Sarawak to respond to the recent developments, at the instigation of Donald Stephens, who had been elected chairman of North Borneo’s first political party, the United National Kadazan Organisation (UNKO), upon its establishment in August. Stephens invited Azahari and Ong Kee Hui, Chairman of the Sarawak United People’s Party (SUPP), to Jesselton, where the three politicians declared that

so far as the wishes of the people in the three territories are ascertainable, “any plan in accordance with the pronouncements made by Tengku Abdul Rahman in Brunei and Sarawak would be totally unacceptable to the people of the three territories.” . . . All agreed that a constitutional link between the Bornean territories was desirable, but could not decide on whether it should be union or federation. They said they hoped the united front might form the basis for a pan-Bornean political party and that the leaders would continue to foregather periodically.35

32 The Borneo Bulletin, “‘Any such measure will arouse people’”, 15 July, 1961, p. 2.
34 ANA, File 221/6/2A, Translation of the Mentri Besar’s speech over Radio Brunei of 7 July, Enclosure to Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Third Secretary, Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, No. 817, 18 July, 1961.
This united front, though it was little more than a label of convenience, provoked the Tunku to the extent that he insinuated that all three Bornean leaders were communists, which allowed their position to be dismissed more easily and besmirched their reputations, particularly in Malaya.\footnote{The Times, “Renewed Call for ‘Malaysia’: Confederation ‘as soon as possible’”, 12 July, 1961, p. 9.} Having made their declaration, the united front was soon superseded by other events and quietly faded into memory.

The resignation of the Malayan officers naturally meant that replacements had to be sought; White reported on 20 June that the Sultan was determined that the Federation would supply the deficiency. The Mentri Besar was despatched to Kuala Lumpur for this purpose, while the Sultan personally tried to persuade those who had resigned to stay, an effort that bore fruit when six of the original ten agreed to remain until their secondment period was over. The State Secretary and the Attorney General both left at the end of July, to be replaced by Raja Azam Kamarulzaman and Abdul Aziz Zain, respectively. Most importantly, the Sultan decided to promote several local officers to senior positions in the government, a shrewd move in light of recent events: Marsal Maun was appointed to the new post of Deputy Mentri Besar, Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim was made Deputy State Secretary and Information Officer, and Pengiran Ali Pengiran Mohd. Daud became the Head of Religious Affairs.\footnote{TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 55, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 21, 20 July, 1961, para. 3; Item 54, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch No. 8, 12 July, 1961, para. 2; Item 73, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 24 July, 1961, p. 1; The Borneo Bulletin, “Malayans cancel journey”, 5 August, 1961, p. 1; Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 258. Marsal later became the Acting Mentri Besar when Ibrahim Jahfar went on medical leave before his retirement.} Thus, the Officers’ Affair had several main consequences: the promotion of some Bruneians to replace the most senior Malayans who had resigned, a great deal of controversy largely caused by the Tunku’s more tactless displays, and a lasting impression in Brunei that Malaya had tried to colonise the Sultanate.

The Officers’ Affair coincided with two other important issues, the Malaysia proposal and the election controversy, a convergence that had a significant impact on the course of each. The speed with which the Officers’ Affair followed upon the heels of the Tunku’s Malaysia proposal adversely influenced the reaction in Brunei to the concept to some extent,
though it is clear that the idea would not have been enthusiastically welcomed in any case. This confluence also exacerbated the effect of the Tunku’s attempts to resolve the situation, encouraging the suspicion that the Malayan officers had come to Brunei, not for the Sultanate’s benefit, but rather to further the federation’s nefarious designs.

The Officers’ Affair also coincided with the controversy over the District Council elections, as well as a protracted crisis in the Medical Department, both of which are discussed in Chapter V. This confluence of events heightened the sense of crisis in the Sultanate and increased the turmoil by creating the perception that the Brunei government had virtually ground to a halt. Such an appearance, in the Sultanate’s restless atmosphere, did little to calm the situation and actually helped to prove the PRB’s case for an early election. The continuing storm over the election issue, on the other hand, also distracted attention from the Officers’ Affair, which minimised its impact and allowed it to fade from public view soon after the Tunku’s departure from Brunei.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the Officers’ Affair was the utter mess that Tunku Abdul Rahman created during his visit to Brunei and Sarawak, which was a rare failure for the usually affable and popular Prime Minister. Apart from the obvious effect of antagonising large swathes of the population of northern Borneo, the Tunku’s impolitic comments also identified potential leaders in the community by provoking a reaction from those who would later lead both support for and opposition to the Malaysia concept, which was particularly important because of the dearth of established local political leaders in North Borneo and Sarawak. This side effect actually assisted the Malayans later, by pinpointing whom they needed to target in order to persuade the people of northern Borneo that Malaysia was their best option.

The Tunku’s visit had the further effect of sowing seeds of distrust regarding the nature of Malaya’s intentions towards the Borneo territories, largely because of his remarks, quoted above, about the need to “bring together all the Malays” and the instructions given to the Malayan officers “to imbibe the spirit of nationalism” in Brunei. These kinds of comments inspired fears that Malaya hoped to replace Britain as colonial overlord of Brunei, North
Borneo, and Sarawak, a potent concern at a time when northern Borneo was just beginning to dream of independence. The Malay nationalism evident in the Tunku’s remarks was also troubling for the non-Muslim peoples of Borneo, partly because of the unhappy memories still prevalent in Sarawak and North Borneo of Brunei’s unpopular rule and partly because the stronger and more cohesive nationalism of the Malays would most likely overpower northern Borneo’s very young and uncertain nationalism.

The emphasis that the Tunku placed on Malayan nationalism was especially offensive in Brunei, because it sought to replace the Sultanate’s own potent sense of nationhood with something that many in Brunei considered too secular and westernised. It also ignored the very real pride that Bruneis felt in their Sultanate and its long history, a course that was fraught with danger for Malaya: ignoring this pride would only push Brunei further away from Malaysia. Whether the Tunku had simply not believed that the nationalism of Brunei could be different from that of Malaya, or was looking ahead to the time when the five territories would combine to form a new country and would thus need to build a new, shared nationalism, the effect of his promotion of Malaya’s brand of nationalism was to alienate the very people he fully expected to support him: the Malays of Brunei.

The Tunku’s visit to Sarawak and Brunei did have the happy effect of stimulating widespread political discussion on the Malaysia concept, which led directly to the formation of the united front. Though this front did not last long and achieved little, it was an important sign of the progress that northern Borneo as a whole had made in its political development. The composition of the united front reflected the youth of this political sensibility, however, as Azahari, Stephens, and Ong represented about half of the recognised non-élite leaders possessed by the Borneo territories. The odd mixture of political beliefs the three men held also reflected this, Stephens being a Kadazan nationalist, Ong a moderate socialist, and Azahari a Malay nationalist. This disparateness was probably one of the main reasons behind the swift dissolution of the united front.

The aftermath of the Officers’ Affair brought promotion for several local public servants, signifying an important shift in the composition of the government, moving from a reliance
on expatriate personnel to the gradual introduction of Bruneian officers to senior positions in the civil service. This shift helped to defuse the volatile situation in the Sultanate after the Officers’ Affair and diminished the need to rely on Kuala Lumpur for assistance with the administration, which was especially important in light of the Malaysia issue, since any decision taken by the Brunei government on the question needed to be seen to be free of outright interference from Malaya. The people who were chosen for promotion were also significant, since Marsal, Pengiran Yusuf, and Pengiran Ali had all become close allies of the Sultan at the time the State Council they were a part of was the primary thorn in the side of the British Resident’s administration. Their elevation cemented this alliance and proved once again that the Sultan had no interest in working with the PRB, especially in light of the bad blood that existed between Marsal and the Party.38

The Officers’ Affair is significant largely because it made obvious the fact that Malaya could not take Brunei for granted in its quest to create an expanded federation. It would have been very easy to do this, because of the many characteristics that Brunei shared with the Sultanates of Malaya and the ties that the two countries had forged over a period of centuries; indeed, the Tunku’s approach during his visit to Brunei suggested that Kuala Lumpur was in grave danger of falling into this very trap. The resentment and ill feeling felt in Brunei towards Malaya that the Officers’ Affair laid bare and the formation of the united front both ensured that Kuala Lumpur knew the perils of such a course, though it still failed to heed this warning in the end, as will become clear later in this chapter.

This warning was put to better use by the Brunei government, who may otherwise have been tempted to ignore the PRB’s opposition to Malaysia in the belief that the majority of the people would have accepted a favourable decision with sufficient persuasion. The Officers’ Affair also made clear that the government could not rely on Malayan officers who had no stake in maintaining an efficient and professional civil service nor any love for the

38 White had remarked that Marsal “was both a radical and a nationalist and a leader of the school teachers’ association [the PGGMB], and had a close connection with the Party Rakyat. His rapid rise, honours and decorations, have rendered him distinctly persona non grata to the Party Rakyat, who regard him as a traitor and who will look upon his appointment as the next step in the campaign to clip the wings of the Party”. TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 85, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 29 July, 1961, para. 3.
country, a realisation that resulted in greater use of locals where possible and a more cautious approach to relations with Malaya. The Tunku’s heavy-handedness had its effect as well, ensuring that the Bruneians would not be as willing to overlook minor irritations as they might have been and, more importantly, causing the Brunei government to be very suspicious of Malaya’s intentions.

**The Progress of the Malaysia Concept**

Events had not, of course, stood still elsewhere in the Malaysian area, with Singapore’s volatile internal politics taking centre stage. The socialist PAP government contained two hostile factions, one that identified itself as non-communist and the other that was labelled by its rivals as communist. This instability resulted in a formal split when the government lost a by-election in mid-July because the communist faction openly supported a candidate from a rival party, which led to a motion of no confidence in the government being narrowly defeated in the Legislative Assembly. The 13 PAP members who had voted in favour of the motion were expelled, leaving the PAP in the precarious position of controlling 26 seats in the 51-member Assembly, vulnerable to further defections and calls for a general election that it feared it would lose to the newly-formed *Barisan Sosialis* (Socialist Front), comprising the recently expelled PAP renegades and several opportunists who believed that the communists held the winning hand.39

Singapore’s problems reinforced the urgency driving the Malaysia concept, leading to both informal and formal negotiations between Singapore and Malaya on terms for the former’s entry into the new federation in August and September. This resulted in an agreement that would give Singapore control over education, social services, and labour whilst ceding jurisdiction over defence, foreign affairs, internal security, and other matters to the Federal government. The Singapore government then pursued the advantage this agreement gave them over the communists through a series of radio broadcasts by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who later described the intention behind these talks thus:

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The surest way to generate this sense of the inevitability of Malaysia was to get people to see that Lim Chin Siong, Fong [Swee Suan] and the pro-communist cadres themselves realised that they were fighting a losing battle, and it was better not to join them. To foster this impression, I decided it was necessary to give everybody the big picture, the background of how the PAP and the communists had formed a united front, why Lim Chin Siong and Fong had broken their undertaking to fight for independence through merger with Malaya, and why they, the communists, must lose.

The British government, in the meantime, was having discussions in the Malaysian capitals and in London to determine whether it would support the Tunku’s proposal, a process that ended with the Malayan Prime Minister being invited to London for talks with Macmillan in late November. The two governments released a joint statement at the conclusion of these discussions that described the Malaysia proposal as “a desirable aim” and that mandated the establishment of a commission to “ascertain the views of the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak” and to make recommendations “in the light of their assessment of these views”. The British government offered Brunei the services of this commission, but the Sultan declined, perhaps because he had already decided to form his own commission of enquiry.

The state of affairs in northern Borneo was also in flux in the wake of the Officers’ Affair. The uncertain initial response to the Malaysia proposal that had firmed into hostile opposition after the Tunku’s intervention gradually shifted into hesitation again upon his departure, when people had had the chance to consider the proposal on its merits without the emotional response that some of the Tunku’s comments had provoked. The July 1961 meeting of the regional branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in Singapore played a key role in this process by ensuring that representatives from North Borneo, Sarawak, Singapore, and Malaya had an opportunity to debate the details of the Malaysia concept in an atmosphere that was conducive to free and frank discussion.

40 Lee, op. cit., pp. 393-4 & 400; Memorandum Setting Out the Heads of Agreement for a Merger between the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, Command 33, Singapore: LK Heng, Government printer, 1961, para. 2; Jones, op. cit., p. 70.
41 TNA, CO 1030/1016, Item 2, Federation of Malaysia: Joint Statement by the Governments of the United Kingdom and of the Federation of Malaya, 22 November, 1961, paras. 2 & 4 and Annex A; Jones, op. cit., pp. 70-6. The communiqué also mentioned the defence arrangements that had been agreed, which was a major point of discussion during the talks, largely because of a difference of interests on the question of involvement in the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation.
42 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 36, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, No. 144, 23 November, 1961, para. 1; DO 169/258, Item 3B, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 50, 28 November, 1961, para. 1.
The primary outcome of the CPA conference was the formation of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee (MSCC) at the initiative of Ghazali Shafie, the Permanent Secretary of the Malayan Ministry for External Affairs, whom the Tunku had entrusted with the primary responsibility for guiding the formation of Malaysia. The purpose of this committee was to “examine the Malaysia Concept which by itself would help to propagate the idea in Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories”, a shrewd strategy that used local leaders to promote the plan in their own countries and involved those who were initially opposed to Malaysia in discussing the idea, helping to persuade them that the concept was feasible.  

Donald Stephens, the chairman of the MSCC, was the earliest and most prominent of these converts, the North Bornean journalist having been the author of the scathing comments in The North Borneo News and Sabah Times, quoted above, that characterised the Malaysia concept as imperialistic.

The first meeting of the MSCC was held in Jesselton on 24 August with all of the territories concerned sending a delegation except Brunei, the government having declined its invitation because it had not had enough time to choose suitable representatives. This initial meeting of the MSCC is most notable for being the first time that the Malaysia concept had been explained in any detail to the people of Borneo, as The Borneo Bulletin observed. The second MSCC meeting, which took place in Kuching in mid-December, saw a high-powered delegation from Brunei in attendance that included both Pengiran Yusuf and Pengiran Ali, though it was there to observe rather than participate. The main outcome of this meeting was a lengthy and detailed discussion of important issues like equality of representation in the Federal legislature, immigration to the Borneo territories, and economic development.

Kuala Lumpur hosted the third meeting of the Committee in early January 1962, which focussed more on economic and trade questions than the previous two conferences. The Committee also decided that the proceedings of the MSCC should be “disseminated as

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44 Ibid., p. 56.
45 The Borneo Bulletin, “The First Step to Malaysia: Delegates speak on safeguards for the Borneo States”, 26 August, 1961, p. 1; “One People, One Allegiance, One Land: Malaysia Plan details”, 2 September, 1961, p. 2; TNA, CO 1030/1002, Record of the Second Meeting of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee held in Kuching on 18th–20th December, 1961, p. 1 & Final Communiqué. Under the Residency, Brunei had sent observers to the CPA, but since the resumption of internal self-government had ceased to do so. Consequently, the Sultanate had no pre-selected delegates to send to the MSCC at such short notice.
widely as possible among the peoples of the territories concerned, so that they too would appreciate the vital necessity of the realisation of Malaysia as soon as possible.” 46 The final meeting of the Committee was held in Singapore in early February, in the course of which a final report of the proceedings of the MSCC was agreed and later published throughout the territories as the “Memorandum on Malaysia”. 47

Despite their official status as observers, the Brunei delegation went so far as to sign the Memorandum, suggesting that the Sultanate’s government was leaning towards support for the Malaysia concept at this time. The speech that Pengiran Ali made at the opening ceremony of the final MSCC meeting supports this interpretation:

Since the Solidarity Consultative Committee Conference at Kuala Lumpur, there have appeared certain elements and attitudes and developments whose object is solely to obstruct and sabotage the Malaysia concept. These activities could not be regarded as constructive nor could they be regarded as the activities of people who are honest and sincere. 48

Pengiran Ali later remarked upon the revival of the northern Borneo federation idea:

We are surprised that this same proposal should take the same form as desired by the pro-Communists. We ask those who claim to have a spirit of nationalism and a love for their religion, race and homeland to consider this matter deeply before they step into disaster. Do they realise that their country, religion and race will be jeopardised and may be ruined by the formation of the federation as proposed by those people? Do they believe that the people of Sarawak and North Borneo will accept the terms of such a federation? Will the sovereignty of His Highness be more secure with the formation of such a federation? This proposed federation has been put forward simply to deceive the people of Brunei, to put obstacles in their path and to bring unhappiness to them. 49

Pengiran Ali made two particularly interesting comments in this passage, the first where he asked whether North Borneo and Sarawak would accept a federation that had at its head the Sultan of Brunei. This clearly referred to historical grievances felt by the peoples of the two territories towards the traditional élite of Brunei, as well as suggesting that the type of federation envisaged by the PRB, where Brunei would play a more prominent role than the size of its population merited, would not be acceptable to the Sultanate’s neighbours. The second point is even more significant, where Pengiran Ali asked whether the Sultan’s

46 TNA, CO 1030/1002, Record of the Meeting of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee, Selangor State Assembly Chamber, Kuala Lumpur, Federation of Malaya, 6th–7th January, 1962, Joint Communiqué, p. 3.
47 TNA, CO 1030/1002, Record of the Fourth Meeting of the Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee held at the Assembly House, Singapore from 1st–3rd February, 1962, Final Communiqué, p. 1.
49 Ibid., p. 2.
sovereignty would be more secure in such a federation. This suggests that the extent of the
powers that the Sultan could retain in any new federation was a major consideration in
deliberations about Brunei’s position on the question of Malaysia.

The response in northern Borneo to the Tunku’s visit in July had clearly demonstrated
that the Malaysia concept needed to be promoted and explained to the people if it was to gain
widespread acceptance. The activities of the MSCC stimulated a great deal of discussion of
the issues surrounding the creation of Malaysia, as the pages of *The Borneo Bulletin* alone in
the latter months of 1961 can attest. In addition, the governments of Sarawak and North
Borneo each published a White Paper in various local languages in January 1962 explaining
the Malaysia concept and what it may involve in simple terms, to ensure that even the least
educated sections of the population could form an informed opinion of the issue. Finally,
local leaders from all three northern Borneo territories were invited to Malaya to see the
progress that the Federation had made since independence.50

The commission of enquiry that had been tasked with surveying the views of the peoples
of Sarawak and North Borneo took some time to create, largely because the British and
Malayan governments disagreed over who would chair the commission. Once agreement had
been reached, the Cobbold Commission, named in honour of its chairman, former Governor
of the Bank of England Baron Cameron Cobbold, travelled throughout the two colonies from
February until April 1962, meeting both individuals and groups, receiving written
memoranda of the views of the people, and canvassing the opinions of leading citizens and
officials in informal gatherings in each regional centre they visited. They also made a
courtesy visit to Brunei in March, where they met with the Sultan and his ministers.51

The Cobbold Commission spent some seven weeks in England writing their report, a
process that was fraught with disagreement over the level of control Britain might retain in
North Borneo and Sarawak. In the final report, handed to the two governments on 21 June,

50 *The Borneo Bulletin* recorded that these visitors were quite diverse, including, for example, housewives, trade unionists,
government servants, and politicians in only two groups, *The Borneo Bulletin*, “Sarawak visitors see development”, 7 October,
80-1.
1962, there were four sets of recommendations, one supported by all five members, another written by the Malayan representatives Wong Pow Nee and Ghazali, a third by British members Sir Anthony Abell and Sir David Watherston, and the last by Lord Cobbold. The commission was, however, able to agree on their assessment of the level of support for Malaysia:

Although, in such circumstances, individual judgement is bound to vary in emphasis, the Commission as a whole endorse, as a general approximation not far wide of the mark, the following assessment which is made by the Chairman. About one-third of the population in each territory strongly favours early realisation of Malaysia without too much concern about terms and conditions. Another third, many of them favourable to the Malaysia project, ask, with varying degrees of emphasis, for conditions and safeguards varying in nature and extent: the warmth of support among this category would be markedly influenced by a firm expression of opinion by Governments that the detailed arrangements eventually agreed upon are in the best interests of the territories. The remaining third is divided between those who insist on independence before Malaysia is considered and those who would strongly prefer to see British rule continue for some years to come. If the conditions and reservations which they have put forward could be substantially met, the second category referred to above would generally support the proposals. Moreover once a firm decision was taken quite a number of the third category would be likely to abandon their opposition and decide to make the best of a doubtful job. There will remain a hard core, vocal and politically active, which will oppose Malaysia on any terms unless it is preceded by independence and self-government: this hard core might amount to near 20% of the population of Sarawak and somewhat less in North Borneo.52

The report also revealed a desire by small groups in both Sarawak and North Borneo to be returned to Brunei, a sentiment that was more widespread in the former than in the latter and that tended to be confined to areas contiguous to the Sultanate.53

The completion of the Cobbold Report resulted in further talks between the Malayan and British governments in London in July, with the agreement that came out of these discussions announcing that Malaysia would come into being by 31 August, 1963. A further formal agreement would be reached between the two governments within six months to settle the necessary constitutional arrangements for all of the territories, and an inter-governmental committee with representatives from Britain, Malaya, Sarawak, and North Borneo would be established to work out the required safeguards for the two colonies. A cosmetic, but nevertheless significant, alteration was also made to the agreement between the Malayan and Singapore governments concluded in September the previous year, whereby

citizens of Singapore would become citizens of Malaysia when the new federation was created, rather than being described as nationals. The Barisan Sosialis had made an issue of the distinction between the terms citizens and nationals, creating a storm of controversy and rallying so much opposition to the Malaysia concept that the PAP decided that the change in nomenclature had become essential.  

The Singapore government had promised its people a referendum on Malaysia, because, as Lee later explained, “[t]o carry out merger just on a majority vote in the Legislative Assembly was out of the question; the people would believe [that] we had sold them down the river, whether or not the terms were fair”. Perhaps more importantly, as Mackie has pointed out, “it would be suicidal [for the PAP] to seek a popular mandate on this great issue by holding a general election” because of their weakness and the widespread support that the Barisan Sosialis appeared to enjoy. The PAP could not afford to lose the referendum, leading them to employ tactics that they themselves privately conceded “may not have been entirely cricket”:

The referendum was not on whether or not there should be a merger, but rather on the form of the merger. Three options were offered. The voting was restricted to the 1959 electoral roll, thereby bypassing those young people, many of whom had left-wing inclinations, who had attained voting age in the preceding three years. The crowning touch came when the Barisan called for casting blank ballots as a protest against the PAP’s high-handed methods. The government, keeping a straight face, responded by declaring that unmarked ballots would be considered as favoring merger, on the ground that the voter was confused by the alternatives. After the election, the government said, the Assembly would vote on the disposition of the blank ballots.

The three alternatives offered were, firstly, a merger with Malaya on the terms previously negotiated by the government; secondly, a complete merger on terms similar to those accepted by Penang and Melaka in 1957, as had been advocated by the Barisan Sosialis in the early stages of the Malaysia debate, which would disenfranchise a large proportion of the Singapore electorate and deprive the island of autonomy in politically sensitive areas like education and labour; and, thirdly, a merger “on terms no less favorable than those given to

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54 TNA, CO 1030/1035, Item 5, Telegram to the Governor of North Borneo from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Secret No. 259, 1 August, 1962, paras. 3-4 & 7; Lee, op. cit., p. 429.
55 Lee, op. cit., p. 402.
the Borneo territories”, which had yet to be negotiated. The PAP’s quite frankly undemocratic tactics paid off when the result of the referendum was announced: of those who voted, 70.8% chose the first option, 1.7% the second, 1.4% the third, 25.4% cast blank ballots, and 0.4% of votes were informal. This was, quite clearly, a victory for the PAP that achieved Lee’s goal of “generating a sense of the inevitability of Malaysia”, quoted above, and, in many ways, marked the end of the campaign for Malaysia in Singapore.

The campaign in the Borneo territories was also virtually over, with the next stage taking place in the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) created during the talks in London in July. The IGC was charged with devising the appropriate constitutional arrangements for the inclusion of North Borneo and Sarawak in Malaysia, in areas like education, parliamentary representation, control of immigration, and citizenship. The delegations representing the two colonies were a mixture of expatriate government officials and local leaders, most of whom had become important figures in the new political parties that the controversy over the Malaysia proposal had brought into existence.

The discussions held in the IGC signalled that Malaysia was on the cusp of being accepted in the two colonies. Though there were important groups that opposed the idea, the majority of the territories’ populations were at least willing to accept Malaysia as a fait accompli. The consolidation of political parties into pro-Malaysia alliances that occurred in both colonies in the later months of 1962, encompassing all parties except the SUPP, was another clear sign of this reality. These advances left Brunei as the only prospective component of Malaysia that remained uncommitted and undecided.

It is immediately clear from this brief survey of the progress of the Malaysia proposal that Singapore’s political problems, as well as being one of the motivating factors behind the creation of the new federation, forced the pace of its formation. The urgency that the PAP split and subsequent events imparted overrode all other considerations, the most obvious of

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58 Ibid., pp. 50-1.
59 These percentages were calculated from data given in Boyce, op. cit., p. 15.
60 TNA, CO 1030/1055, Item 123, Malaysia: Report of the Inter-Governmental Committee, 1962, para. 3 & Annex B.
these being the fact that the Borneo territories were very far from ready to make the informed decision regarding their own future that had so suddenly been thrust upon them. Many in Sarawak and North Borneo were well aware of this fact, and quite justifiably resented having their dreams of self-determination dashed by Singapore’s apparently chronic instability.

Having said that, the peoples of North Borneo and Sarawak were not deprived of the opportunity to express their views on the Malaysia proposal, as has been demonstrated above. The MSCC, in particular, was a discussion forum that enabled community leaders from both colonies to express their peoples’ views. The newspapers of the region were less exclusive forums for discussion of Malaysia, because they welcomed letters from all who wished to write and, as a result, printed the views of people from all shades of opinion. These public discussions played a significant role in ensuring that the legitimacy of the new federation was acknowledged by much of the international community and, more importantly, by the majority of the peoples of Malaysia themselves. The comments and suggestions made in these forums also shaped, to some extent, the way the new federation was structured in Sarawak and North Borneo.

The description given above of the transition from outright opposition to enthusiastic support for the Malaysia proposal does not elucidate the reasons for this change. The most significant of these was the fact that the British government supported the Malaysia concept, which effectively removed the option of retaining the status quo and encouraged those who implicitly trusted the colonial administrations to accept their guidance. The geopolitical situation of the Borneo territories was also influential, with the Philippine claim to North Borneo and Indonesia’s expansionist proclivities both viewed as threats that could be better dealt with from within a larger grouping. The growing communist movement in Sarawak was a further reason to support Malaysia, because of the previous success that the Malayan government had had in halting the spread of the ideology and its consequences.

The benefits that Malaysia promised to bring were another reason to support the concept, the most prominent of these being the prospect of self-government and democracy, the
expectation of greater rural and urban development, and the belief that the indigenous peoples would receive similar treatment to that accorded to the Malays in the existing Federation. The common historical and cultural links between the five territories of Malaysia boosted the appeal of the new federation, especially in contrast to the lack of affinity that the Borneo territories felt towards their other neighbours. Finally, the failure of the northern Borneo federation proposal, though the colonial governments had endeavoured to keep it alive in Sarawak and North Borneo at least, demonstrated that this option was not a viable one, as much as some in the territories might wish it to be.

The Brunei-Malaysia Commission

Whilst these events in North Borneo, Sarawak, Malaya, and Singapore were taking place, Brunei was, of course, also considering its options concerning Malaysia. In early August 1961, the Colonial Office invited the Sultan to share his “preliminary views” on the concept with them at White’s instigation.\(^61\) According to White, the Sultan apparently flatly refused to express any preliminary view when invited to do so. He claimed to be barred from so doing both by the Constitution and Treaty! He claims that if formally invited by H.M. Government to consider the proposal he would have to seek advice as laid down in the Constitution.\(^62\)

White speculated that the Sultan’s reticence was caused by the amount of public opposition to Malaysia, demonstrated by the support that the PRB received for its protest against the postponement of the District Council elections, which had attracted as many as 8,000 people.\(^63\) The Sultan may also have wanted more time to consider his options and to think about the possible consequences of his decision.

When the Sultan was formally invited to express his thoughts in the lead-up to the London talks between the British and Malayan governments in November, he revealed his decision to the Executive Council:

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\(^{61}\) TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 79, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State to the Colonies, Personal No. 51, 4 August, 1961, para. 2; Item 77A, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 25, 1 August, 1961, para. 1.

\(^{62}\) TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 86, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 28, 8 August, 1961, para. 1.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., para. 2. The Borneo Bulletin stated that 15,000 people took part in the procession, but White’s lower figure is preferred here as the more likely one. The Borneo Bulletin, “Mass Protest...”, 12 August, 1961, p.2.
He announced his own support of Tunku’s plan and stressed the ties of religion and language between Malaya and Brunei. He had instructed his Government to prepare urgently a report on the political, economic, legal and administrative implications of merger. He had prepared a further letter to you [the Secretary of State for the Colonies] which would welcome the proposal and express his readiness to take part in negotiations to determine the condition[s] on which Brunei would enter into a closer association with Malaya.  

The Sultan announced this decision publicly at the budget session of the Legislative Council on 5 December, describing the Malaysia proposal as “very attractive” because “the ties of religion, race, custom and culture” amongst the Malaysian states were “similar and strong”.  

These moves were, according to White, made on the advice of the new Attorney General, Abdul Aziz Zain, with the support of the acting Mentri Besar, Marsal, Pengiran Yusuf, and Pengiran Ali. These new leaders had done much to clean up the government of the state, though the Sultan’s adoption of a more hands-off approach to administration was probably the most decisive factor in this change. The budget session of the Legislative Council in December, for example, saw much of the legislation required for the organisation of the District Council elections passed, including the long-awaited Nationality Enactment. In addition, the backlog of government business that had built up in the previous months of dysfunction, to the extent that there were 600 files awaiting attention in the State Secretary’s office, had finally been cleared by Marsal and Pengiran Yusuf.  

The Brunei government also attempted to conciliate the PRB, with former vice-president HM Salleh being appointed State Welfare Officer. Salleh’s precise role in the Party since his resignation in 1958 is not clear, though White implied in a letter to the Secretary of State that he was still active in politics, describing him as “one of the more violent members” of the PRB. Azahari was then appointed as an unofficial member of the Legislative Council and as one of four members of the Brunei-Malaysia Commission in January 1962. Azahari accepted his Council seat “as a mark of respect to His Highness the Sultan”, though he

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64 TNA, DO 169/258, Item 2, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 47, 23 November, 1961, para. 1.  
66 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 101, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch Personal No. 1, 15 January, 1962, paras. 13 & 16.  
described it as “not worth anything much”. These appointments were probably motivated by the government’s desire to associate the PRB with its actions without surrendering any power, as well as by the need to appease the Party’s constant clamouring for change.

The Brunei-Malaysia Commission to which Azahari had been appointed was chaired by Marsal and had a representative from each of the largest communities in the Sultanate: the Malays, Chinese, Iban, and Dusun. They held open sessions in Bangar, Tutong, Seria, Kuala Belait, Muara, and Brunei Town from 15 January to 3 February, hearing the views of around 200 individuals and organisations and attracting large audiences. Many of those who spoke were, according to The Borneo Bulletin, Brunei Malays, though some Iban and other indigenous people also contributed their opinions.

Reuters reported at the beginning of February that the commission “recorded strong opposition from all circles of people”, while The Borneo Bulletin’s source remarked that “[i]t was a walk-over for the anti-Malaysia forces”. Both news services appear to have relied upon the same anonymous source, since they contain virtually the same information: for instance, they each reported that the only pocket of outright support for Malaysia was in Tutong, while both linked the widespread opposition to the proposal in the Belait and Brunei-Muara districts to the fact that most of the PRB’s support came from these areas. The source also commented that “opposition to Malaysia – judged by the public reaction at the open sessions of the commission – was almost 100 per cent”.

Hussainmiya has asserted that the source of these reports of the commission’s findings was Azahari, a likely enough assumption since Azahari had the most to gain from such
disclosures. The Brunei government was quick to deny the assertions, describing the reports as “wrong and mischievous”. White, on the other hand, confirmed the original reports, saying that “the majority of speakers were giving [the] agreed Party Rakyat line”. Marsal later said in a press statement that “no one can coerce the Government into publishing the contents of the report of the Commission” and, despite the PRB’s best efforts, the report was never published. White, however, remarked in March that the government had decided to ignore the report because Marsal had not allowed the other members of the commission to read it, let alone contribute to it.

The political scene in Brunei had acquired a more varied hue while these developments took place, with the formation of new political parties finally providing some competition for the PRB. Abdul Manan Mohamad’s Brunei National Organisation (BNO) had splintered from the PRB in November 1960 and attracted around 700 members, mostly from the Tutong area. There were also two stillborn parties, the Brunei United National Organisation (BUNO) of Zaini Ahmad, who had a temporary difference of opinion with his PRB colleagues, and an unnamed party, the brainchild of Dusun community leader Lukan Uking, that would represent the people of the ulu, primarily the Dusuns of the Belait and Tutong districts. Neither party progressed farther than an initial announcement of intent. The Brunei United Party (BUP), registered in December 1961 and led by Hasbullah Mohammed Daud, was more successful, though its faithful endorsement of most government policies meant that it failed to woo much support away from the PRB.

Both of these parties, the BNO and the BUP, adopted pro-Malaysia policies, in stark contrast to the PRB’s strident opposition to the proposal. They even went so far as to form an alliance, initially including Zaini’s mooted BUNO, whose aim would be to “foster the cause.

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72 Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 265. Zaini, however, has denied that this was so, saying that Azahari was “morally bound not to say anything about the Report” so he “gave no public statement”. Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad, Partai Rakyat Brunei: The People’s Party of Brunei – Selected Documents / Dokumen Terpilih, Insan, the Institute for Social Analysis, Petaling Jaya, 1987, p. 24.
74 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 47, Telegram to the British Commissioner, Singapore from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 10, 3 February, 1962, para. 1.
76 TNA, CO 1030/1015, Item 4, Letter to CG Eastwood (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 10, 3 February, 1962, para. 1.
of Malaysia”, as its spokesman, Arshad Marsal, told *The Borneo Bulletin*. Zaini, however, quickly denied any interest in supporting Malaysia and, in any case, he soon dropped the idea of forming a new party in the belief that there was no space for a fourth entity in Brunei’s polity. More importantly, Zaini had recognised that there would be no competing with the PRB’s massive success and he soon returned to its fold.

The question of what the Sultan’s position on Malaysia was at any one time is, of course, central to any discussion of the proposal. His reluctance to share his opinion when invited to do so by the Colonial Office on two occasions in the latter half of 1961 and, indeed, several other times right up until Brunei’s final rejection of the proposal in 1963 make it difficult to judge with any certainty whether the Sultan was in favour of it or not. Even his declaration that it was a very attractive idea in December 1961 could be construed as a cautious endorsement that could still be retracted if the terms were found to be unsatisfactory or if circumstances changed dramatically. This assessment of the Sultan’s position is, in fact, the one that appears to be the most accurate and is thus that which is relied upon throughout this thesis.

The Sultan’s initial reluctance to share his views with the Colonial Office was probably motivated by an innate caution about expressing his opinion before it was fully formed. By refusing to detail his position at that stage, the Sultan bought himself more time to consider the ramifications of the Malaysia proposal and to try to reconcile his assessment of what Brunei’s national interest was with his people’s wishes. In addition, by waiting he could also learn more about what Malaya’s views were on how the new federation would be structured, which would affect the terms that Brunei could expect to be offered.

Circumstances had changed by December, by which time pressure had mounted on the government to express some sort of opinion, largely due to the widespread support the PRB had gained for its position and the agreement between the British and Malayan governments

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that had approved the concept in November. The cautious endorsement that the Sultan offered was clearly another strategy to buy time, being neither acceptance nor rejection, though it did signal that he was prepared to consider the proposal and did not rebuff it outright. By making an announcement, the Sultan reduced some of the pressure he was under and paved the way for a formal assessment of the views of the people of Brunei.

Another strategy used to fend off the importunities of the PRB was the attempt to involve the Party in the workings of the government through the appointments of HM Salleh as State Welfare Officer and Azahari as a nominated member of the Legislative Council. This was clearly a sign that the government believed that the PRB was becoming too entrenched in its role as an opposition party and felt threatened by its success. It also had the useful side effect of making the government appear as though it were welcoming the growth of democracy in the state, which was especially important after the postponement of the District Council elections. The strategy was not, however, initially successful, with Azahari’s participation in the Brunei-Malaysia Commission proving problematic, as has been seen, and Salleh apparently remaining active in the Party.

The Brunei-Malaysia Commission itself was clearly motivated by a desire to allow the people of the Sultanate the chance to express their views on an important question; this is why the commission’s hearings were open to the public and media. Whether the government ever intended to release the commission’s report is difficult to assess, though they had no obligation to do so, since they had never said they would. In addition, the press reports of the commission’s hearings made formally releasing its conclusions obsolete. The failure to release the report may have had everything to do with Marsal’s manipulation of it, which implies that its conclusions were inaccurate. It was most likely the case, however, that the sheer weight of opposition to the Malaysia proposal and the widespread support for the northern Borneo federation idea that were evident at the commission’s hearings motivated this secrecy. The embarrassment of this rejection after the Sultan’s cautious endorsement of the proposal and the need to buy more time to persuade the people that Malaysia was the best
way to secure Brunei’s future, if that was what the government decided, made suppressing
the report very necessary.

The question of whether the Brunei-Malaysia Commission was a valuable exercise is
another issue that is difficult to judge. The widespread opposition to Malaysia that was
already quite evident from the PRB’s increased popularity and the reaction to the proposal in
the media made a formal enquiry into the state of opinion on the subject almost obsolete in
an objective sense. On the other hand, the process of assessing the levels of support for and
opposition to an important question that involved the future of the state itself had an inherent
value of its own that should not be dismissed lightly. In addition, the mere act of consulting
public opinion, whatever the outcome of the enquiry, enhanced the government’s limited
democratic credentials.

The growth in the number of political parties described above was a clear sign of the
progress that political development had made in Brunei, diversification in the number and
scope of parties being an important milestone in the process of politicisation. It also
demonstrated that there was some dissatisfaction with the almost monolithic success of the
PRB, as well as with its leadership structure and policy choices. Most importantly, the
existence of the BNO and the BUP indicates that there was some pro-Malaysia sentiment in
Brunei, though the small size of these parties’ support bases demonstrates just how limited
this was.

**Action in the Legislative Council**

Azahari’s appointment to the Legislative Council, made in January, did not take effect
until April, when the first meeting of the Council for 1962 was held. It is not clear why the
council met so infrequently; the constitution required that it meet just once a year, so
presumably these meetings were held only when pending legislation made them necessary.
When it did meet, the April meeting of the Council appeared to be unusually busy, judging
from the uncommonly extensive coverage it garnered in *The Borneo Bulletin*. Much of this
activity arose from resolutions proposed by Azahari, including motions concerning
employment for Malay school leavers, the establishment of a more nationalist education system, and the provision of more scholarships for vocational training. The most significant of the resolutions that he proposed requested that the Brunei government “acknowledge the historical sovereignty of the Sultan of Brunei over the whole of the British Borneo territories”. None of these resolutions was passed, with the latter motion winning only six supporters, whilst 17 voted against it.

The Borneo Bulletin also reported on another of the issues discussed at the same meeting:

The acting Mentri Besar, Dato Setia Marsal bin Maun, said that, in his opinion, the question of Malaysia could not be discussed in the Legislative Council...

The acting Mentri Besar pointed out that it was up to the Sultan to accept or reject the proposed Malaysia plan.

The Sultan had recently told White that it was his government that would make the decision on Malaysia, directly contradicting Marsal’s assertion.

A fortnight after his first appearance in the Legislative Council, Azahari announced to The Borneo Bulletin that he intended to resign his seat:

The party leader told The Bulletin this week that he felt that it was not right that he should accept $400 and other expenses as a Legislative Council member when it was obvious that his presence in the Chamber could be of no possible assistance to the people of Brunei.

“I am a Nationalist,” said Inche Azahari. “I am not a Socialist or a Communist. I work only for the national aspirations of the people of Brunei. This is my life.

“I am downhearted and despondent that my work as a Nationalist – for the benefit of the people of Brunei – appears to be of no avail under the present system prevailing in Brunei.”...

“In fact,” he declared, “I am so disillusioned that I feel I must exile myself from Brunei and continue my work abroad.”

White reported that Azahari’s decision to resign from the Council was really motivated by the government’s decision to call in the extensive debts he had incurred in the course of his business activities. These debts apparently amounted to as much as $150,000 and had accumulated largely because of Azahari’s tendency to use threats of political trouble to secure further loans when required. White linked the government’s decision to foreclose on the debt to a meeting that had been arranged between Azahari and the Tunku, in an attempt

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83 DO 187/33, Item 75, Letter to CG Eastwood (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 19 April, 1962, para. 4.
to win the former’s public support for Malaysia. In his interview with The Borneo Bulletin, Azahari himself had indirectly confirmed that his resignation was caused by his financial position:

Inche Azahari declared that the government was bringing “heavy pressure” to bear on him in several ways and that “things are becomingly [sic] increasingly more difficult.” He criticised the government’s ‘apathy [sic] towards local business enterprises.” He said that contracts were invariably awarded to overseas firms and that the locals were not being given a fair deal.85

The Brunei government had, in the meantime, been making some progress towards a decision on Malaysia. Firstly, a booklet discussing the merits of the proposal, in the form of a list of questions and answers, was disseminated, though it is not clear when this occurred; it was most likely in the weeks before the hearings of the Brunei-Malaysia Commission commenced. Then the Sultan called a meeting of his advisory council to vote on the Malaysia proposal in late March, with 14 of the 17 members of this committee approving the concept in principle. One of the three who voted against it was the acting Mentri Besar, Marsal, who was apparently embroiled in an argument with Pengiran Ali over the report of the Malaysia commission at this time. White reported that Marsal also “delivered himself of some scathing remarks about the Malayan officers (all of which, needless to say, were passed on)”, presumably damaging his personal relationships with the officers in question.86

Shortly after this vote was taken, the rift between Marsal and Pengiran Ali was healed through the good offices of Pengiran Yusuf and Marsal and one of his colleagues changed their votes, leaving only the Pehin Jawatan Dalam opposed to Malaysia; the Pehin was likely genuinely opposed to the concept, since his brother was a high-ranking member of the PRB. The Attorney General attempted to persuade Azahari towards approval of Malaysia, with some success at first because of the lack of support in Sarawak and North Borneo political circles for the PRB’s aspirations for northern Borneo. However, Marsal’s brief flirtation with

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85 Ibid., p. 9; TNA, CO 1030/933, Item 6, Letter to the Deputy Commissioner- General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 7 May, 1962, para. 2; CO 1030/1038, Item 84, “Political Situation – Brunei”, Enclosure to Letter to the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 15 August, 1962, pp. 3-4.
86 TNA, DO 187/53, Item 72, Letter to CG Eastwood (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 14 April, 1962, paras. 2-3; Item 62, Letter to the Deputy Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 6 March, 1962, p. 1; Item 73, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 12, 18 April, 1962, para. 1.
open opposition to Malaysia, in the course of which he may have offered Azahari the boon of his support for the PRB’s position, as well as the likelihood that the Party would be very unwilling to alter its position, meant that such an about-face would barely be worth the effort required.  

British officials in the area and the Malayan Attorney General had been advocating a conciliatory meeting between Azahari and the Tunku for some time, in an endeavour to woo the former into public support for the Malaysia concept. The Tunku was finally persuaded to accede to this suggestion in early April, a meeting that received differing interpretations from each participant: the Tunku informed Tory, Britain’s High Commissioner to Malaya, that Azahari was “keen on Malaysia” and that he “realised he was losing influence in Brunei and obviously did not want ‘to miss the bus’”. Azahari’s account of the same meeting to the Attorney General was somewhat different:  

[Azahari] suggested convening a three territories all-native meeting in Brunei to consider merging under the Sultan and entering Malaysia as one unit. [The] Tunku apparently agreed to allow him six weeks to achieve this pie in the sky project, as for security reasons he prefers that Brunei should not announce [its] decision [on Malaysia] until [the] Cobbold report is presented.

The lack of any press coverage of such a conference suggests that Azahari failed to garner any interest in the idea at all in North Borneo and Sarawak and he instead turned to the bully pulpit he had been granted in the Legislative Council to pursue his irredentist dreams.

Little progress was made on the Malaysia issue in April or May because the Sultan and several of his advisors had travelled to Mecca at the beginning of May, returning to Brunei at the end of the month. There was some talk of the establishment of a working party to negotiate with the Malayan government on possible terms for Brunei’s entry around this time, with Neil Lawson, who had advised the Sultan and his ministers during the protracted gestation of the constitution, again providing legal guidance. In the event, an unofficial

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87 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 72, Letter to CG Eastwood (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 14 April, 1962, paras. 4-5. “Pehin Jawatan Dalam” is the title of a high-ranking mentri; the Pehin’s name in full was Pehin Jawatan Dalam Haji Awang Mohd. Noor bin Pehin Orang Kaya Laksamana Haji Awang Abd. Razak. DE Brown, 1970, Brunei: The Structure and History of a Bornean Malay Sultanate, Muzium Brunei, Brunei Town, p. 204; Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, Brunei Darussalam: The Road to Independence, Brunei History Centre, Bandar Seri Begawan, 1998, p. 238.
88 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 68, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 102, 12 April, 1962, para. 1.
89 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 73, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 12, 18 April, 1962, para. 1.
delegation led by the Pengiran Pemancha went to Kuala Lumpur in early July to clarify what Brunei’s position might be in Malaysia.90

The Brunei government had been trying to clarify what Malaya’s expectations of the Sultanate’s position would be for some weeks, by means of obtaining a copy of the Cobbold Report. In pursuit of this objective, the Sultan had said something that was very significant:

[White] emphasised the difference of Brunei’s position to that of Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo, in that Brunei shared not only religious, cultural and language interests with the Malay States, but also the Sultanate form of Government. He [the Sultan] said that none of these factors was of importance compared to the welfare of Brunei and its people, and the eventual decision would be taken in the light of the State’s welfare.91

This statement clearly demonstrates what the Sultan’s primary concern was in considering Brunei’s future.

In mid-July, an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Council unanimously approved a draft resolution and speech from the throne for the Legislative Council meeting to be held on 18 July that supported Malaysia in principle and sanctioned negotiations with the Malayan and British governments on the terms of the proposed federation. The Sultan’s message to the council, read by Marsal, contained some very interesting passages:

In considering the question of Malaysia, it must be understood that my first consideration is whether this plan will increase the prosperity of the ra’ayat as a whole, and if this plan will also perpetuate peace in our state. After consideration of the various aspects affecting Brunei which I have mentioned above, and after I had received the advice of my senior advisors, I would now state that, by the Grace of Allah, the Federation of Malaysia plan should confer the greatest benefits and advantages that will enrich my country and my people, and with the advice and consent of my Executive Council, I have much pleasure in announcing to the members of the Legislative Council so that it will be known to all my people, that in my view, it is possible for me to accept the Federation of Malaysia plan in principle. . .

It is also proper for me to state that with the acceptance of Malaysia in principle, it does not necessarily mean that it is final. The object of this pronouncement is to enable the Government to seek the conditions of merger that will bring advantages and additional benefits to this country. If the conditions are reasonable and beneficial, as well as advantageous to the people, it is certain that such conditions will guide use [sic] in final participation in the Malaysia plan. But, if on the other hand, agreement cannot be reached on certain important conditions affecting matters

90 TNA, DO 187/53, Item 83, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 17 May, 1962, para. 3; The Borneo Bulletin, “Brunei Group Ends K.L. Talks: Tengku: From my previous talks with the Sultan of Brunei, I got the impression that he was happy over the formation of Malaysia. I take it that they have now accepted it.”, 14 July, 1962, p. 1.
91 TNA, CO 1030/1017, Item 182, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 12 June, 1962, para. 4.
of benefit and advantage to the people and the state, it is probable that Brunei will do not participate in the Malaysia plan.\textsuperscript{92}

The Legislative Council passed the resolution by 24 votes to four, with one abstention.\textsuperscript{93}

The motivation behind the timing of this move has not received much attention in the literature. Hussainmiya has asserted that the Sultan was “under considerable pressure from both the Colonial Office and the British officials in Brunei to start immediate formal talks”, though White’s reports to the Colonial Office do not reflect this statement. Rather, the impression these documents give is that White attempted to persuade the Sultan of the suitability of the Malaysia concept for Brunei without putting undue pressure on him; indeed, White appeared to believe that he had very little chance of influencing the Sultan one way or the other. It is more likely that a combination of domestic political pressure and the acquisition of more data on Brunei’s potential position in Malaysia, through the recent talks with Kuala Lumpur and the publication of parts of the Cobbold Report, caused the government to take this step of declaring its intention to commence negotiations with Malaya.\textsuperscript{94}

The initial public reaction to the Sultan’s message was muted, in White’s estimation because of the imminence of the District Council elections and the distraction caused by National Language Month.\textsuperscript{95} The PRB’s comment was that “[e]ven if the Brunei Government had given consent for Brunei to join Malaysia, it was the party’s duty to continue fighting and to prolong the struggle against colonialism”, while the BNO described it as “one of the wisest moves in the history of Brunei”.\textsuperscript{96} There were, however, some who disagreed with the Sultan’s views, to the extent that Pengiran Yusuf broadcast a warning to the nation over Radio Brunei that there was “a small section of the population [that] was...


\textsuperscript{94} Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 267; TNA, DO 169/258, Item 60, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 17 July, 1962, para. 2.

\textsuperscript{95} TNA, DO 169/258, Item 63, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 24 July, 1962, para. 5. National Language Month was a Government-led celebration of the use of \textit{Bahasa Melayu} in Brunei, intended to promote loyalty to the state by encouraging non-Malays to use the language as an expression of their love for their country. The Borneo Bulletin, “Express Loyalty By Using Malay: Language-month appeal to non-Malays”, 7 July, 1962, p. 11.

attempting to incite feeling against the Sultan” by spreading rumours that “the acceptance of Malaysia meant the abolition of the government of the state”.

More importantly, the culprits “had also dared to say that, if Brunei joined Malaysia, it was preferable not to have a Sultan”.

Two questions arise from Azahari’s short stint as a Legislative Councillor. The first concerns his reasons for introducing a resolution in the council calling for the Brunei government to acknowledge the historical sovereignty of the sultans of Brunei over Sarawak and North Borneo. It would have been no surprise that he had done so, since the reunification of the three territories was one of the central tenets of PRB policy. This was probably the main reason that he raised the question in the first place, to use his new position to his party’s advantage by advancing its agenda in the premier legislative body of the state. Another factor was the progress that had been made on the Malaysia concept in the ten months since it was first proposed, which increased the urgency of pursuing the PRB’s rival vision for the future of the Borneo territories: every person who was won over to Malaysia was one less supporter for the northern Borneo federation.

The second question concerns why Azahari chose to resign from the Council. Though, as a nominated member, he served at the Sultan’s pleasure and there was no guarantee that he would retain his seat after the council was prorogued in mid-July for the District Council elections, he still had every reason to hold onto this important position that gifted him both official status and a fine platform for the service of his party. The reason that Azahari himself gave for his resignation, that the prevailing system made his attempts to implement the PRB’s policies impossible, was the primary factor, since the composition of the council at that time meant that it was unlikely that Azahari would receive much support on those policies that were most important to his party, as the failure of all of his resolutions attests.

98 Ibid.
Another motivating factor was Azahari’s tendency to become despondent, as he described it to *The Borneo Bulletin*, when things failed to go his way, which usually resulted in a resignation from the chairmanship of the PRB. Contributing to his frustration in this instance, apart from the utter failure of his Legislative Council resolutions, was the sudden financial pressure he had been placed under and the continuing silence from the government on the results of the Brunei-Malaysia Commission. This combination of failure and pressure created the sense of despondency that Azahari referred to and temporarily weighed his spirits down to the point where he spent some weeks away from Brunei, presumably to replenish his stores of optimism.

Mentioned briefly above was Marsal’s assertion that it was for the Sultan to decide Brunei’s position on Malaysia and the ruler’s contradiction of this statement. It was stated in Chapter III that the sultan was head of both state and government under the constitution, which suggests that Marsal’s assertion was more accurate, though the fact that the Sultan had reduced his role in day-to-day administration since the Officers’ Affair lends some weight to his statement that his government would make the decision on the Malaysia question. However, the gravity of the issue concerned suggests that the Sultan would be the one making the final decision, though he would, undoubtedly, take the views of his close advisors and the opinion of his people into consideration.

The meeting that took place between the Tunku and Azahari in April is interesting primarily because it emphasises the fact that the Malayan government had, up until that point, chosen not to woo the PRB as it had the other political parties in the Borneo territories. As the rather derogatory remarks that the Tunku made during the Officers’ Affair had demonstrated, the Prime Minister did not hold the Party in high regard, in spite of its popularity and the absence of any real competition for it in Brunei. The reason behind this position was probably the government structure in the Sultanate that kept the PRB in opposition with its popularity being the only weapon it could legally use against the administration. Kuala Lumpur thus focussed its campaign promoting Malaysia on persuading the Sultan and his government of the concept’s merits.
The Legislative Council resolution that approved Malaysia in principle in July was a significant moment because it entrenched both the PRB and the government in their differing positions on the proposal. For the Party, the resolution was a clear sign that the government was not heeding its entreaties to listen to the voice of the people on this issue, leading it further into strident opposition in an effort to force the administration to listen. For the government, on the other hand, the resolution and the message from the Sultan that accompanied it were public affirmations of the decision it had taken to see what terms Malaya might offer for Brunei’s entry to the new federation, though it is clear from the Sultan’s message that the government still reserved the right to refuse Kuala Lumpur’s invitation should these terms prove to be unacceptable.

The Brunei Government’s Campaign for the Return of Limbang

The story of the seizure of Limbang by Sarawak in 1890 was recounted in Chapter II. The district also figured twice in Chapter III, firstly in 1941 when Sarawak and Brunei conducted some negotiations concerning a possible financial settlement of the issue and secondly when, shortly after his accession to the throne, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III laid claim to both Limbang and Labuan in an interview with The Straits Times in September 1951. These kinds of incidents clearly indicate that the annexation of Limbang rankled in Brunei long after it had occurred.

This sense of loss was strong enough in December 1960 for a resolution to be approved by the Legislative Council calling for the government to investigate the circumstances under which Limbang was lost and, if the situation warranted, to negotiate with Sarawak for its return. Though this provoked a flurry of letters to The Borneo Bulletin, both favouring and opposing the idea, there was no other sign of activity on the issue in Brunei until February 1962, presumably because of the administrative problems that the government suffered in 1961. By contrast, the resolution provoked a good deal of action in London and Kuching,
with officials in both cities searching out documents pertaining to the original annexation and legal officers giving opinions on the issue.99

The Brunei government’s first action on the resolution was taken in February 1962, when the State Secretary asked White to request copies of relevant documents from the Colonial Office. London decided to comply with this request some time before the revolt occurred in December 1962, providing correspondence between the governments of Brunei and Britain in the early 1890s and documents relating to the financial settlement during the 1940s. The Brunei government’s request was, perhaps not coincidentally, shortly followed by the receipt of a petition in Kuching addressed to the Governor pleading for the return of Limbang to Brunei, signed by 21 people who claimed to “represent our villages as well as ourselves and . . . the majority of the sons of the soil”, which, it was claimed, added up to a total of 8,000 people.100

The Sarawak government did not respond to the petition until early May, when it released a statement saying that there were no grounds for the alteration of Limbang’s status and that it did not accept that a majority of the population desired such a change. In contrast, the Sultan, who had also received a copy of the petition, sent a cautiously encouraging reply; he, of course, was all in favour of returning Limbang to Brunei, though he had to be careful not to disturb the even tenor of Brunei’s relations with Sarawak and Britain, particularly with the looming decision on Malaysia still to be made. The pro-Brun ei movement followed this petition with an appeal to the Prime Ministers of Malaya and Singapore “to support ‘the people’s demand’ for the return of Limbang” in June, sending copies of its missive to Donald Stephens in his capacity as chairman of the MSCC, Lord Cobbold, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, White, and the Mentri Besar.101


100 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 34, Petition from the Inhabitants of Limbang to the Governor of Sarawak to be allowed to return to the Government of Brunei, 27 February, 1962, p. 2; Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 278; CO 1030/1296, Item 108, “Annexation of the Limbang District”, Memorandum by unknown author, c. January 1963, para. 7; Item 45, Draft Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from HJ Nield (CO), 5 July, 1962, Appendices.

The pro-Brunei movement also turned to the time-honoured tactic of a demonstration, attracting an estimated 3,000 people to the courthouse in Limbang in mid-May to support its campaign. Four petitions were presented to Sarawak’s Chief Secretary and a call made for a plebiscite to be conducted on the question of Limbang’s future. The Sarawak government’s only response was to deny that so many people had attended the demonstration, asserting instead that there had only been between 200 and 300 protesters. These public moves naturally attracted more letters to The Borneo Bulletin, there being 22 letters directly addressing the Limbang issue published in the newspaper in 1961 and 1962, including the four already mentioned above, with 12 favouring the pro-Brunei movement and 10 opposing it.102

It may be noticeable that there has been no mention in this account of any public support for the pro-Brunei movement from the Brunei government. The reason for this apparent lack of support for a cause so close to their hearts is the same as that given above for the caution with which the Sultan replied to the petition of February: Brunei needed to remain on good terms with both Sarawak and Britain, and a formal, public claim to Limbang would certainly not be conducive to this. This did not, however, prevent Brunei from pursuing its claim in private, probably in the hope of promoting its chances of success through this means.

These behind the scenes moves included an approach to the British government through the High Commissioner that was framed as “a plea on [the Sultan’s] behalf” for the return of Limbang to Brunei.103 Neil Lawson, legal advisor to the Brunei government, was also asked to approach the Colonial Office in October and he argued the Sultanate’s case very ably. Finally, in November the Sultan wrote personally to Duncan Sandys, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, requesting that he see White and Lawson to “discuss the subject of the return of Limbang”.104 None of these moves met with any success, largely because Sarawak

103 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 56, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal no. 18, 28 August, 1962, para. 3.
104 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 90, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Sultan of Brunei (Translation), 22 November, 1962, p. 1; Item 79, Letter to JD Higham (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 1 October, 1962, para. 1; Item 80, Note on Brunei and Malaysia, 9 October, 1962, paras. 4 & 6.
was adamantly opposed to the idea of returning the district on the grounds that the majority of the population wished to remain under Sarawak’s jurisdiction.

The Colonial Office responded to the Sultan’s letter of November by asking the governors of North Borneo and Sarawak on 6 December for their views on potential reactions in the two colonies should Britain agree to return Limbang to Brunei. The governors, Sir William Goode in Jesselton and Sir Alexander Waddell in Kuching, did not reply before the revolt began and, consequently, their views were heavily coloured by recent events. Goode was the first to respond, on 28 December:

Immediately before the revolt I was about to reply to your telegram No. 513 that any overt move towards the return of Limbang to Brunei would have serious repercussions here which are [not] outweighed by any advantages to be gained in Brunei. This is still my view.

2. Main objections are:-
   (a) Encouragement of the Philippine claim;
   (b) Already the intrigue in Labuan and Sipitang and two small areas near Jesselton for the return to Brunei (? is regarded omitted) with apprehension by majority of the people that it would succeed;
   (c) Loss of confidence in established order with possible undermining of the present general acceptance of Malaysia;
   (d) any [sic] concession now will be a victory for Partai Rakyat and the revolt.105

Waddell’s reply swiftly followed on 31 December, spread across two telegrams. The first observed that

[e]ven the suggestion that we were now seriously [sic] considering handing over Limbang to Brunei would have [a] catastrophic effect on the majority of the population [of the district] who have not supported the rebels and are now actively co-operating with the Government in tracking them down. It would be tantamount to condoning the revolt and underwriting violence. It would certainly have a tonic effect on the remaining rebels.106

Waddell’s second telegram addressed the reaction of the remainder of the state:

Reaction in remainder of Sarawak would be strongly adverse. Apart from loss of territory and possible consequential effects upon Sarawak’s terms of entry into Malaysia, the people generally would regard it as a surrender to violence and the beginnings of a re-assertion of Brunei domination over Borneo territories (Azahari’s aim in fact). It certainly ought not to be done without the consent of the Legislature which would not in my estimation be forthcoming. It would make continued administration of Lawas by Sarawak extremely difficult and would give Brunei a common frontier with Indonesia.107

105 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 103, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, Secret No. 361, 28 December, 1962, paras. 1–2; Item 93, Telegram to the Governors of Sarawak and North Borneo from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Secret nos. 448 and 513, 6 December, 1962, para. 3.
106 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 104, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, Secret No. C.323, 31 December, 1962, para. 1.
107 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 105, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, Secret No. C.326, 31 December, 1962, para. 1.
In his first telegram, Waddell gave the impression that only the Malays and Kedayans of Limbang supported the pro-Brunei movement, an appraisal that the Resident of the Fifth Division had already contradicted just before the rebellion:

[Richard] Morris confirmed my doubts about the assessment hitherto accepted in Kuching that there is not much support in Limbang for the Sultan’s claim. This has always seemed to me unlikely, considering the great material benefits now enjoyed by the people of Brunei – absence of taxation, free education, old age pensions etc. After all, the town of Limbang is only a very few miles from the Brunei frontier and these material attractions are therefore very much under the noses of the people in Limbang. Morris believes that a majority in Limbang district – not only Malays – is in favour of return to Brunei, but he is having this estimate checked carefully and will be reporting further as soon as possible. The position is different in Lawas, where there is a larger non-Malay proportion in the population.108

Lawas is the other major river of the Fifth Division, located on the east side of Brunei’s Temburong District; it represented one of the main stumbling blocks to the Sultanate’s claim to Limbang: were the latter to be returned to Brunei, Lawas would be left dangling alone and separated from the rest of Sarawak.

The revolt destroyed the pro-Brunei movement’s already slim chances of success, since a government that could not command the confidence of its own people clearly could not expect to be given control over new lands. Brunei could not negotiate from this position of weakness, a reality that was reflected in the absence of the Limbang issue from the Sultanate’s discussions with Malaya in 1963. Once Brunei opted to stay out of Malaysia, the government raised the question with Britain again, with a letter from the Sultan to Sandys suggesting that discussions on the point would be helpful before sovereignty over Limbang was transferred to the new federation.109 It does not appear that any such talks were held, and the Limbang issue became dormant once more.

The fundamental question that arises from this campaign for the return of Limbang is why the loss of this one river was felt so deeply as to last for over a century. Most obviously, Limbang bifurcated the Sultanate, making the administration and development of the

108 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 95, Extract from Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from Sir John Martin (CO), 5 December, 1962; Item 104, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, Secret No. C.323, 31 December, 1962, para. 1.
Temburong district from Brunei Town very difficult and creating persistent transportation and immigration problems. In addition, as McArthur had observed in 1904, the Limbang River was the true river of Brunei Town and the resources of Limbang comprised much of Brunei’s wealth, which contributed greatly to the impoverishment of the Sultanate before the oil boom of the 1950s.\(^\text{110}\) The way that the district was lost was another factor, the seizure being so sudden, unexpected, and upsetting that it left an open wound that could not be healed, especially when Brunei refused to accept that Limbang was lost.

The second point that develops from the above discussion is the curious coincidence of timing between the activities of the pro-Brunei movement and the Brunei government’s campaign for the return of Limbang. There is no evidence that the former acted at the latter’s instigation, simply a strong suspicion that they did. The fact that the pro-Brunei movement only appeared after the Brunei government had begun to take action on the Legislative Council resolution, in February 1962, rather than beginning its activities after the motion had been passed in December 1960, is certainly suggestive. So, too, is its disappearance from public view during Brunei’s Malaysia negotiations with Kuala Lumpur in the first half of 1963, though this was probably motivated more by the need to keep a low profile after the rebellion. Finally, the absence of the really impassioned agitation that might have been expected once it became clear that Limbang would become part of Malaysia, combined with the petering out of the Brunei government’s campaign at around the same time, does lead one to infer a certain synchronicity between the two.

Another question that arises is why the Brunei government chose to take such a muted approach to its campaign, especially considering its depth of feeling on the issue. Its reluctance to take its case to any of the legal forums open to it, such as the International Court of Justice, leads one to suspect that it had been advised that its legal claim was relatively weak. The Brunei government had excellent political reasons for this approach as well, most obviously the need to maintain good relations with both Sarawak and Britain, as has already been mentioned. In addition, the Malaysia proposal created a delicate balance

that needed to be preserved if the new federation was to have any chance of a trouble-free birth. For example, a referendum could not be held on the Limbang issue without causing some awkward questions about why a plebiscite could not also occur throughout Sarawak and North Borneo on the colonies’ participation in Malaysia. Also, the Brunei government was well aware that an aggressive campaign for the return of Limbang would breed a sense of resentment towards the Sultanate that would inevitably affect the harmony of the new federation adversely, which would be a very important consideration for Brunei if it participated in Malaysia.

The last issue that will be discussed here is the question of why Britain chose not to accede to Brunei’s request for the return of Limbang. Its primary concern, quite properly, was its perception that the majority of the people of the district preferred to remain part of Sarawak. The adamant opposition of the Sarawak government also played a role, as London was very reluctant to over-rule the advice of local officials without good cause. The potential repercussions in North Borneo were another deterrent, as it was feared that the Philippines’ claim to the colony might be artificially strengthened and certain pockets of pro-Brunei feeling could also be encouraged if Limbang were returned to the Sultanate. Finally, such a change could threaten the integrity of Malaysia by creating friction between the Bornean states, an extremely undesirable state of affairs in any new country.

The Latter Months of 1962

Once the Brunei government had announced its intention to commence negotiations with Malaya on the Sultanate’s entry into Malaysia, it was imperative that Brunei decide what its terms would be. A committee composed of senior civil servants was established at the end of August to examine the constitutional, administrative, and legal implications of the new federation for Brunei and to make appropriate recommendations. A second committee, or perhaps an expanded version of the first, met in September to decide the terms that Brunei would seek. There is some ambiguity in the literature on these committees; Hussainmiya, referring to documents in the Brunei National Archives, conflates the work of the two
committees, while White does not mention the first. The dates that Hussainmiya cites for his committee and the activities that White ascribes to the second, however, indicate that there were two separate bodies.\textsuperscript{111}

This second committee initially agreed to request terms similar to those of Sarawak and North Borneo, with some differences: the 1959 constitution would remain in force, the privileges of Brunei’s indigenous people could not be altered without the state’s permission, the Sultan would receive the same rights as those of the Malayan sultans, and voting rights would be restricted to subjects of the sultan rather than including citizens of the Federation. Once this point had been reached, however, it was suddenly decided to abandon these proposals in favour of “some kind of closer association” instead of a structure more suited to a federation.\textsuperscript{112} Behind this abrupt change, White reported, was a “strong element in the Committee opposed to any surrender of Brunei’s sovereignty”, which “the Sultan was inclined to support”.\textsuperscript{113}

White summarised the committee’s new proposals thus:

(a) Sultan joins rulers conference without option of becoming head of state.
(b) Brunei has two nominated members of the Senate but protract [sic, protection?] in parliament.
(c) Brunei joins certain federation boards, finance, development, etc.
(d) New federation guarantees position of Sultan and present constitution, manages external affairs, with some limitation and defence subject to Brunei’s control of her regiment which will serve only in the State, and will grant federal citizenship to legal residents of the State who are not subjects of the Sultan.
(e) Brunei will contribute to cost[s] of Federation’s in these respects and also to cost of civil servants needed.\textsuperscript{114}

White suspected that the Sultan was behind this about-face, though Lawson had persuaded the committee to reserve the ruler’s position on these proposals, creating an escape route

\textsuperscript{111} Hussainmiya, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 272-3; TNA, DO 187/33, Item 99, Letter to CG Eastwood (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/504/62(V), 19 September, 1962; Item 93, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch no. 19, 25 September, 1962, paras. 1 & 3.

\textsuperscript{112} TNA, DO 187/33, Item 99, Letter to CG Eastwood (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/504/62(V), 19 September, 1962, pp. 1-2; Item 93, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch no. 19, 25 September, 1962, paras. 1 & 3.

\textsuperscript{113} TNA, DO 187/33, Item 93, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch no. 19, 25 September, 1962, para. 1.

\textsuperscript{114} TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 60, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal no. 26, 22 September, 1962, para. 2. The Brunei Malay Regiment had been established in May 1961 and spent much of 1962 training in Malaya.
should Malaya, as the Sultan, White, Lawson, and Abdul Aziz Zain all expected, reject these proposals.\footnote{115}{TNA, DO 187/33, Item 93, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch no. 19, 25 September, 1962, paras. 4–6.} 

The second round of exploratory discussions with Malaya began on 25 September in Kuala Lumpur, with the Brunei delegation, led by Marsal, quickly finding that the Federation found its terms “unacceptable”.\footnote{116}{TNA, DO 169/258, Item 73, Telegram to the CRO from the Acting High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 727, 29 September, 1962, para. 2; *The Straits Times*, “Brunei team arrives for ‘final talks’”, 26 September, 1962, p. 6. The delegation comprised Marsal, Pengiran Ali, Pengiran Yusuf, Jamil Umar, Pengiran Kerna Indra Haji Mohamed, the Controller of Communications, and legal advisers Lawson and Abdul Aziz Zain.} Indeed, according to White, it was only due to Lawson’s conciliatory efforts that the talks extended beyond their first hour, and Lawson himself described their overall outcome in these terms: “In effect, the negotiations had been adjourned without agreement and would fail completely if the Federation did not show a more understanding approach”.\footnote{117}{TNA, DO 187/33, Item 103, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch no. Personal 21, 2 October, 1962, para. 2.} The primary effect of this round of negotiations was, in fact, to make the Bruneian members of the delegation “angry and resentful” and resulted in a general call amongst the Sultan’s Advisory Committee for the utter rejection of Malaysia.\footnote{118}{TNA, DO 187/33, Item 107, Letter for Lord Selkirk by RE Radford, 3 December, 1962, para. 3; Item 103, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch no. Personal 21, 2 October, 1962, paras. 4-5.} 

The question is, of course, why the Brunei government decided to make proposals that were so different from Malaya’s conception of the new federation. White reported that Marsal, described by the Malayans as “violently opposed to Malaysia in principle”, was the “moving spirit behind their formulation”; the Sultan had wanted to see how Kuala Lumpur would react to Marsal’s ideas.\footnote{119}{TNA, DO 187/33, Item 108, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 755, 8 October, 1962, para. 1; DO 169/259; Item 84, “Brunei’s Membership of Malaysia”, Note by unknown author, c. October 1962, para. 8.} The Malayans believed that this was “simply an opening gambit designed to strengthen [the Sultan’s] hand in negotiations”.\footnote{120}{TNA, DO 169/259, Item 74A, Extract from Report of the Greater Malaysia (62) 8th Meeting, 2 October, 1962, Sub-Para. (d).} Lawson, on the other hand, believed that the Brunei government genuinely preferred a closer association: 

He was therefore startled to find, during his first discussions on arrival in Brunei, that they had not at all appreciated that joining Malaysia meant joining a highly centralized federation in which the individual states were left with relatively minor control of their affairs.\footnote{121}{TNA, DO 187/33, Item 107, Note for Lord Selkirk by RE Radford, 3 December, 1962, para. 2.}
Supporting Lawson’s belief is the fact that the Sultan and the Bruneian members of the delegation who had gone to Kuala Lumpur all asserted that Malaya had never told them that the Sultanate would lose its sovereignty upon entering Malaysia.\footnote{122 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 103, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch no. Personal 21, 2 October, 1962, para. 6.}

The aftermath of this disastrous round of exploratory talks saw the Advisory Council stridently demanding that Brunei summarily reject Malaysia in favour of continued British protection, though there was some support for the idea of immediate independence. The Sultan, however, decided to heed Lawson’s advice to reserve his position and, in effect, to let the situation calm down before taking any definite decision on the matter. Lawson also persuaded the Sultan to send observers to the IGC, though they were given strict instructions to neither sign any documents nor commit Brunei in any way, reflecting the government’s newly unfavourable view of the concept. A further sign that Brunei was keeping its options open was the Sultan’s invitation to Lawson to return to the Sultanate in December, perhaps for a renewal of negotiations.\footnote{123 Ibid., paras. 5-6; Item 107, Note for Lord Selkirk by RE Radford, 3 December, 1962, para. 7.}

These developments naturally led to a blizzard of activity in British circles, discussing what to do to ensure that Brunei would eventually enter Malaysia and what the consequences might be if it did not.\footnote{124 See, for example, TNA, DO 169/259, Item 77A, Letter to Sir John Martin (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 8 October, 1962 and DO 169/259, Item 88, Enclosure to Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from JD Higham (CO), 31 October, 1962.} There was, of course, little that could be done: the High Commissioner could not compel the Brunei government to act on his advice and, in any case, it would be pointless to push the Sultanate into a federation it did not want. Consequently, it was decided to take advantage of a suggestion made by the Sultan in September and considered for some weeks, that White should return to Britain to discuss the Limbang issue with the Colonial Office. This opportunity was seen by the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, George Petty-Fitzmaurice, Marquess of Lansdowne, as a way “to keep the Sultan
guessing” about Britain’s intentions; White was recalled to London both for personal leave and to discuss the progress of the Malaysia proposal in Brunei in mid-November.\textsuperscript{125}

While these events had been occurring outside the public eye, the SUPP had decided to put its case to the United Nations’ Special Committee on Decolonisation in an effort to circumvent the formation of Malaysia.\textsuperscript{126} To maximise its chances of success, the SUPP sought support for its appeal from the other two remaining anti-Malaysia parties, the PRB and the United National Pasok Momogun Organisation of North Borneo. The chairmen of the three parties, Azahari, Ong Kee Hui of the SUPP, and GS Sundang of the Pasok Momogun, signed a memorandum calling for the following actions:

1. The United Nations Organization should, in pursuance to its declaration and resolution, intervene in the proposed transfer of sovereignty in Sarawak and Sabah on the ground that such a transfer is a denial to the peoples in these territories of their right to complete independence.
2. Alternatively that a plebiscite organised and conducted by the United Nations Organization be held before such transfer of sovereignty.
3. In accordance with the peoples [sic] freely expressed will and desire and our belief, a federation or Union of the three Borneo territories viz Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei be brought about with His Highness the Sultan of Brunei as the Constitutional Head of such Federation or Union.\textsuperscript{127}

The Committee of Seventeen granted a hearing to the petitioners less than a week before its session was due to finish on 19 September, forcing this temporary coalition to decline this offer and request a hearing at the next session of the committee, then expected to be held at the end of December.\textsuperscript{128}

This anti-Malaysia alliance was significantly weakened by a split in the Pasok Momogun, which resulted in Sundang’s decision to sign this memorandum being publicly repudiated by his party. The Pasok Momogun’s opposition to the Malaysia proposal began to disappear around this time, to the extent that representatives of the party signed a memorandum submitted to the IGC by all of North Borneo’s political parties that outlined North Borneo’s

\textsuperscript{125} TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 86, Note by EM West for WIJ Wallace, 30 October, 1962, para. 3; Item 57, Letter to CG Eastwood (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 12 September, 1962, para. 2; DO 187/33, Item 125, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, Personal No. 161, 4 November, 1962, para. 1.

\textsuperscript{126} The full name of this committee is the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. At the time of these events, it was also known as the Committee of Seventeen, though its membership was expanded in December 1962 so that it was then known as the Committee of Twenty-Four.

\textsuperscript{127} Zaini, op. cit., p. 172; Ong Kee Hui, Footprints in Sarawak: Memoirs of Tan Sri Datuk (Dr) Ong Kee Hui 1914 to 1963, Volume 1, Research and Resource Centre, Kuching, 1998, pp. 585-6. The Pasok Momogun had been formed in September 1961 in opposition to the UNKO, vying for support from the same Kadazan communities that Stephens’ party relied upon.

\textsuperscript{128} TNA, CO 1030/1035, Item 72, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Personal No. 120, 14 September, 1962, para. 2; Zaini, op. cit., p. 173.
terms for joining the new federation, and then the Pasok Momogun applied to join the pro-
Malaysia Sabah Alliance in October. Finally, on 27 October, Sundang officially withdrew
his support for the UN memorandum, explaining his party’s sudden change of heart by
saying that they had been “left standing in the cold”, without any support from the other
parties in the colony. 129

The SUPP suffered its own internal difficulties, with the moderate faction of the party
engineering a showdown with the leftists over the SUPP’s anti-Malaysia stand and its
communist links. This move had the potential to isolate the PRB completely on the question
of the new federation, which could almost fatally weaken its case at the UN. This situation
did not eventuate, however, because the moderates’ resolutions were easily defeated, the
leftist faction having greater support amongst the grassroots of the party. 130 These events left
the PRB and the SUPP united behind their memorandum to the UN, without support from
North Borneo and waiting for the Committee of Seventeen to reconvene sometime in
December.

Despite its strident anti-Malaysia views, the PRB had been keeping its options open by
maintaining a sporadic dialogue on the federation issue with the Malayan government, as
demonstrated above by Azahari’s meeting with the Tunku in April. Viewed in its entirety,
this dialogue was clearly motivated, on the PRB’s part, by a desire to have a fallback plan
should circumstances change so much that a tactical shift towards support for Malaysia
became necessary. This interpretation is supported by the cancellation of mooted talks
between the Party and the UMNO in late September, which was motivated, in the Malayans’
view, by Azahari’s “close understanding with Marsal”. 131 The intensification of the Mentri
Besar’s opposition to Malaysia at that time would have raised the PRB’s hopes of success in

129 The Borneo Bulletin, “‘We were left out in the cold’: Sundang explains policy change”, 27 October, 1962, p. 1; TNA, CO
1030/1036, Item 99, Letter to WI Wallace (CO) from the Governor of North Borneo, 17 September, 1962, para. 1; Item 167,
Enclosure to Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Acting Governor of North Borneo, No. 896 Saving,
31 October, 1962; Edwin Lee, The Towkays of Sabah: Chinese Leadership and Indigenous Challenge in the Last Phase of
130 Chin Ung-Ho, Chinese Politics in Sarawak: A Study of the Sarawak United People’s Party, Oxford University Press, Kuala
Lumpur, 1997, pp. 70-1.
131 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 93, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei,
Despatch no. 19, 25 September, 1962, para. 7; Item 108, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from
the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 755, 8 October, 1962, para. 4.
its campaign against the new federation, especially after its decisive election victory, thus making any dialogue with Malaya counter-productive.

Before this situation arose, Azahari and some of his colleagues conducted exploratory talks with Malayan Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak and Ghazali when they visited Brunei in mid-August. The aim of these discussions, judging from Ghazali’s description of them, was simply to exchange views and explore points of concern from both sides. Ghazali also invited the PRB to send members to Kuala Lumpur on tours similar to those made by delegations from North Borneo and Sarawak, mentioned above, for the purpose of seeing the benefits that Malaysia could bring. The invitation was accepted, but never actually used.\footnote{Ghazali, op. cit., pp. 266-73; Various issues of The Borneo Bulletin from 18 August to 1 December, 1962.}

The Malayan government spent much of October and November trying to persuade the PRB to send a delegation to Kuala Lumpur; it had finally recognised, as White remarked, that “Azahari, almost as much as the Sultan, is the key to Brunei’s entry into Malaysia”: the Sultanate could not be brought into the new federation without the concurrence of the people, and the PRB essentially spoke for them on this issue.\footnote{TNA, DO 169/259, Item 85A, Letter to WJF Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 27 October, 1962, para. 2; DO 187/33, Item 117, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 776, 19 October, 1962, para. 2; Item 118A, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 786, 25 October, 1962, para. 3; Item 123, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 813, 3 November, 1962, para. 1; Item 133, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 270, 21 November, 1962, para. 1.} Azahari accepted an invitation to Kuala Lumpur for negotiations in late October, promising to arrive after his trip to Manila in November. However, he did not go, apparently because of unexpected delays in the Philippines, though it is difficult not to suspect that the imminent decision to revolt was a more important factor.\footnote{TNA, DO 169/259, Item 85A, Letter to WJF Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 27 October, 1962, para. 2; DO 187/33, Item 128, Telegram to the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, No. B186, 15 November, 1962, para. 1.}

The first round of negotiations between Brunei and Malaya, so unexpectedly acrimonious, throws up one very interesting question: was the Brunei government really unaware that joining Malaysia would necessitate a transfer of sovereignty? The Malayans insisted that they had explained their vision of the structure of Malaysia to Bruneian officials
many times, while White believed that Brunei’s claims to the contrary stemmed from an attempt to avoid committing itself either for or against the new federation, a stalling tactic to see which way the wind was blowing. Lawson, on the other hand, as his comment quoted above demonstrates, genuinely believed that the Brunei government had failed to understand the nature of the proposed federation.

Judging where the truth lies on this point is very difficult, especially because it is, at its base, a question of believing the assertions of one side over the other. The fact that much of Brunei’s negotiating position was universally attributed to Marsal, who was well known to be anti-Malaysia, certainly suggests that the Sultanate’s preference for closer association was a ploy designed to ensure that Brunei would not participate in the new federation. Indeed, the very details of the proposal appear to have been tailor-made for this purpose. On the other hand, Lawson’s comment weighs heavily because of his knowledge of the people involved and his experience in Brunei affairs. This is, however, equally true of White, who had served in Sarawak since the 1930s before coming to Brunei permanently in 1958, thus devaluing Lawson’s view of the matter, especially as Lawson had had only sporadic involvement in the Sultanate since 1958.

However, it is the existence of a third hypothesis that holds the key to this question. This theory holds that the Brunei government was well aware that Kuala Lumpur preferred a true federation, but chose to suggest closer association in the hope that Malaya would accept its proposed terms in accordance with its promise to “provide any facilities” that Brunei wanted. White’s report that the Sultan had agreed to Marsal’s proposals in order to see how the Malayans would react, mentioned above, supports this theory to some extent, though it does imply that the ruler was not very confident of success. Within this hypothesis, then, Malaya’s assertions that it had discussed the envisaged structure of the new federation with the Brunei government become irrelevant, since it was not a question of what the Sultanate knew about Malaysia, but rather of what they wanted out of it.

135 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 108, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 755, 8 October, 1962, para. 1; Item 116, Letter to Sir John Martin (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 16 October, 1962, para. 4.
The aftermath of the negotiations also raises its own interesting issue, that of why the Brunei government did not immediately reject the idea that the Sultanate participate in Malaysia, a course so stridently advocated by some. The primary reason for keeping Brunei’s options on this question open was that Britain strongly preferred that the Sultanate join Malaysia, and a breach caused by demands that the British would consider unreasonable would have many undesirable consequences. In addition, total rejection of the new federation would only play into the hands of the PRB at a time when the government was in a very delicate position, unpopular because of its own inefficiency, constantly criticised by a political party that had won the country’s first election in a landslide, and struggling to maintain unity in the face of the already divisive issue of Malaysia.

The joint appeal to the United Nations demonstrates that the three parties involved all needed support in their stand against Malaysia. The growing consensus in favour of the new federation in northern Borneo made this support vital for all three of the parties to prevent political isolation and to strengthen the validity of their case at the UN. The PRB’s situation was slightly different from that of its allies, particularly in light of its election victory and strong political position, but it still needed support from its counterparts in Sarawak and North Borneo in order to further its own northern Borneo federation. The overt support that the SUPP and the Pasok Momogun both lent to this idea in the memorandum, however short-lived or insincere, was invaluable in this respect.

The role of GS Sundang in this anti-Malaysia alliance is also interesting, since it is clear from the events that followed the announcement of his participation that his was a truly lone voice, lacking even the support of the party he led. The Pasok Momogun had broken away from the Donald Stephens-led UNKO partly because of that organisation’s support for the Malaysia concept and, by the time the anti-Malaysia alliance was established, was the sole political party in North Borneo that still opposed the idea of the new federation. However, as has already been noted, the mood within the Pasok Momogun had begun to shift towards acceptance of the *fait accompli* that Malaysia had become around the time of these events and Sundang had evidently failed to appreciate this fact. Consequently, the party leader was,
as he said, “left standing in the cold”, with neither support for his views nor sufficient prestige to carry his party with him.

The necessity of Sundang’s withdrawal from the anti-Malaysia alliance and the instability that threatened the SUPP’s own continued participation had their effect on the coalition’s effectiveness. Without support from North Borneo, the alliance looked even weaker than it already was, while its cause was extensively damaged by Sabah’s apparently unanimous acceptance of Malaysia. The SUPP’s internal problems, meanwhile, threatened the viability of the alliance altogether and may have left the PRB standing alone in northern Borneo against Malaysia. The nature of the SUPP’s difficulties, with its leftist and moderate factions pitted against each other in a fight for control of the party, also weakened the effectiveness of the alliance by leaving it open to accusations of communist influence, a stigma that was impossible to escape once it was applied in the Cold War world.

By contrast, the PRB’s willingness to treat with the Malayans demonstrates that its campaign against Malaysia was not yet desperate. Had it pursued talks with Malaya more assiduously or refused to negotiate at all, it would have shown that the PRB was not confident of success in its campaign; indeed, the fact that Kuala Lumpur was the one pursuing the Party for talks indicates that the very opposite was true. At the same time, the PRB’s readiness to consider such discussions demonstrates that it, like the Brunei government, was keeping its options open in case the prevailing circumstances changed. If the administration definitely decided to come out in favour of Malaysia, the Party would need to be able to change its own position very quickly, and the existence of a channel to the Malayan government would facilitate this. On the other hand, Kuala Lumpur’s recognition that the PRB’s support was crucial if the campaign for Malaysia was to succeed in Brunei showed that the Party could derail the Sultanate’s participation in the concept completely if it continued to oppose it.
Conclusion

This chapter has described the effect that its proposed involvement in the new federation of Malaysia had on Brunei, which was the second major cause of the rebellion. The primary reason that this subject is so significant is the grave threat that it posed to the PRB’s dreams of a federation of northern Borneo under the leadership of Brunei. While Sarawak and North Borneo remained colonies of Great Britain, this dream could still be realised; once the two territories achieved independence through membership of Malaysia, the dream would almost certainly be dead. This threat was greatly increased by the possibility that Brunei itself would become part of Malaysia, thus abandoning forever this unique opportunity to reclaim former glories.

This threat was exacerbated by the willingness of the Brunei government to consider joining Malaysia. The favourable announcements that the Sultan made about the proposal to the Legislative Council in December 1961 and July 1962 and the discussions conducted with Malaya in July and September 1962 all contributed to the PRB’s growing fear that the administration would agree to participate in the new federation. Whatever the government’s actual view of the proposal, its actions and words suggested that it favoured Malaysia, which, as has already been observed, signalled the end of the PRB’s own Bornean federation idea. The growing consensus in favour of Malaysia in Sarawak and North Borneo had the same effect, as well as depriving the Party of any chance of support for its northern Borneo federation.

More broadly, the Malaysia proposal stimulated increased political activity and inspired the birth of more political parties in all three Borneo territories, as was remarked above, which caused more conflict and tension, especially in Brunei. This atmosphere bred both discontent and unease, a cocktail of emotions that risked igniting into violence, should the right spark be applied at the right moment. Adding to this tension and discontent was the exacerbating effect of the imminent change that the Malaysia proposal represented: whatever the outcome of the process, there would be consequences that would need to be adapted to
and dealt with. This created further unease, particularly since the shape of this impending change was unknown, which only added to the uncomfortable atmosphere in Brunei throughout 1962.

Several other significant points arise from this chapter. The first of these is the important role that Brunei Malay nationalism played in the Sultanate’s polity, discussed in relation to the Officers’ Affair. Though this point was also mentioned briefly in Chapter III in the context of its role in the PRB’s ideology, its centrality in Brunei’s polity requires that it receive greater attention here. Firstly, it needs to be recognised that all three elements of this concept are important when considering its uniqueness: nationalism denotes its ideology, Malay its ethnicity, and Brunei its focus. This point is especially relevant when differentiating Brunei’s nationalism from that of Malaya, which, as was seen in the description of the Officers’ Affair above, is a very significant distinction to make.

The Malay dominance of Brunei society that was mentioned in Chapter III is the reason that Brunei Malay nationalism occupied its central position in the Sultanate’s polity. Clearly, the ethnic group that predominated in any society would promote its own interests above those of less populous groups, and this was even truer for a group that was as pre-eminent as the Brunei Malays were. This numerical dominance meant that there was no real challenge to the supremacy of Brunei Malay nationalism in the Sultanate and, consequently, the political positions of both the traditional élite and the PRB were relatively secure from actors who advocated other ideologies.

It also needs to be emphasised that this Brunei Malay nationalism was espoused by both of the contending political groups in the Sultanate. This both narrowed and widened the sphere of political discourse: limiting it by essentially excluding other groups from the political conversation, whilst expanding it by eliminating purely nationalist and ethnic questions from consideration, which allowed more immediately vital issues to predominate. This shared position also meant that neither group could base its appeal to the people on its superior commitment to the promotion of the interests of the Bruneis, a common method of winning support. This restriction was modified somewhat, however, for the traditional élite,
because of the role played by its hereditary status and, especially, the potent symbol of Brunei Malay culture represented by the sultan, which gave the élite a natural advantage over the PRB.

Externally, the primary consequence of the pre-eminence in the Sultanate of Brunei Malay nationalism was, as has been remarked several times previously, the resulting preference of many in Sarawak and North Borneo not to enter into any federation where Brunei would predominate. Past experience of the rule of the Bruneis had repulsed even the Malays of the two colonies, as well as the indigenous peoples who had borne the brunt of their depredations. The supremacy of Brunei Malay nationalism in the Sultanate, should Brunei become dominant by whatever means in any federation of the three territories, threatened to crush the interests of the many other ethnic groups of the area and overwhelm any political movements then in existence in the two colonies.

The Officers’ Affair also emphasised the fact that Brunei’s acceptance of the Malaysia proposal could not be taken for granted. The many similarities that Brunei shared with the sultanates of Malaya made it very easy to assume that they would be the first to enter the new federation, which is more or less what the Malayan government did in 1961 and the first half of 1962 when it chose not to employ the kind of persuasive methods in Brunei that were used so effectively in North Borneo and Sarawak. The hostility towards Malaya revealed so clearly by the Officers’ Affair demonstrated that Brunei was far from the sure thing it was assumed to be, while the resentment and distrust that arose from the Affair itself, and particularly the Tunku’s most insulting comments, only increased the difficulty of persuading the government and people of Brunei that they should join Malaysia.

The description given above of the campaign for the return of Limbang reveals the extent of pro-Brunei feeling in the area, which is unsurprising in view of its proximity, demography, and historical links to the Sultanate. These Brunei sympathies played an especially important role in motivating many young men from Limbang to participate in the revolt, particularly in light of the pro-Malaysia momentum that had built up in Sarawak throughout 1962. The PRB’s northern Borneo federation offered a more attractive alternative
than Malaysia because it was less of an unknown quantity, since there had been plenty of
time to get used to the idea. The central role that Brunei would play in the smaller federation,
in contrast to its obscurity in Malaysia, was also a major motivating factor for the rebels of
Limbang, because they saw themselves as subjects of the sultan and would thus reap the
benefits of the Sultanate’s pre-eminence in such an entity.

The final important point that needs to be highlighted concerns the unsuccessful
negotiations with Malaya of September and the position that Brunei adopted for these talks.
The fact that the government chose to pursue a form of closer association is particularly
significant in the light of subsequent events, since the terms that Brunei requested at the
negotiations that occurred in 1963, which were much closer to what Malaya found
acceptable, were clearly made from a position of weakness arising from the rebellion. It is,
therefore, reasonable to assume that the closer association that was pursued when in a
stronger position was what Brunei really wanted if it decided to join Malaysia.

The form of closer association that the Brunei government requested is especially
suggestive: the proposals that White described, quoted above, indicate that it was essentially
asking for the status quo with the only major change being that Malaya would replace
Britain as the Sultanate’s protector. Even the constitution would remain the same, despite its
dissimilarity to the constitutions of the states of Malaya. This clearly demonstrates that
Brunei was reluctant to change its situation at all and was, in fact, happy to remain as it was,
especially since it was still adjusting to its new system of administration. It also suggests that
they were not interested in entering into a true federation with Malaya, which would require
that most, if not all, of Brunei’s sovereignty would be surrendered to the federal government
and its administration changed to suit the structure of the new federation, depending on the
terms that could be negotiated.

It is clear, then, that the Brunei government’s primary concern when considering the
Malaysia proposal was the question of the Sultanate’s sovereignty. The difference between
federation and closer association lay in the degree of control that Brunei would have over its
own destiny and character, including the structure of its government, the role of the sultan,
and the nature of its political discourse. Fundamentally, it was a question of how much power Brunei would be willing to surrender to the federal government, and its preference for closer association indicates that the answer to this question was as little as possible.

This all begs the question of why Brunei was willing to consider the Malaysia proposal at all. Almost all of the reasons given above for the readiness of the people of North Borneo and Sarawak to be persuaded of the merits of the idea also apply to Brunei: the beneficial effect of British support, the geopolitical situation, the perceived communist threat, the shared historical and cultural links with Malaya, and the failure of Britain’s closer association proposal of 1957. The only one of these reasons that does not also extend to Brunei is that concerning the benefits that Malaysia would bring to its new members, such as self-government, democracy, greater rural and urban development, and privileged treatment for indigenous peoples. Since all but one of these advantages were already Brunei’s and the other, democracy, was within the gift of the government, these benefits possessed little of interest for the Sultanate.

Brunei also considered membership in Malaysia because of the protection that the new federation would offer. As the Tunku had so indelicately observed during the Officers’ Affair, independence would be unwise for a country as small and rich as Brunei, making federation the most viable option. The pervasive global influence of anti-colonialism also played a role, ensuring that maintenance of the status quo would be very difficult in the face of world opinion and Britain’s desire to divest itself of its colonial interests as quickly as possible. Another motivating factor was the fact that, were Brunei to refuse to join Malaysia while Singapore, North Borneo, and Sarawak accepted, the Sultanate would be surrounded on all sides by a foreign country, creating myriad defence, immigration, and transportation issues.

It is very noticeable that all but two of these reasons are external factors. There was no internal impetus for Brunei to join Malaysia, which explains the initial hostility and the widespread opposition to the idea of the new federation. This is a crucial point, suggesting that there was always little likelihood of Brunei accepting the Malaysia proposal without a
concerted campaign for public and government support, which, as has already been seen, did not eventuate. Whatever the potency of the external factors that made Malaysia attractive, the absence of vital internal interests urging its acceptance meant that membership of the new federation was not absolutely necessary for the Sultanate and, therefore, Brunei could easily decline its invitation, which is exactly what happened in July 1963.
Chapter V: Brunei’s Internal Politics
The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the significant role that widespread discontent with the government played as a cause of the Brunei Rebellion. Quite simply, the revolt was, by its very nature, an anti-government action, which was motivated by community dissatisfaction with the policies and direction of the Brunei government. Three specific areas in which this displeasure particularly flourished were public reactions to the administration’s failure to avert the Sultanate’s economic decline caused by the end of the 1950s oil boom, the dysfunction that was all too often a hallmark of the government’s operations after the promulgation of the constitution in September 1959, and the disappointment arising from the District Council elections and the administration’s refusal to work with the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB) to any great extent even after the elections. The effect that the accumulation of this dissatisfaction had must also be acknowledged, since none of the causes of these feelings occurred in isolation.

**Brunei’s Economic Decline**

It may be recalled from Chapter III that Brunei’s post-World War II prosperity depended entirely on increased oil production and the swelling government revenues derived from that industry. By the late 1950s, however, this situation had begun to change, as a correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (*FEER*) observed in 1962:

> The flow of oil from Seria has fallen almost steadily since the peak year of 1956, which saw a production of just on 42 million barrels or about 5.8 million tons; but in 1960 production was down to a little over 34 million barrels. Royalty payments have fallen more sharply, from a peak of $44.7 million in 1957. Saving fresh discoveries[,] Seria will be finished in 20 years or so; then the Shell Company will presumably depart and with it not only the royalties but the taxes through which it supplies a good part of the rest of the state’s revenue.\(^1\)

This decline in oil output affected Brunei’s entire economy and consequently lay at the root of much of the discontent felt in the Sultanate in the years leading up to the revolt.

> These economic problems manifested themselves most prominently in the oil industry, as Brunei Shell Petroleum (BSP) began to retrench staff in the latter months of 1958. High Commissioner Dennis White reported in October 1960 that the company’s labour force had

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been reduced from 8,000 to 2,500, while the BSP informed the Colonial Office in June the next year that a further reduction to 1,500 personnel was likely if no new oil was found. An optimistic estimate of current oil reserves made in November 1962 estimated that 240 million barrels remained, with daily oil production to decline markedly from 68,000 barrels in 1963 to only 10,000 by 1980.²

The BSP’s woes led to a trade recession in the Belait District, which soon spread to Brunei-Muara as well. One sign of this recession was the decision of the Straits Steamship Company, which carried small cargoes from Singapore to Brunei Town, to reduce its service from weekly to fortnightly. Compounding the Sultanate’s economic problems was the significant gap between the end of the First Five-Year Development Plan in 1958 and the beginning of the second in 1962. Though the former had many deficiencies, as noted in Chapter III, the absence of a formal development scheme meant that there was no large-scale government activity stimulating the economy, while the Public Works Department (PWD) was forced to follow the BSP’s lead by retrenching staff.³

The precise extent of unemployment in Brunei is difficult to gauge: in 1960, there were approximately 700 people registered with the government as unemployed; much of the population was engaged in what the 1960 Annual Report described as “peasant agriculture”, which implies both subsistence-level activity and under-employment.⁴ On the other hand, the unemployment problem was not desperate enough to make the vacancies in the rubber and logging industries attractive: as someone commented to the FEER’s correspondent, “[b]ut those of course are jobs requiring a little work”.⁵

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² Kevin Jones, “Absolutism and Democracy in the Brunei Revolt”, MA Thesis, Australian National University, 1983, p. 19; TNA, CO 1030/1447, Minute to WIJ Wallace (CO) from HJ Nield (CO), 23 June, 1961, para. 5; DO 187/33, Item 129, Telegram to Mr West, the High Commission to the Federation of Malaya from JD Higham (CRO), 16 November, 1962, paras. 1-2.
Nevertheless, the unemployment problem was severe enough:

In August 1960 the State Medical Officer reported that Brunei had one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. He attributed the problem to “the financial distress of mothers.” “Babies were known to be the sons and daughters of fathers without any employment. Some of the fathers were in receipt of daily pay insufficient to keep the family.”

The government was not, of course, quiescent in the face of this economic decline: a new National Development Plan was being drawn up before a dedicated committee was established in May 1961 to oversee the progress of the new programme. The plan that the government approved in April 1962 was intended to “strengthen, improve and further develop the economic, social and cultural life of the people of the state.” It contained 268 separate projects across the usual areas of economic activity, including agriculture, community development, and communications, and would operate for a period of five years from 1962, costing an estimated $700 million.

The negotiations that were held with the BSP in 1962 and 1963 to increase the revenues that Brunei earned from its oil exports were a more concrete example of the government’s attempts to halt this economic decline. Two experts from New York oil consultancy WJ Levy visited the Sultanate on more than one occasion to advise the government on prevailing international norms, while the principal of the firm directly assisted the administration during negotiations in London in February 1963. It was rumoured during an earlier round of discussions that revenues would be split evenly between the government and the BSP; the precise details of the final agreement are unknown, but the 1963 Petroleum Enactment did mandate that income tax would be raised from 30% to 50% of profits, while the rate of royalty levied on offshore oil production was set at 10% of the value of production for fields located three nautical miles from the coast and 8% for fields beyond ten nautical miles.

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6 K Jones, op. cit., p. 19.
Exacerbating the situation was the introduction of trade union activism into Brunei, with the formation of the Barisan Buroh Bersatu Brunei (Brunei United Labour Front, BULF), mentioned briefly in Chapter III. Registered in the latter months of 1960, the BULF was soon in stride, threatening a general strike in March 1961 to protest against a problem with wage payments in the PWD. Once union members in the Agricultural, Municipality, and Marine Departments had voted to support the intended strike, the government announced that it would meet the BULF’s demands.\(^\text{10}\)

The BULF’s other major success came with Brunei’s first official strike, called by the office staff of William Jacks and Company (Borneo) to protest against the refusal of the management to alter the provisions of their staff profit-sharing scheme in favour of all 13 of their administrative personnel. All were members of the BULF, which engaged in negotiations with the company in an effort to avert the strike, but the two parties were unable to reach agreement; the strike consequently began on 2 January, 1962. The BULF persuaded labourers at the wharf to refuse to handle Williams Jacks’ cargoes, and then attempted to instigate a general strike of all their members that failed to attract significant support.\(^\text{11}\)

The company was reported to have employed several tactics in an attempt to sidestep the effects of the strike, such as evicting strikers from the office on the first day of the action, importing an employee from their Jesselton branch to replace the striking workers, and using outside staff to carry goods, all of which failed due to the BULF’s intervention. More constructively, William Jacks released a press statement on 20 January that explained its position, which was its first public comment on the strike. An “amicable settlement” was finally reached between the BULF and the company at the beginning of February, the details of which were not reported in The Borneo Bulletin; White wrote that “the Labour Front

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eventually advised the staff of William Jacks to accept the Chairman’s offer, which was no
strike pay, but a month’s advance of pay, repayable at the Chairman’s discretion”. 12

The BULF, as was briefly noted in Chapter III, was closely connected to the PRB in
political matters, largely because many of the top officials of the union were also leaders of
the Party, most prominently Hapidz Laksamana, who was both Secretary General of the
BULF and Vice President of the PRB. The most public manifestation of this link was the
joint rally that the two organisations held in June 1961 to protest against the delay in
c conducting the District Council elections, attended by around 7,000 people. The BULF
passed six resolutions at this gathering, primarily dealing with the union’s opposition to
some of the BSP’s policies and its support for the PRB’s political programme. White
speculated that the BULF’s involvement in the rally was merely a way to “prove to both
Government and Shell [sic] that the Party Rakyat could now bring heavy pressure to bear by
way of a general strike, if their demands are not met”. 13

At the end of 1961, the government finally brought the Trade Union Enactment into
effect, after much discussion and delay in framing the legislation. This enactment, by
restricting unions to the representation of only one industry or similar trades, forced the all-
inclusive BULF to disband and reduced the influence of the PRB over the trade union
movement, since few of the Party leaders held jobs outside of politics. The BULF’s leaders
recovered from this blow by organising three new unions, one representing oil workers,
another government officers, and the third employees of other companies, such as private
firms and retailers. The registration of all three unions was delayed by the appointment of
too many political figures to high positions, which was prohibited by the enactment, and by
the government’s intention to employ a trade union advisor before approving the new bodies.
Two of these unions, the Government Workers and Oil Workers Unions, were registered in
July along with a third, the Government Permanent Officers Association; the General


13 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 42, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 21 June, 1961, paras. 1 & 3-4.
Workers Union was rejected because its membership was too varied to be consistent with the provisions of the new legislation.\textsuperscript{14}

The economic decline that afflicted Brunei in the late 1950s and early 1960s, though not particularly severe, did cause a sense of lassitude to pervade the Sultanate, which was described by the correspondent of the \textit{FEER} in 1960 as “running down like a clock”.\textsuperscript{15} This lethargy affected everyone and may be part of the reason the government tended to move slowly on decisions both big and small. More importantly, this inertia caused more Bruneians to become politically engaged because of their anger towards the government for its failure to end the Sultanate’s economic problems. The dwindling of Brunei’s onshore oil resources had its own emotional effect, causing some concern for the state’s future and making the idea of federation more attractive.

The activities of the BULF had the opposite effect, causing and formalising conflict in the relationship between employers and employees and generating some disquiet in a more general sense. Its most significant contribution, however, was to increase the PRB’s leverage in its opposition to government policies, especially with regard to the postponement of the District Council elections. The BULF’s support for the Party’s policies, including the adoption of more democratic practices, the northern Borneo federation, and Brunei’s progress towards independence, made it at least appear that the PRB was not alone in its opposition, an important consideration in light of the difficulties inherent in the Party’s rather precarious constitutional position.

Essentially, the lassitude and discontent described here is associated with the sense of frustration discussed in Chapter III and caused by the fact, as Zaini Ahmad commented to a \textit{New York Times} correspondent in 1961, that “[o]ur country is rich but our people are


\textsuperscript{15} PHM Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 720.
poor”.\textsuperscript{16} This disparity motivated many of the PRB’s supporters in their political engagement and, consequently, formed part of the foundation upon which the Party’s worldview was built. More relevant here is the role that the government played in this frustration, neither alleviating nor acknowledging it. Quite apart from the different issues that caused this dissatisfaction with the government’s performance, this failure even to recognise that this feeling existed served only to inflame passions against the administration further.

**Dysfunction within the Government**

The workings of the Brunei government, as has already been observed several times, were far from seamless after the Residency ended in September 1959. The best example of this is the protracted crisis in the Medical Department. In April 1960, Abdul Wahab Mohamed Ariff, previously State Medical and Health Officer in Terengganu, was appointed the State Medical Officer, having been personally selected by the Sultan. Dr Wahab, described by Ghazali as a “strict disciplinarian” who was “out of place” in Brunei, swiftly alienated most, if not all, of his subordinates, to the extent that four of the six doctors in the Sultanate had resigned by April 1961, the remaining two had decided not to renew their contracts, and the expatriate nurses were seeking transfers elsewhere.\textsuperscript{17} The administration was forced to ask the Malayan government for immediate assistance and were loaned the services of two doctors for three months.\textsuperscript{18}

Efforts had, of course, been made to resolve the tensions in the department, with the foremost of these being the formation of a committee of the Executive Council, comprising the Mentri Besar, the Attorney General, and the High Commissioner, to consider its reorganisation. The committee recommended that, henceforth, the State Medical Officer should be confined to policy decisions instead of being involved in day-to-day matters and that that officer should work from the Secretariat rather than from the General Hospital in


\textsuperscript{17} Ghazali Shafie, *Ghazali Shafie’s Memoir on the Formation of Malaysia*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 1998, p. 43; *The Straits Times*, “Birth control permitted, Muslims told”, 30 September, 1959, p. 6; TNA, CO 1030/1447, Minute to WIJ Wallace (CO) from HJ Nield (CO), 23 June, 1961, para. 2; *The Borneo Bulletin*, “Brunei State Seeks Doctors: 4 out of 6 have resigned”, 29 April, 1961, p. 1.

Brunei Town. They also recommended that Dr Wahab’s secondment to Brunei should be terminated. The Sultan apparently took this latter proposal as a “personal insult” and ignored it entirely.\(^\text{19}\) The Sultan’s involvement also extended to refusing to accept the resignation that Dr Wahab had offered in early April and taking him to Malaya in May to recruit replacements for those doctors who had resigned.\(^\text{20}\) It appears that the Sultan was determined to save face by keeping Dr Wahab on and instead replacing the entire staff of the department, should it become necessary.

In early May, the State Secretary, Ahmad Omar, issued a statement to the press in an effort to reassure the people that the Medical Department would not collapse. This statement said that there were twelve positions on the establishment in 1961, six of which were filled; efforts were being made to find doctors for the six vacancies. Now that four of the doctors already employed had resigned and the remaining two had announced that they would not renew their contracts, it was hoped that the full establishment of twelve medical officers would be filled through recruitment in a few weeks. The situation was, thus, not as critical as had been suggested in the press. Furthermore,

> the government has not spared any efforts to enquire into the [doctors’] complaints referred to in the press, and attempts have been made to remove any cause of dissatisfaction.

[The statement said:] “Under the terms of their contract the doctors are obliged to give three months’ notice before leaving, and insofar as these doctors are concerned, by the time they leave recruitment of new doctors will have been finalised.

“The government is not unaware of its responsibilities for the health and welfare of the people and will find ways and means to maintain the medical services of the State.”\(^\text{21}\)

The PRB chose not to comment on this issue until 17 June, when its joint rally in Brunei Town with the BULF protesting against the delay in holding the District Council elections was held. The estimated 7,000 people who attended this rally supported 14 resolutions proposed by the PRB, two of which apply to this situation: “that the Government halt unrest in the Medical Department and sack whoever is guilty” and “that the Government take

\(^{19}\) TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 17, Letter to WJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 13 April, 1961, para. 2; Minute to WJ Wallace (CO) from HJ Nield (CO), 23 June, 1961, para. 2.
\(^{20}\) TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 17, Letter to WJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 13 April, 1961, para. 2.
immediate and proper steps to improve the weak administration"). The second of these resolutions refers to the dissatisfaction felt in the Sultanate towards the service that the government offered to its people in general, which will be discussed further below, and not just to the ructions in the Medical Department.

These tensions were pushed into the background by the Tunku’s Malaysia proposal at the end of May, the sudden outbreak of the Officers’ Affair in mid-June, and the controversy over the District Council elections in August and September. In February 1962, however, the problem again came to the forefront of the public’s attention, when Dr Wahab responded to a disgruntled citizen’s letter to The Borneo Bulletin with a press statement declaring that “Brunei now had more doctors than in previous years”, citing several examples of how the situation had improved. Rather than resolving the complaint, however, Dr Wahab’s response appears to have merely invited a resumption of hostilities, with The Borneo Bulletin soon reporting that three doctors would shortly be resigning, with one set to leave as early as the following week. The latter issued a statement to the press upon his departure alleging that “[d]octors in Brunei are being treated very badly” without citing particular instances of such mistreatment.

The government denied that two other doctors would resign and pointed out that the doctor who had was, in fact, leaving to undertake postgraduate study in England. The Borneo Bulletin had already printed two letters to the editor criticising Dr Wahab’s press comments and calling for an inquiry into the Medical Department. It also published two editorials in successive weeks repeating the appeal for a proper investigation into the situation, a call that the newspaper had already made several times during the initial phase of the dispute. In the second of these editorials, Ralph Shaw, the editor of the newspaper, denied that The Borneo

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*Bulletin* had sought out either the departing doctor’s press statement or the many letters on the subject that they had printed.25

*The Borneo Bulletin* continued to receive letters requesting government action to resolve the Medical Department’s problems throughout 1962, though it appears that little occurred in response to them.26 The matter was even raised in the Legislative Council in April, with Pengiran Yusuf, on behalf of the government, denying that there was a shortage of doctors in the state. The government then, unusually, addressed these criticisms directly with a statement to the press:

The spokesperson said that, in October, 1961, there were 11 government doctors, including two doctors who were seconded from Malaya, when cholera was threatening Brunei.

The state now had 12 doctors, including eight government and four non-government, with an average of 7,000 inhabitants per doctor, the spokesman said.27

It is difficult to assess what the actual situation was, in terms of numbers of doctors, after the original spate of resignations. The competing claims of the government and its critics tend to confuse the issue rather than to elucidate it, while the only information readily available on this subject comes from the administration’s Annual Report for 1961-62. At the end of 1961, 8 medical officers and specialists were employed by the government, including the State Medical Officer; by the end of 1962, this number had risen to 14.28 The latter number is, obviously, an increase over the 11 who had been employed before the crisis began, and a definite improvement over the situation after the resignations started.

The problems in the Medical Department were not the only sign of the dysfunction that afflicted the government. White summed up the new administration’s failings in a report to the Colonial Office on Brunei’s first year of internal self-government:

The Sultan adopted, with enthusiasm, the role of Chief Administrator and, with a weak and ailing Mentri Besar, exercised the closest control of day to day administration, which slowed down the wheels almost to a standstill. Departments


are understaffed, particularly in the professional grades, and two departments in particular are in danger of total collapse, notably the Medical and Public Works. The public are restless and critical and the civil service is worried and unhappy. 1961 will, therefore, be a critical year. Repeated warnings have failed, so far, to convince the Sultan and the unofficial [Legislative] Councillors of the danger of antagonising and discouraging Malayan officers, as well as British, and only a major crisis will bring them to their senses, and it may not be long incoming [sic].

The employment of Malayan civil servants at the higher levels of the administration was another factor in this dysfunction, as the Officers’ Affair had demonstrated. One point that was not explored there was the fact that Bruneian officers who felt that they had been passed over for promotion expressed their resentment by deliberately “paralysing any intended action” of the Malayans who had, in their view, stolen these jobs from them. Exacerbating this situation was the unfortunate fact that several of these Malayan officers were generally found to be “incompetent”, “dilatory”, “inadequate”, and lacking a “sense of responsibility”.

It is clear, however, that the root of the trouble lay in the fact that the Sultan “insisted on having his finger in every pie”, though, by March 1961, White was of the opinion that he was tiring of this self-imposed responsibility:

I feel that the Sultan is beginning to find himself overwhelmed with routine matters, which he is beginning to find tedious. He may also be beginning to realise that his decisions are not always popular or right and that this affects the security of his throne, a danger which has frequently been brought to his notice in the past. He has only himself to blame . . .

The Sultan’s management style also left a lot to be desired:

[Ibrahim Jahfar, the Mentri Besar] emphasised the increasing suspicion with which he [the Sultan] seemed to regard many of his advisers, his frequent criticisms of his own Government in Executive Council for the papers and views they put up, and for bringing up matters which were within their competence to decide, forgetting that they have learnt by bitter experience that he is apt to cancel their decisions if made without prior reference to him, but his major worry is the refusal of the Sultan to face facts. He has refused to tackle the Medical Department problem and merely orders all protagonists to kiss and be friends. Now, of course, the spate of resignations is beginning and a reasonably sound department will soon be wrecked.
By early April, the situation had deteriorated to the point where most of the senior government officers, comprising the Mentri Besar, State Secretary, Attorney General, Establishment Officer, and State Education Officer, had expressed their desire to either retire or return to Malaya. The Colonial Office documents do not record what happened in this particular instance, but it is likely that the Sultan was able to persuade them all to stay on. The reasons for the Malayans’ desire to return home have already been discussed at length; the Mentri Besar’s wish to retire was motivated by his increasingly awkward position and the Sultan’s evidently diminishing regard for him.34

The PRB used the platform created by its joint rally with the BULF in June to address the government’s deficiencies, passing the resolution quoted above calling for improvements to the “weak administration”. Azahari’s comments on this resolution demonstrate one way in which the government’s inefficiency affected the people directly:

“The Brunei administration is weak. If we send letters we will not get a reply for six months. What is this? There is no administration in the world so weak. We urge the Government to improve things.
“If our letters for six months go unanswered well the first time we’ll be patient (sabar), the second time we give warning (terbabar), and the third time we give a slap (menampar).”35

Deputy High Commissioner for Brunei PH Meadows wrote a paper assessing the functionality of the Brunei government in the wake of the Rebellion, a very necessary exercise at the time, that came to this conclusion:

It is clear that the Administration, particularly with reference to advisory services (veterinary, agricultural[,] health services, public utilities (water, electricity, sanitation etc.) and community development and welfare services, has been sadly ineffectual, and that neglect of the needs of the population had given rise to widespread discontent and was one of the main contributory reasons for the rebellion, especially as there was no lack of wealth to make them possible.36

A more detailed analysis of the way that the administration operated noted:

Apart from the shortage of technical and departmental officers as referred to at (3) above, the administration suffers acutely from lack of experienced administrators, inadequate organisation, antiquated and time-consuming procedures, poor progressing and programming of work, [and] inadequate follow up direction and supervision. The running of a complex Government machine is a skilled business

34 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 17, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 13 April, 1961, para. 1; Item 16, Extract from Brunei Political Intelligence Report for March, 1961, c. April, 1961, para. 2.
35 The Borneo Bulletin, “Word By Word...The Bulletin Takes You To The Big Rally: ‘Sultan of Brunei has been deceived‘”, 24 June, 1961, p. 20.
36 TNA, CO 1030/1469, Item 406, “The Brunei Administration”, Undated Memorandum by the Deputy High Commissioner for Brunei, c. May, 1963, para. 4. This report is reproduced in Appendix II.
and responsibilities have to be decentralised and delegated. [sic] accompanied by clear directions and instructions. At present the highest officials of the Government spend much of their time performing tasks of subordinate staff, papers tend to go round in circles (whereas co-ordinating meetings would dispose of the problems in one or two sittings) and a considerable volume of unnecessary work still goes to the highest levels. One way and another the machinery becomes bogged down and nothing seems to get under way.\(^\text{37}\)

Meadows also mentioned that ST Divers had conducted a review of public administration in Brunei in July 1962, the recommendations of which are reproduced in Meadows’ report.\(^\text{38}\)

No other mention of Divers or the report that resulted from this review was noted in the literature, leading to the assumption, supported by comments made by Meadows in his paper, that little worthy of remark came of Divers’ visit in the realm of improvement in the government’s efficiency. Nevertheless, the very existence of the Divers Report does suggest that some effort was made at least to assess the causes of the dysfunction, presumably at the invitation of the Brunei government, while the lack of publicity afforded to the review indicates that this process was not undertaken merely for show.

Many of the problems experienced by the administration had ceased by the middle of 1961, due to the return of some of the Malayan officers to the Federation during the Officers’ Affair, the departure of Ibrahim Jahfar on medical leave prior to his retirement, and the appointment of several locals to prominent positions in the civil service. The most important factor in this improvement, however, was the Sultan’s disengagement from the day-to-day running of the administration, which allowed him to escape the personal criticism that he had begun to attract. The situation had, as White described it, “quietened down” by the time the postponement of the District Council elections was announced at the end of July, though there remained a sense of frustration amongst the people with the government’s deficiencies.\(^\text{39}\)

\(^\text{37}\) Ibid., para. 5(5).
\(^\text{38}\) Ibid., para. 4(2).
It is quite clear from this discussion that the Sultan’s direct involvement in all aspects of the government was the primary reason that the administration became so slow and inefficient after the resumption of internal self-government. Though the constitution vested supreme state power in the Sultan, there was no real need for him to retain all of this authority since he could delegate it to the Mentri Besar. The selection of Ibrahim Jahfar, formerly the Sultan’s private secretary, in this position shows that he never really intended to do so, which was, perhaps, not surprising in light of the battle he had waged through much of the 1950s to wrest power from the British Resident. The Sultan’s own personality exacerbated the effect of this situation, since he preferred to “give adequate thought to his decisions to avoid any future complications”, as Hussainmiya has put it, which naturally slowed the government machinery considerably. The confusion over who made decisions, delays caused by the Sultan’s innate caution, and the incompetence of the Malayan officers all combined to make the new Brunei administration ponderous and inefficient.

Another interesting feature of this governmental dysfunction is the way it was superseded by the Malaysia proposal, the Officers’ Affair, and the furore over the District Council elections. Though the situation was partially resolved by the aftermath of the Officers’ Affair, those problems that remained continued to be a simmering issue that could boil over at the slightest provocation. In addition, the administration’s inability to bring its level of service up to the standard expected by the public maintained a small but significant reservoir of resentment that contributed to the general sense of frustration felt towards the government.

There are several reasons that the government’s performance is significant in relation to the rebellion, most obviously the fact that it increased the frustration that the people felt towards the administration, as has already been observed. This frustration could be parlayed by an astute political party into a willingness to consider the possibility of an alternative government, especially at a time when the forthcoming elections were a major topic of

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conversation. The prominent role that the traditional élite played in the administration meant that much of the opprobrium that the government’s inadequate performance created attached itself to them, increasing their unpopularity with the people and making the PRB, conspicuously free of the influence of the pengirans, more attractive. Finally, the utter failure of the Malayan officers to either endear themselves to the local population or do their jobs properly had an adverse effect on the popularity of the Malaysia concept in Brunei, providing a further boost to the PRB’s supporter base thanks to its very public opposition to the idea.

The District Council Elections

There had been no formal elections during the Residency period, so it was necessary to construct an electoral system from scratch once the constitution had been promulgated, the most important part of which was the creation of the Nationality Enactment, which was discussed in Chapter III. The Brunei government sought assistance with this construction process from Malaya, with Kuala Lumpur sending the chair of its Elections Commission in August 1960 to advise on the necessary administrative and legislative steps. The resulting report led the Executive Council to set the date of the elections for late August 1961, which required that the Nationality Enactment be passed before 30 November, 1960. This, of course, did not happen.

The Malayan government continued to provide experienced personnel to advise on electoral procedure, with Selangor’s Supervisor of Elections visiting Brunei in January 1961 to assist in demarcating constituencies; this official planned to return the next month to train local staff in the registration of voters. The Brunei government took its first legislative step in February when it passed the Constitution (Election Commission) Order, 1961, to establish a body to conduct all elections in the state, delimit constituencies, and maintain electoral rolls. In May, a team of government officials and politicians was sent to observe the conduct of elections in Malaya, including the newly appointed Supervisor of Elections and

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41 TNA, CO 1030/937, Item 17, Extract from Brunei Political Intelligence Report for August, 1960, c. September, 1960, para. 2; CO 1030/1402, Item 4, Extract from Brunei Political Intelligence Report for September, 1960, c. October 1960, paras. 1 & 3.
representatives from both the PRB and BNO. Two public servants from the Information Department also went to Malaya, to study the organisation of civics courses so that similar seminars could be conducted in Brunei for penghulus, community leaders, and students.\textsuperscript{42}

There was a long hiatus in this preparatory process whilst the debate over the nationality legislation raged; the next legislative step only came in October with the promulgation of the Constitution (Amendment) Proclamation, 1961, which postponed the elections by one year, as noted in Chapter III. The government then selected the members of the Election Commission, demarcated constituencies and polling districts, and appointed registering officers to oversee the creation of the electoral rolls. Registration for these rolls opened on 1 February and closed on 31 March, 1962; electors could check the completed lists for errors for a period of approximately three weeks from 16 April. Finally, various enactments and regulations were published to complete the legal structure for the elections, including regulations to manage the conduct of the elections and an order governing the constitution and operation of the District and Legislative Councils.\textsuperscript{43}

In late June, it was announced that 21 July would be nomination day and 30 August the day of election. The Legislative Council was then dissolved on 20 July and nominated members appointed to the newly established District Councils on 1 August. On the same day, the names of those candidates who had been elected unopposed were officially


announced, while those of the candidates in contested seats were published on 18 August. It had been announced in July that government servants would be permitted to stand for election; if they failed, they would be reinstated to their position, and if they were elected, they would be allowed to retire from the public service. Finally, after the elections had taken place, a writ summoning the electoral college of each District Council, comprising the chair and members of each council, was issued to select the elected members of the Legislative Council, marking the last stage of the construction of the electoral system.44

The election campaign itself did not really have a finite beginning, because of Brunei’s unique political circumstances. The Sultanate did not have its second political party until August 1960, which, even then, never really challenged the supremacy of the PRB. More importantly, the Party’s real political battle was always with the government, making the PRB’s priority not the winning of votes but the shaping of how the election would be conducted. The debate over the Nationality Enactment was thus a centrepiece of the early part of its campaign, as was illustrated by the PRB’s threat to boycott the elections unless all laws and regulations governing their conduct were published.45

The PRB’s Joint Action Rally with the BULF in June 1961 also demonstrated this concern with the structure of the electoral system: no less than three of the 14 resolutions proposed by the Party referred to some aspect of this machinery. Commenting on these resolutions, Azahari said, amongst other things:

“We are making a moderate, well-mannered resolution. If it is ignored I shall inform the people of Brunei what action to take in order to conclude the matter.” . . .
“Anyone would think there was no staff preparing for the elections, yet it is only two months before the date they have been promised. What are the responsible persons doing? Are they being paid thousands of dollars just for sleeping? . . .
“Now there has been delay. Responsible people in the Government of Brunei wish His Highness to be suspected by the people and distrusted. Where does their love to

45 The Borneo Bulletin, “The Big Question We All Want To Know: Will Brunei elections be held this year?”, 11 March, 1961, p. 1.
the Sultan lie? His Highness is not a politician. He left this matter to the administrators of the State who swore to be loyal. But they have deceived His Highness. They wish to embarrass him before his people and the world.”

The PRB had intended to give the government an ultimatum at this rally, whereby a general strike would be called if no action were taken on the elections within two weeks; such a strike would coincide with the visit of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaya, thus causing maximum embarrassment. This ultimatum was not, however, delivered, at the request of the Mentri Besar: presumably, it was felt that more might be achieved by applying pressure simply through weight of numbers, rather than by means of threats. The estimated 7,000 people who attended this rally and the alliance it represented between politics and labour caused much consternation in government circles, largely because of the extent of the BULF’s support amongst the BSP’s workforce: should the union conduct a successful general strike, the oilfields would be crippled.

This concern about the PRB’s new allies did not, however, hasten the government into action: White urged the Sultan to make some sort of announcement about the elections without success, though the latter “hoped the Government would bring the matter to [the] Executive Council shortly”. The PRB then sent a representative to ask White whether it would be worthwhile to go to London to lobby for Colonial Office intervention; the High Commissioner suggested that a delegation be sent to the Mentri Besar instead. Contrarily, the Party chose to deliver its ultimatum to the government on 24 July, demanding action on the question of elections and threatening a full week of rallies and demonstrations, followed by a general strike, should the administration remain silent once the ultimatum expired in a week’s time.

The government responded by reaffirming its intention to hold elections on a date that it would announce shortly. Just days later, the statement announcing its decision to postpone

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47 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 36, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/5/510/3/59, 15 June, 1961, para. 3; CO 1030/1403, Item 60, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 12, 17 June, 1961, para. 2; The Borneo Bulletin, “Word By Word... The Bulletin Takes You To The Big Rally: ‘Sultan of Brunei has been deceived’”, 24 June, 1961, p. 14; CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, S/504/1/61, 19 July, 1961, para. 11.

48 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 59, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, S/504/1/61, 19 July, 1961, para. 11.

49 Ibid., paras. 7 & 12.
the elections for a year was released. It had been feared that the PRB would react badly to the delay, in the belief that it was caused by the government’s desire to push through Brunei’s merger with Malaya before elections could occur. Precautions were taken to deal with any disorders that might result: general security was strengthened, the Commissioner of Police was authorised to seek assistance from Sarawak and North Borneo should it be required, and a proclamation of emergency was pre-drafted. In the event, the Party chose to postpone its demonstration from 30 July to 6 August and abandoned any intention of calling a general strike, ostensibly because such an action would “damage the economy of the country too seriously to be lightly entered into”.

The PRB’s demonstration attracted nearly 15,000 people in The Borneo Bulletin’s estimation, bearing banners with slogans like “Brunei people want representative government” and “Voice of the people is the voice of freedom”. The demonstrators also handed a petition to White, calling for a conference in London between representatives of the governments of Brunei and Britain and the PRB to negotiate an acceptable date for elections to be held. However, as White later pointed out, it was perfectly clear that the postponement set down by the government was a fait accompli and the petition was merely a way for the PRB to express its displeasure without risking a decisive clash with the administration.

Before discussing the subsequent election campaign, it is first necessary to introduce the political parties who attempted to oppose the PRB juggernaut properly. First in the field was the Brunei National Organisation (BNO), registered in August 1960 and led by Abdul Manan Mohamed, a founding member of the PRB who had left the Party in 1958 due to

50 TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 85, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/59, 29 July, 1961, paras. 6-8 & 12-3; Item 73, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 8/S/502/1/52, 24 July, 1961, para. 2; Item 62, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 22, 27 July, 1961, paras. 1-3; Item 68, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 23, 29 July, 1961, para. 4.

51 The Borneo Bulletin, “Mass Protest...”, 12 August, 1961, p. 2; “No Confidence Plea to Britain: Demonstrators will march Tomorrow to High Commissioner’s house”, 5 August, 1961, p. 1; TNA, CO 1030/1448, Item 1, Petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Partai Rakyat Brunei, 4 August, 1961, paras. 27-28; CO 1030/1447, Item 101, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch Personal No. 1, 15 January, 1962, para. 11.
“political disagreements”.^{52} The BNO’s draft constitution, as summarised by *The Sarawak Tribune*, outlined its objectives:

- To achieve independence for Brunei and territories which were separated from it . . .
- To fight for the freedom of speech and religion.
- To establish a responsible government based on parliamentary democracy.
- To safeguard the interests of the minority races in Brunei.
- To improve the lot of the Native people of Brunei and the people [sic] of Brunei in general.^{53}

As noted in Chapter IV, the BNO was based in and drew most of its members from Tutong, which probably says more about the PRB’s tendency to concentrate on the larger population centres like Brunei Town and Kuala Belait than it does about the BNO’s inherent attractiveness.

The Sultanate’s third political party, the *Pergerakan Bersatu Brunei* (Brunei United Party, BUP), was founded in September and registered in December 1961. Led by Hasbullah Daud, previously prominent in the *Sahabat Pena*, the BUP was, according to Matassim, established to “take advantage of the postponement of the 1961 elections”, a likely assumption in light of its limited following and the timing of its foundation.^{54} *The Borneo Bulletin* published its manifesto:

1. work by all ways and means for an independent Brunei nation and sovereign state.
2. improve particularly the benefit of Malay Raayat and the people of Brunei as a whole.
3. give preference [to] and safeguard the Muslim religion and Malay custom and work by all means to spread the Muslim religion.
4. safeguard the status and the sovereignty of the ruler in accordance with the constitution.
5. establish, protect and safeguard the principle of democracy by means of responsible parliament.
6. constitute, protect and safeguard the freedom of religion, opinion, speech and writing.
7. respect, protect and safeguard the rights of minority races.
8. co-operate with other nations in the world to establish a new community based on humanity and justice.^{55}

The furore surrounding the postponement of the elections was followed by a curious calm lasting approximately three months, which appears to have been a period of adjustment to

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^{53} TNA, CO 1030/1214, Item 1, Extract from *The Sarawak Tribune*, “New Party Takes Form Next Month”, 31 August, 1960.
the new look administration and the changed situation. The pages of *The Borneo Bulletin* during this time illustrated this, containing stories on political party formation in Sarawak and North Borneo, events concerning Malaysia, and other unrelated topics, but little on political activity in Brunei. The PRB was unusually quiet, partly because Azahari was ill and partly because it was awaiting a reply to its petition. Little of interest occurred during this unwonted calm, apart from a brief spat between the PRB and the BNO over the question of the latter’s policy regarding a target date for Brunei’s independence.56

The BNO was again in the news early in 1962, when Abdul Manan Mohamed declared that his party, which had previously been opposed to the idea of Malaysia, had decided to support the plan because of fears about “the isolated situation of the Borneo territories which were surrounded by powerful neighbours”.57 The BUP, too, supported Malaysia, though its president, Hasbullah Daud, caused some controversy during a study tour he led to Malaya, when he said that “some people of Brunei were still ignorant about Malaysia and its benefits” because “only a handful of them were keeping abreast with the political events in this region” while the “rest were more concerned in making money”.58 The PRB retorted, “Just because the people do not have faith in Tuan Haji Hasbollah does not mean that they are not interested in politics”, as had been demonstrated by the large number of people who had spoken out against Malaysia to the Brunei-Malaysia Commission.59

The election campaign itself, when viewed through the pages of *The Borneo Bulletin*, was far from the exuberant process one might expect of a country’s first democratic election. Counting from the first issue of 1962 until the edition of 1 September, 118 stories on political issues in Brunei were published, on the broadest possible definition of ‘political’. By contrast, in the same 35 issues of the newspaper, there were 296 articles on the debate about Malaysia, though, to be fair, these stories covered developments in North Borneo, Sarawak, Singapore, and Malaya, as well as in Brunei. Whether *The Borneo Bulletin* was

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more concerned with the Malaysia issue or there was simply less news available about political issues, it is clear that the election campaign was a relatively muted affair that bore little resemblance to similar, more rambunctious processes familiar in modern democracies.60

This analysis of The Borneo Bulletin’s election coverage also reveals the disparity between the levels of attention accorded to the three political parties, with the PRB appearing far more frequently than the BUP and BNO. For example, nearly every step of the Party’s campaign was documented, including a conference of branch representatives to discuss the election in May, the commencement of canvassing efforts in June, and the announcement of the party platform in August. This preference for the Party reflected the weakness of the BNO and BUP and the corresponding strength of the PRB, as well as what was probably a simple lack of activity on the part of the newer parties, instead of a marked bias in favour of the PRB. The BUP and BNO were extremely inexperienced with little public support and underdeveloped party structures, while the PRB had six years of politicking under its belt, claimed 20,000 members, and had well-established branches and sections to aid its campaign; little wonder, then, that the PRB received far more attention and won the election easily.61

The manifesto that the PRB released in early August represented the first time that the PRB had published all of its policies at once since a similar document, quoted in Chapter III, had been produced upon its foundation. The later manifesto was more detailed and extensive, though it drew on and expanded many of the ideas expressed in the original. Notable amongst these policies were the PRB’s continued opposition to Malaysia and a commitment to an independent northern Borneo by 1963. Most of the manifesto espoused policies that would win support from lower and middle income groups, including advancing rural development, raising wages nationally, improving pensions and social welfare schemes.

60 This data was obtained by perusing every issue of The Borneo Bulletin from the period 6 January to 1 September, 1962. Each article was categorised by main subject; generally speaking, if it mentioned the Malaysia concept, it was counted as a Malaysia article. The political category includes articles on the PRB’s election preparations, political bickering between the parties, the government’s response to Party criticism, and sundry other matters.

61 The Borneo Bulletin, “Election Conference”, 12 May, 1962, p. 5; “Voters’ Round-Up”, 16 June, 1962, p. 8; “We Still Oppose Tengku’s Concept of Merger says Party Ra’ayat Manifesto”, 4 August, 1962, p. 1. The number of members claimed by the PRB always stretched credibility, especially when Brunei’s small population is considered. Despite this, the PRB was, indisputably, the most popular political party in the Sultanate, whatever the number of its members.
amending the new trade union legislation, ensuring merit-based recruitment to the civil service, and the establishment of an anti-corruption body. Finally, the manifesto called for new economic development in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and minerals other than hydrocarbons, the introduction of a modern educational system “based on [the] national interest”, and the provision of more overseas secondary scholarships and teacher training.62

The independent candidate for the seat of Bukit Pasar in Tutong, Ghazali Umar, who had resigned from the PRB as recently as May, also released an election manifesto, promising to represent the wishes of his constituents and to raise all of their complaints in the District Council. Assuming that The Borneo Bulletin’s report of the document is comprehensive, Ghazali’s manifesto appears to be insubstantial in terms of policies, concentrating instead on emphasising the importance of having an effective opposition in the councils. He also “urged the people not to believe in the ‘wild promises’ or [‘]far-fetched pledges’ made by other political parties in the state”, which was undoubtedly aimed at his erstwhile colleagues.63

This same candidate provided the most contentious moment of the election campaign when he accused the PRB of being “organised on Communist party lines” because ordinary members of the party “had no freedom to speak their minds” and “every one in the party had to toe the line and anyone found not ‘singing the same song in parrot fashion’ earned party displeasure”.64 Furthermore, Ghazali claimed that the PRB was “trying to establish a one-party system in Brunei which was contrary to democratic principles. He alleged that the Party Ra’ayat was trying to change Brunei into a communist state”; Ghazali provided no evidence to support his assertions.65 The PRB immediately responded, contending that Ghazali had requested permission to run on a Party ticket for the election, which begged the question of when precisely he had decided that the PRB was run on communist lines, after his departure from the party or after his approach was ignored.66 Abdul Manan Mohamed of the BNO opined that “most of the activities of the Party Ra’ayat were being controlled or

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62 Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (Ed.), Partai Rakyat Brunei: The People’s Party of Brunei – Selected Documents / Dokumen Terpilih, Insan, the Institute for Social Analysis, Petaling Jaya, 1987, pp. 161-7. The manifesto has been reproduced in Appendix II.


65 Ibid.

directed by clandestine organisations outside Brunei”, embodied by such PRB-sponsored visitors as Ahmad Boestamam of the *Parti Rakyat Malaya*. The quarrel was rounded off by Ghazali’s reply to the PRB’s allegations, which is worth quoting at length:

Recently, he accused the B.P.R. of being run on Communist lines to which the party replied that it appeared Tuan Ghazali’s attack was made in the hope that the Sultan and the government would arrest all B.P.R. candidates and thus remove a powerful opposition. This week, in a special Press statement, Tuan Ghazali said there would be no need to use force to remove the party men because, after the elections, the party would die a natural death. This would come when the people realised that they had been “cheated” by the party. He said that the B.P.R. was fast losing its influence in the state because it no longer had the interest of the people at heart as it had five years ago.

The only instance of actual campaigning that *The Borneo Bulletin* printed appeared on the day after the election, a report of a speech that Azahari had made at a rally on the Tuesday before the polls. The full article is reproduced in Appendix III, to demonstrate the kind of oratory that Azahari usually employed, as well as the tone and content of the PRB’s election campaign. This speech clearly demonstrates that the Malaysia issue lay at the heart of the campaign, which is unsurprising since it was the primary point of difference between the programmes of the PRB and its two opponents. The other interesting point arising from this article is Azahari’s failure even to mention the election, which is curious only three days before votes were to be cast. Though it is entirely possible that the newspaper simply chose not to include any such comment, it may be that Azahari did not address the subject because he had perfect confidence in the PRB’s ability to win the contested seats.

Some of Azahari’s assurance undoubtedly emanated from the events of nomination day on 21 July, when 31 of the 55 seats were won by PRB candidates unopposed, with a 32nd falling to the Party on 4 August because only the PRB nominated a fresh candidate when the original aspirant was disqualified. Of the 23 contested constituencies, 18 seats had two nominated candidates and the remaining five were three-cornered fights, the majority of these contests being between the PRB and independents. The BNO nominated only six...
candidates, all in Tutong, while the BUP’s lone representative was its leader, Hasbullah Daud, who stood in the seat of Sumbiling in the Brunei-Muara District against Zaini Ahmad. Azahari did not stand for election, apparently because he had refused to apply for naturalisation in the erroneous belief that he was legally entitled to citizenship.  

When polling day arrived on 30 August, PRB candidates won more than 60% of the vote in all but four of the contested seats. They lost only one seat, that of Labu in Temburong, in a close contest with a local independent candidate who was described by White as “strong” while the Party was “probably overconfident”. In another seat, Tutong’s Ukong, the successful PRB candidate, Bakri Md. Serudin, actually received only 47% of the vote, with two independents splitting the remainder. The nearby constituency of Rambai was similarly close, with the winning margin being only three votes; the ten informal votes cast in that electorate may have been the difference between victory and defeat for the independent candidate, Marican Andoo. That particular seat is also notable because it played host to the candidate who failed to win a single vote, the BNO’s Pengiran Suhaili Talip; presumably, he was too modest to vote for himself. Finally, the lone female candidate to stand for election, Nahriah Mohd. Daud, an independent, received nearly 31% of the votes cast, an excellent performance against both the PRB and the prevailing social attitudes of the time.

In sum, the PRB received 4,357 votes, or 75.58% of the total number cast in the 23 contested electorates. The majority of the remaining votes went to independents, with a total of 19.06% of the vote; the BNO won only 173 supporters and the BUP 25. The participation rate, 87.24% of the electorate in the contested seats, was excellent, with only 111 informal votes and 716 registered voters failing to participate. The end result of the elections, then, was that the PRB held all but one of the 55 District Council seats and was thus entitled to all of the available 16 seats on the Legislative Council. Making the Party’s position even more secure was the decision of the sole independent, Metusin Aliakbar, to join the PRB shortly


71 TNA, CO 1030/931, Item 6, Extract from Brunei Political Intelligence Report – August 1962, c. September, 1962, para. 1.
after the elections, most likely because of pressure and persuasion exerted on him by the Party.\textsuperscript{72}

Once the elections were over, the political scene returned to its former complexion, with the PRB and the government competing for supremacy and the Malaysia question dominating the headlines. Azahari was the first to re-enter the fray, calling for Brunei’s “undemocratic” constitution to be changed and for the elected members of the District and Legislative Councils to be recognised as the legal government of the state.\textsuperscript{73} Party Vice-President Hapidz Laksamana supported these remarks, saying that “the Sultan could guide the people of the state towards the establishment of a democratic form of government without injuring the traditional rights enjoyed by the Crown of Brunei”.\textsuperscript{74} Azahari continued this campaign by demanding a referendum on the Malaysia issue because the government-appointed commission sent to Malaya to discuss Brunei’s terms of entry “did not have the confidence of the people”.\textsuperscript{75}

In the meantime, Azahari had been embroiled in a dispute with the director of the Language and Literature Bureau, Jamil Umar, over what had been said at an audience with the Sultan on 10 September. The incident began with some comments Azahari made to Malayan newspaper \textit{Berita Harian} stating that he was “confident [that] the Sultan of Brunei would accept party guidance to ensure that the Brunei Government . . . would be run by the people’s representatives”.\textsuperscript{76} Jamil responded with a press statement claiming that Azahari had actually pledged his Party’s support for the Sultan’s acceptance in principle of the Malaysia proposal. A government statement had earlier stated that Azahari and his delegation, comprised of 50 of the elected district councillors, had pledged their loyalty to the Sultan.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{The Borneo Bulletin}, “Constitution must be changed – Azahari”, 8 September, 1962, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{The Borneo Bulletin}, “We want democracy – Laksamana”, 22 September, 1962, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{The Borneo Bulletin}, “No mandate from people on Malaysia: Azahari calls for referendum”, 22 September, 1962, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{The Borneo Bulletin}, “Azahari pledged Party support to Sultan on merger – Jamil”, 15 September, 1962, p. 1. Jamil Umar, as noted in the Dramatis Personae, is now an eminent historian in Brunei; his publications are credited to Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}; “I shall not think of any personal gain... Sultan”, 15 September, 1962, p. 1.
Azahari denied Jamil’s allegation, insisting that he had told the Sultan that he[,] as an individual, would not oppose Malaysia if it was the Sultan’s wish that Brunei should federate with Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo. He added, however, that he was not committing the Party Ra’ayat to this line.78

The exchange terminated with Jamil’s refutation of Azahari’s assertions: his statement was “absolutely factual” and his intention had been to deny the “false news” printed in Berita Harian.79 The editor of The Borneo Bulletin, Ralph Shaw, had the final word, commenting that “if the Sultan – as the supreme authority – says ‘I want Malaysia’ then, out of loyalty and affection, the party will (unwillingly, perhaps) fall into line and prove its devotion to the ruler”, as Azahari had said he would do.80

The BNO and BUP rebounded from their comprehensive defeat swiftly, participating in discussions with pro-Malaysia parties in Sarawak to form a grand alliance to promote the new federation in the Borneo territories. They were soon joined by a new ally, a party established by Ghazali Umar called the Brunei People’s Alliance, whose declared purpose was to support the Sultan’s decisions on all vital issues, and especially on the Malaysia proposal. Such lofty ambitions as his party had did not prevent Abdul Manan Mohamed from indulging in everyday politicking, accusing the PRB’s elected members of “feather[ing] their own nests by buying cars on government loans and riding about in state, forgetting the worries and cares that troubled the ordinary people”; Azahari was quick to deny this charge.81

The PRB, thanks to its clean sweep of the District Councils, selected all 16 of the elected Legislative Councillors, with Hapidz Laksamana chosen as the leader of this unofficial opposition and Yasin Affandy as his deputy. The Sultan nominated six of these councillors to the Executive Council, including Laksamana, Pengiran Yusof Pengiran Mohamed Limbang, and Mohamed Akip Abdul Ghani. Four of these gentlemen had initially declined

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their nomination because they were not the PRB’s choice for these seats; they eventually accepted their new positions, presumably out of respect for the Sultan.\textsuperscript{82}

The membership of the two councils was thus altered considerably, with the government having a majority of one in the Legislative and of two in the Executive Councils, assuming that all non-PRB members voted in accordance with administration policies. There were two Legislative Councillors who may have voted with the PRB on certain issues, nominated member Dato Temenggong Lim Cheng Choo and the State Welfare Officer, HM Salleh. White commented that the “voting of the Dato Temenggong is likely to be governed by the degree of intimidation the Party Rakyat can bring to bear”, while HM Salleh’s previous close association with the Party made his voting intentions somewhat unpredictable.\textsuperscript{83}

The first meeting of the new Legislative Council was held on 10 October, which appears to have merely been a ceremonial opening of the third session of the council, rather than a serious occasion to deal with and debate legislation. The Sultan made a speech from the throne to open the new session formally, during which he made some remarks that, in retrospect, are almost prescient:

\begin{quote}
His Highness added that, in shouldering the responsibilities which the members owed as a duty to their country, they should bear in mind that the fate, as well as the well-being of the people, lay in the hands of the members of the council . . . The people have placed their faith in you and their future depends on how you conduct yourself.

He also told the members it was their duty to see [that] law and order was maintained in this country.

Urging the members to perform their duties sincerely, the Sultan said that he hoped the members of the council would live up to their responsibilities.\textsuperscript{84}
\end{quote}

The Mentri Besar had earlier revealed the government’s approach to the new political situation when he stated that the advice of all district councillors would only be “considered if it was not contrary to government policy”, clearly implying that the PRB still had little

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\item[82] \textit{The Borneo Bulletin}, “Party names Legco men”, 22 September, 1962, p. 18; “Executive council named”, 29 September, 1962, p. 11; TNA, DO 187/33, Item 103, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Despatch No. Personal 21, 2 October, 1962, para. 9; CO 1030/933, Item 9, Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from JD Higham (CO), 19 October, 1962, para. 1.
\item[83] TNA, CO 1030/933, Item 10, Letter to JD Higham (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/59, 27 October, 1962, para. 2(d).
\end{footnotes}
hope of achieving any of its political goals if these happened to conflict with the administration’s priorities.\footnote{The Borneo Bulletin, “Councillors told advice may not be accepted”, 15 September, 1962, p. 19.}

This discussion clearly demonstrates that the PRB’s battle with the government to shape the electoral system was far more important than its campaign to win the polls themselves. This was largely a product of the political culture in Brunei, which virtually guaranteed that the Party would win the elections easily. As a result, there was a great deal more riding on its struggle to influence the structure of the electoral system, since the nature of this system would, to a large extent, determine the shape of the post-electoral landscape. In addition, at one stage, before the elections were formally postponed, it was feared that they might not be held at all, demanding that the PRB throw all of its resources into averting such a potentially disastrous situation.

The Party’s primary objective in this endeavour was, obviously, to ensure that the electoral system was as democratic as possible. This was not about boosting the PRB’s own chances of success, but rather a desire to foster the growth of democracy in the state, one of its main goals. More self-interestedly, the fairer and more transparent the system was, the less likely it was that the result of the election could be manipulated in someone else’s favour. Finally, the PRB likely calculated that the greater the democratic character of the electoral system, the more probable it was that this disposition could be absorbed by the administration as a whole, thus increasing its own chances of leading the government sooner rather than later.

Having said all that, it is perfectly obvious that, for all its demands and speechifying, the PRB achieved little actual change: all they managed to do was to persuade the government to accept certain natives of North Borneo and Sarawak as candidates for citizenship and hasten the announcement of the delay of the elections somewhat. Though it was certainly an achievement to hurry the administration into anything, it must be said that a lot of effort had been expended for precious little reward. The PRB was working from a position of
weakness, as has been demonstrated elsewhere, which improves the assessment of its performance to some extent, but it is clear that the government had definitely won this particular skirmish.

The alliance between the PRB and BULF was responsible for most of the pressure that the Party exerted on the government, as was observed above. It must be said, however, that this alliance was somewhat artificial, since it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the PRB had been responsible for establishing the BULF in the first place and retained control of it throughout its existence. Though there is no positive proof of this in the literature, the many personnel that the two bodies shared and, more importantly, the close correlation between their policies and interests indicates that this was indeed the case. As a result, the support that the BULF offered the PRB in its political campaigns was more aesthetic than real, though, as has been seen, the appearance of broader support still had a beneficial effect for the Party.

The elections themselves raise some interesting questions, most obviously, whether the PRB’s victory was really a foregone conclusion. The number of uncontested seats, the absence of well-organised opposition parties, and the juggernaut-like character of the Party all answer a resounding yes to this, and, indeed, there was never any real doubt about the result. The number of uncontested seats itself leads one to ask if the PRB might have had a hand in bringing this about, a question upon which one can only speculate due to the lack of evidence either way. However, the absence of any comment in The Borneo Bulletin on this subject indicates that there was no unethical action of this kind, since the BNO and BUP would surely be clamouring to make allegations of this nature if they were in any way warranted. The media coverage of the election campaign raises its own question, whether the amount of attention accorded to the PRB in comparison to that given to its opponents was unfair. It is difficult to say that it was, when the PRB’s dominance and the corresponding weakness of the BUP and BNO are considered, as well as the newer parties’ lack of organising capacity. In addition, the media could only cover events that were newsworthy, and one suspects that there was little of interest emanating from the smaller parties.
Post-election, the only event of any significance was the public exchange between Azahari and Jamil over whether the former had committed his party to back the Sultan’s qualified support for the Malaysia concept. The interest in this incident lies in Azahari’s admission that he would personally support the Sultan if he decided to take Brunei into Malaysia. By showing this willingness to shift its view on the proposed federation, the PRB was acknowledging the weakness of its own position _vis-à-vis_ the Brunei government. As has been noted elsewhere, entry into Malaysia offered the quickest route to democratic governance for the Sultanate, which, even after the District Council elections, still appeared to be beyond the Party’s reach. As a result, this readiness to change course so dramatically, should circumstances justify it, showed the PRB’s relative priorities: democracy before opposition to Malaysia.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has described the general sense of frustration and discontent that was one of the primary causes of the Brunei Rebellion. The economic decline described above was one factor in this, largely because of the uncertainty about Brunei’s future caused by declining oil production. The crucial role that the oil industry played in the Sultanate’s economy, not just for the government’s revenues but also more generally, meant that declining oil production affected the entire country and, indeed, caused some concern about the future economic viability of the state itself. Such uncertainty was a natural breeding ground for discontent, with the BSP, with the government, and with life generally. Exacerbating the effect of this discontent was the disparity between the wealth of the state and the poverty of the people, the importance of which cannot be over-stated. As was discussed in Chapter III, this inequality caused great frustration amongst the people, which was only increased by the government’s failure to resolve the problem.

This unique combination of disappointment about the distribution of Brunei’s wealth and the effects of its gradual loss mixed uncertainty about the future with discontent about the present, and was thus a potent factor in the growth amongst the people of dissatisfaction with
the government’s performance and a corresponding increase in the popularity of the PRB. The Party’s policies were sufficiently different from those of the government that it offered a reasonably plausible way of resolving the problems lying at the root of this discontent, while its consistent criticism of the administration’s many shortcomings contributed to the growing disenchantment with the way the government operated. The sense of uncertainty about the future is especially significant, since it only increased the fear that Brunei’s participation in Malaysia was inevitable, a combination that made any suggestion that the Sultanate might retain the status quo or even attain independence as part of a northern Borneo federation even more attractive.

The government’s inability to arrest Brunei’s economic decline and its failure to meet the people’s demands for a fairer distribution of the state’s wealth were also important factors. Had the administration been able to accomplish either or both of these goals, or at least gain credit for attempting to do so, the PRB may not have been so successful in attracting support and the government would have been far more popular with the people, and thus more assured of its position. The fact that the administration was solely responsible for these matters was also significant, since it meant that all of the opprobrium for the government’s failures would be attached to it, while the Party could safely criticise from the sidelines without suffering a similar fate.

Another factor that contributed to the sense of frustration and discontent prevalent in Brunei at the time of the rebellion was the government dysfunction also discussed in this chapter. This was another problem that could be laid solely at the government’s door, since the smooth functioning of the administration was quite clearly its own responsibility and there was no question of shifting the blame elsewhere. The failure of the experiment of using Malayan officers in place of expatriate public servants as under the Residency exacerbated the effect of this problem, since the success of the scheme depended absolutely on the diplomacy and goodwill of Bruneian officials; when the Malayans returned home so precipitately, it was very clear that the local members of the government were primarily responsible for this embarrassing debacle.
The most important point about this government incompetence was the prominent role that the Sultan played in the administration, which ensured that much of the responsibility for this dysfunction could be attributed directly to him. Though the respect and affection felt for him by his people made the Sultan, to a certain extent, exempt from personal criticism, the fact that he personally wielded the supreme state power that the constitution had granted him meant that the people, quite naturally, held him responsible for the consequences of his decisions. In addition, despite his best efforts to dissociate himself from day-to-day administration after the Officers’ Affair, the Sultan’s continuing central role in the government ensured that he remained ultimately responsible to the people for all of its deficiencies.

The third factor contributing to this sense of frustration in the lead-up to the rebellion was the disappointment caused by the District Council elections, which appeared to promise so much change and yet delivered so very little. Though it may be that too much was expected from the elections, which, after all, were only ever intended to give the people a voice in government, the fact that the *status quo ante* remained almost entirely unchanged caused a great deal of disenchantment amongst those who had hoped that the elections would transform the composition of the administration. This failure of reality to live up to expectations particularly affected the PRB, which had believed that the result of the elections would radically alter its position in the polity: even holding all 16 elected seats in the Legislative Council, however, was of no material use while the government of the country was still entirely controlled by the Sultan. For the Party, then, the elections were a monumental disappointment that served only to frustrate its dreams of power, an extremely potent factor in its decision to revolt.

Having said that, the election results also benefitted the PRB, by reinforcing its viability and status as the only legitimate opposition in the state. The overwhelming nature of its victory ensured that the PRB’s claim to be the voice of the people was resoundingly endorsed by the electorate, while the devastating loss suffered by the other political parties stripped them of any authority or legitimacy. The primary outcome of the elections, then,
was to ensure that the PRB remained locked in single combat with the government for control of the state, the significance of which was discussed at the end of Chapter III.
Chapter VI: The PRB’s International Relationships
The aim of this chapter is to discuss the Partai Rakyat Brunei’s (PRB) links with political parties and other entities in the region and internationally as a way to understand how these relationships informed the Party’s decision to begin the Brunei Rebellion. The PRB’s links to organisations in Sarawak and North Borneo lent credence to the idea that the Party’s federation concept would be widely backed in the two colonies, which led the leadership of the PRB to believe that the revolt would, in turn, be supported. The Party’s relationship with the government of the Philippines also had a decisive impact, boosting the PRB’s credibility in the lead-up to the rebellion and providing some much-needed confidence in its prospects of success.

The development of the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU) is so entangled in the Party’s relationship with elements within the Indonesian government that the two subjects are discussed together. The very existence of the Tentera was a temptation to rebel, since there would be little point in creating such a body if the Party had had no intention of using it. The PRB’s relationship with elements within the Indonesian government, meanwhile, encouraged the idea that the Indonesian military would provide material support to the TNKU in the course of its rebellion, an assumption without which the revolt would likely never have happened. Finally, the Tentera’s training programme in Kalimantan played a key role in the utter failure of the rebellion, since, on its own, the TNKU possessed few military skills and, as a result, the opportunity that had been lost when the programme miscarried so completely was quite significant.

The PRB’s Links in the Proposed States of Malaysia

As has been mentioned in previous chapters, the PRB had relationships with political parties in Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, and Sarawak. Most of these associations tended to be anti-Malaysia alliances, unsurprisingly, though some were of a more permanent character. The extent and effect of these links are discussed in detail below.
As demonstrated in Chapter III, the PRB’s relationship with its counterpart in the Federation, the Parti Rakyat Malaya (PRM), began when Azahari attended the PRM’s inaugural general assembly in December 1955 and modelled the political party that he subsequently founded on its ideology and approach. The two parties regularly sent delegations to each other’s annual congresses, for example in Ipoh in Perak in November 1957 and in Brunei Town in April 1957 and February 1960, though the Brunei government sometimes refused to allow the representatives of the PRM to enter the Sultanate. There were, however, no formal ties between the two parties, as PRM leader Ahmad Boestamam confirmed in August 1962. The PRB had a similar relationship with the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP, now known as Parti Islam Se-Malaysia), with PMIP leaders being invited to and attending PRB congresses.¹

The controversy regarding the Malaysia proposal brought the PRB closer to its Malayan allies, since they all opposed the concept, though for different reasons. The PRM, with its Malayan People’s Socialist Front (MPSF) coalition partner, the Labour Party of Malaya, supported the principle of Malaysia but disagreed with the Malayan government’s choice of method, timing, and the manner of its implementation. The PMIP preferred the concept of Melayu Raya, encompassing Malaya, Singapore, the Borneo territories, the Philippines, and Indonesia, as a more viable means of promoting the welfare of the Malay people as a whole; the Malaysia concept was consequently described by PMIP president Burhanuddin Al-Helmy as “small and narrow”.²

This shared hostility to Malaysia created increased opportunities for the PRB to ally itself with opposition groups in both Malaya and Singapore; for example in September 1961, when

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the newly formed *Barisan Sosialis* of Singapore invited delegations from the PRB and PRM to attend its inaugural meeting. The chairmen of the three parties, Azahari, Lee Siew Choh of the *Barisan Sosialis*, and the PRM’s Ishak Mohammed, issued a statement declaring that “the Borneo territories should achieve self-determination before they decide on the nature of their association with Malaya and Singapore”. Boestamam had earlier expanded on this view in a joint statement with Azahari:

Party Raayat Malaya and Party Raayat Brunei believe that Brunei people and Borneo people as a whole are unable to accept the Malaysia idea which is to the benefit of colonialists and capitalists. We urge the Malayan people and the Brunei people to unite in brotherhood and deliver an independent nation.

The MPSF then organised a conference in January 1962 in Kuala Lumpur of all socialist parties in the prospective components of Malaysia in order to discuss their views and unite their efforts to thwart the formation of the new federation. Though the conference was most notable for expelling the People’s Action Party (PAP) of Singapore because it was, ostensibly, no longer socialist, it also passed several resolutions, prominent among which were those calling for a closer association of the people of the five Malaysian territories “based on recognition of the right of self-determination”, condemning any attempt to implement the Malaysia proposal without the consent of the Bornean peoples, and demanding that democratic elections should be held in the Borneo territories; “if these territories through such elections declare their desire for a United Kalimantan Utara (United Borneo Territories), then the British Government should forthwith give effect to such desire”. As Eussoff Agaki Ismail has commented, the PRB’s aim in attending the conference was “to identify itself with other anti-Malaysia political forces outside the Sultanate and at the same time to rally the support of those forces towards strengthening the idea for the unification of the Borneo territories”.

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It is apparent from this brief discussion that the PRB’s links with its Malayan allies tended to manifest themselves through word rather than deed, which was further demonstrated after the rebellion when both the MPSF and the PMIP issued statements characterising it as a revolt against British colonialism. In a parliamentary debate on the Federation’s material support for the Brunei government, Boestamam said that “any uprising against [the] forces of colonialism anywhere in [the] world gets our 100 per cent support”, while the PMIP passed a resolution condemning British forces for their suppression of the people of Brunei. The Malayan Communist Party was also reported to have “expressed full support for the Brunei people’s revolution”, an endorsement that the PRB likely neither solicited nor appreciated.

The Malayan government evidently rated the practical nature of the PRB’s Malayan alliances more highly, since it firstly arrested fifty people in December, including nine MPSF leaders, for allegedly participating in activities in support of the Malayan Communist Party, before arresting Boestamam himself in February 1963. Boestamam was accused of a variety of subversive activities, including being in “close collaboration” with the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), forming a secret organisation that would act as a “fifth column” for Indonesia, and having foreknowledge of the TNKU’s intentions six months before the revolt began. The timing of these arrests link them to the Brunei Rebellion, though it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Malayan government merely seized the opportunity created by the revolt to deal with a longstanding irritant.

Singapore

The PRB’s involvement in the Singapore political scene followed a similar pattern to that of Malaya, with its primary relationship being with the Parti Rakyat Singapore (PRS). The two parties sent delegations to each other’s congresses, in Singapore in February 1957 and in

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Brunei Town in April 1958, with the former gathering passing a resolution supporting the PRB’s policy on the northern Borneo federation. The PRS also backed the PRB’s opposition to Malaysia, describing the concept as “a very dangerous intrigue of the reactionary right-wing movement in conjunction with the British colonialists”; they instead supported complete independence before any larger confederation could be considered, just like the PRB.\textsuperscript{10}

The PRB’s other Singaporean ally was the Barisan Sosialis, a relationship based solely on their shared opposition to Malaysia. As noted above, the PRB had sent a delegation to the Barisan’s inaugural meeting, while a group from the Singapore party visited Brunei in June 1962 in order to gauge the level of support in the Sultanate for the Malaysia plan.\textsuperscript{11} It is clear what the Barisan derived from this relationship: a Malay nationalist ally in northern Borneo that presented an excellent opportunity to hinder the progress of the Malaysia plan; what the PRB gained is less obvious, since associating with a known communist front organisation did little to enhance the Party’s reputation with either the Sultan or the people. However, as was observed in Chapter IV, the PRB needed as many allies as it could attract in its fight against Malaysia, and the Barisan was a very willing volunteer.

Both the PRS and the Barisan Sosialis lent verbal support to the PRB after the outbreak of the Brunei Rebellion, describing it as a “popular nationalist movement for independence and liberation from British colonialism”.\textsuperscript{12} The Barisan expanded on this sentiment:

\begin{quote}
The revolt is a measure of the extent of the peoples’ feelings against the Malaysia Plan which is designed to perpetuate British colonial domination. It has exploded the bluff that the Malaysia [sic] Plan has the support of the peoples of the Borneo Territories. It is time for the [Malayan] Alliance and the PAP to reconsider their support for this British scheme.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

The Barisan then organised a mass rally on 23 December to “support the people of Brunei in their struggle against colonialism”, attracting approximately 4,000 people, described by Lord Selkirk, the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia, as the usual

\textsuperscript{12} TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 32, “Monthly Summary of Intelligence, December 1962”, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 16, 8 January, 1963, para. 2.
\textsuperscript{13} ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Enclosure to Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the First Secretary, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 2459, 11 December, 1962, para. 3.
number of hard core supporters expected at a Barisan rally, who showed no marked enthusiasm for the cause. More interestingly, Selkirk reported to the Colonial Office that Lim Chin Siong, Secretary-General of the Barisan, had confessed that ‘a section of the leftist masses’ had been confused by the anti-communist and monarchist aims of Azahari but asserted that the latter nonetheless represented a national democratic anti-imperialist movement which deserved their support.

The PRS supported this and another Barisan rally, held in January 1963, as well as conducting a poster campaign of its own to promote the rebels’ cause.

As its Federation counterpart had done, the Singapore government took the opportunity presented by the Brunei Rebellion to arrest 111 of its opponents, though its action was delayed until February 1963 by political circumstances. The full story behind these arrests is well beyond the scope of this thesis: suffice to say that the fact that Lim Chin Siong happened to meet Azahari days before the revolt provided plenty of cover for an action that had been contemplated since the first half of 1962, as did Indonesia’s announcement of its intent to oppose the formation of Malaysia. Jones has summarised the effect of these arrests:

With their defeat in the referendum on Malaysia staged the previous September, and with the heart of their leadership now forcibly removed from the political scene in Singapore, the Barisan could offer little effective opposition (either legal or extra-legal) during the remainder of 1963 to Lee’s policies and the plans for Malaysia.

North Borneo

The PRB’s links with political parties and figures in North Borneo were discussed in Chapter IV, primarily dealing with Donald Stephens’ involvement in the united front against Malaysia in July 1961 and the Pasok Momogun’s participation in the United Nations (UN) petition in September 1962. North Borneo was a very different proposition from other territories, since the PRB had no real natural political ally; even the Pasok Momogun was...

14 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 32, “Monthly Summary of Intelligence, December 1962”, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 16, 8 January, 1963, paras. 2-3; ANA, File 248/5/6, Telegram to the DEA from the Australian Commission, Singapore, Saving no. 5, 28 December, 1962, para. 1.
15 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 32, “Monthly Summary of Intelligence, December 1962”, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 16, 8 January, 1963, para. 3.
lukewarm at best in its support for the UN petition. This situation caused the Party to build its own networks in the colony independent of other political parties, mostly in the Brunei Bay area as part of the gestation of the TNKU, and it is these activities that are discussed here.

It may be recalled from Chapter III that, before the PRB was officially founded, several other societies were created as fallbacks should the government refuse to register the new party; this Trojan horse strategy was also used in North Borneo in early 1957 and again in 1962. The following passage from an intelligence report demonstrates both the aim and the general success of this endeavour:

In the latter part of December [1960] one of these [PRB] visitors, who had been drinking over-freely in a bar in Labuan, confided that the purpose of his visit was to make a preliminary survey in preparation for the time when Brunei would resume possession of North Borneo. He and his friends, who sought to restrain him, did not endear themselves to their audience by their [sic] presumption of the inherent [sic] superiority of Brunei and the Brunei Malays.18

It is highly unlikely that all PRB visitors to North Borneo behaved quite so tactlessly, though the fact that much of the Party’s support in the colony was confined to the Brunei Bay area, where the majority of North Borneo’s Bruneis lived, indicates how unattractive the prospect of a return to Brunei sovereignty was in the wider community.

The PRB had two vehicles in its Trojan horse strategy in 1962, the Angkatan Desa Bersatu of Labuan and the Angkatan Ra’ayat Anak Sabah of Sipitang. The first of these was refused registration by the North Borneo government because it had concealed its direct association with the PRB, revealed by its aims:

(1) Closer association of the Borneo territories in accordance with the old sovereignty of the Sultan of Brunei;
(2) the formation of a United States of Borneo under the Sultan of Brunei prior to consideration of Malaysia; and
(3) the return of Labuan to Brunei.19

The second organisation had been established after a group of Sipitang residents visited Brunei, presumably receiving advice from PRB members about ideology and political

18 TNA, CO 1030/932, Item 5, Extract from the North Borneo Local Intelligence Report, January 1961, c. February, 1961, para. 9; ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Public Relations Officer, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 944, 8 May, 1957, para. 5; TNA, CO 1030/932, Item 10B, Appendix A to the North Borneo Local Intelligence Committee Report – November 1962, 28 November, 1962, para. 2.
19 TNA, CO 1030/932, Item 10B, Appendix A to the North Borneo Local Intelligence Committee Report – November 1962, 28 November, 1962, paras. 2-4.
methods. Quite what the *raison d'être* of these Trojan horses was is unknown; from information in the possession of the colonial government, it appears that the two societies would support the foundation and operation of a third, the Sabah United Labour Front, in order to form a similar alliance to that of the PRB and the BULF. It is possible, also, that these organisations were formed solely to conceal the TNKU’s activities in North Borneo.

Apparently separate from these networks was a similar operation based on the sizeable Indonesian community of Tawau, which was very close to the border with Kalimantan in North Borneo’s east. This network was exposed on 12 December, four days after the outbreak of the rebellion, when an anti-piracy patrol discovered uniforms similar to those worn by the TNKU in several kampongs on the outskirts of Tawau. It was later reported that

> [o]n 17th December [the] Chairman of the Indonesian Association [of] Tawau volunteered [the] information that two weeks before the Brunei revolt he was approached to form a secret body in Tawau to supply food and other necessities to large bodies of Brunei rebels in the border areas near Tawau. He had supplied food to them on several occasions. He said [the] rebels were well armed with automatic rifles and radio transmitters, and they planned to attack Tawau with [a] simultaneous uprising by local Indonesians.

Entirely separate from these covert networks was the PRB’s association with GS Sundang of the Pasok Momogun, discussed in Chapter IV. For Sundang, this relationship was motivated by the fact that the increasing ascendancy of the pro-Malaysia parties in North Borneo had forced him to seek allies for his continued opposition to the new federation in Sarawak and Brunei. The PRB, of course, suffered from the same sense of isolation, though Sundang was in a more invidious position: as has previously been noted, his party failed to support his campaign once Malaysia became a *fait accompli*, and Sundang was forced to abandon his public opposition in order to remain leader of his party. The alliance between the PRB and the Pasok Momogun was founded on their shared opposition to Malaysia and, thus, when the latter ceased to espouse this cause, the relationship ended.

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The PRB’s relationships in Sarawak were the most complex, encompassing links with both political parties and informal local networks. Early in its existence, the Party attempted to ally itself with the anticession faction in Sarawak, but its overtures were rebuffed because this group was interested solely in restoring the Brooke regime to the government of Sarawak and had no interest in inter-territorial politics. The PRB then turned its attention to the people of Limbang, attempting to recruit members among the villagers, some of whose natural sympathies lay in Brunei. The Sarawak government countered this move by sending senior Malay officers to discourage any support that might be elicited: this effort proved successful, as “those who originally displayed an interest [in the PRB] had little comprehension of its political significance”.22

The PRB’s primary relationship in Sarawak was, of course, with the SUPP, which was more of a natural ally than a superficial assessment of the two parties would suggest. For a period of several months in 1959 and 1960, the PRB and the SUPP were the only political parties in northern Borneo, which caused them to gravitate towards each other more than they may have without this circumstance. In addition, both parties were left wing and anti-colonialist, so they shared some interests and goals, as well as the way they approached politics. Finally, and most importantly, both were by nature opposition parties, agitating for fundamental changes in the government of their respective states, which made them instinctive allies when inter-territorial solidarity was required, especially during the anti-Malaysia campaign.

As the PRB had done with parties in Malaya, they invited a delegation from the SUPP to their annual congress in February 1960, permitting the three representatives to address the assembly. The SUPP returned the invitation, hosting Azahari as “guest of honour” at their first anniversary celebration in Kuching in June the same year, a visit that Chin, viewing it from the SUPP’s perspective, described as “significant” because it showed that the SUPP

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22 TNA, CO 1030/242, Item 74, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for October, 1956, Serial no. 10/56, c. November, 1956, para. 4; Item 61, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for April, 1956, Serial no. 4/56, c. May, 1956, para. 5; Item 73, Sarawak and Brunei Political Intelligence Report for September, 1956, c. October, 1956, para. 6.
“had already established ties with other political personalities in the region”. The issue of closer association was canvassed, and it was suggested that a committee be formed to encourage this federation, but nothing was actually accomplished. Labour organisations in Sarawak, such as the Sarawak Trades Union Congress, that were closely linked with the SUPP in much the same manner as the BULF was connected to the PRB, also exchanged visits and pledges of solidarity with their Bruneian counterparts.

From its inception, the PRB, as was shown in Chapter III, had wanted to operate in North Borneo and Sarawak; in December 1960, White reported that they had unsuccessfully sought to change the terms of their constitution to allow them to do so, either by establishing branches or formal alliances with other political parties: the SUPP was, of course, the prime candidate for the latter action. With the failure of this strategy, the PRB turned instead to aiding in the establishment of a new branch of the SUPP in Miri in early 1961, though the precise nature of this assistance is unknown. In addition, the PRB recruited members who resided in Sarawak, mostly in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions, some of whom may also have been members of the SUPP or the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak (BPS), discussed below. Their role was most likely to foster support for the northern Borneo federation concept in these groups and their local communities.

The SUPP was the PRB’s most steadfast ally in its campaign against Malaysia, beginning with its participation in the united front in September 1961. The SUPP had multiple reasons for opposing the concept, the most important of which have been summarised by Mackie:

As a contemporary account put it: ‘Certainly, many fears are widely held amongst [the] Chinese. Opposition is partly Chinese communal and partly Communist inspired. They do feel that Malaysia means a privileged status for the native and an inferior status for the Chinese.’ They feared disadvantageous conditions of citizenship (later remedied by safeguards to a large extent), a threat to their schools and culture, and discrimination against them in employment opportunities and

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25 TNA, CO 1030/932, Item 4, Extract from the Political Intelligence Report, December 1960, c. January, 1961, para. 1; CO 1030/1447, Item 3, Letter to Eugene Melville (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/504/59, 31 December, 1960, para. 2; ANA, File 3032/2/1, Part 1, The Political Outlook in Sarawak up to the end of 1963: Report by the Joint Intelligence Committee (Far East), Annex to JIC(Fe)(60)120(Final), 11 February, 1961, para. 14; Enclosure to Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Second Secretary, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 2518, 19 December, 1962, para. 26; The Straits Times, “Borneo Row on ‘Foreign Politicians’”, 28 November, 1960, p. 16.
access to land. Some of SUPP’s leaders, such as Ong Kee Hui, indicated a willingness to consider a federation with Malaya, provided that independence were conceded first.26

The SUPP remained opposed to Malaysia until the day the new federation was inaugurated, despite the many difficulties their steadfastness caused them in the aftermath of the rebellion and the initial stages of Konfrontasi.

The most important of the SUPP’s anti-Malaysia activities in tandem with the PRB were recounted in Chapter IV, so it is only necessary to say here that a large part of the basis of the alliance between the two parties was their shared opposition to the new federation. The fact that the SUPP had agreed to support the PRB’s northern Borneo federation under the sovereignty of the Sultan of Brunei had probably less to do with conviction than with expediency: it was the cost of the PRB’s strong support for the SUPP’s anti-Malaysia campaign, a price it was very willing to pay, since this federation concept was extremely unlikely ever to eventuate. Having the PRB, as a Malay nationalist party, on its side far outweighed the minor irritations associated with paying lip service to a northern Borneo federation under a constitutional monarchy.

The outbreak of the rebellion brought this alliance to a crashing halt. The leadership of the SUPP quickly dissociated itself from the PRB as best it could, though the efficacy of this was diminished somewhat by the fact that a large proportion of party members in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions were known to have participated in the revolt. The rebellion triggered the resignation of several hundred of the SUPP’s most moderate members, some because of the party’s implication in the revolt, and some because of pressure exerted by the government caused by the party’s links with the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO). This loss was balanced, as Hanna has pointed out, by the arrest of many left-wing members of the party who were suspected of involvement with the CCO, which enabled the SUPP to consolidate and better control its base.27

Unlike the governments of Malaya and Singapore, the Sarawak government had actually acted against the CCO before the rebellion began, arresting several people in June 1962 and deporting some to China under the Undesirable Persons Ordinance. The outbreak of the revolt caused a state of emergency to be declared in Sarawak and the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance to be enacted, which allowed people suspected of subversive activity to be held in preventive detention without charge for up to two years. Within two weeks of the rebellion, between 35 and 50 people had been arrested because the government had evidence that the CCO, “if not directly linked with this rebellion, sympathises with it and would seek to take advantage of it if it gets any opportunity”, as the Chief Secretary told the Council Negri, the premier legislative body in Sarawak.\(^{28}\) Ong Kee Hui, Chairman of the SUPP, later reflected that these arrests had an unexpected effect:

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Unfortunately these extensive arrests and detentions had a demoralising effect on many of our young members and shattered their confidence in achieving our aims by constitutional means. A considerable number of the more gullible were persuaded by hard core members of the CCO that they had to leave their families and ‘disappear’ into the jungle to avoid arrest. In fear, many of these misguided youths crossed the border into Indonesian Kalimantan. There they received rudimentary military training and served in expendable roles in the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU – the Indonesian army in Kalimantan), when Indonesian President Sukarno’s armed confrontation against the formation of Malaysia began in 1963. It is doubtful if this unhappy outcome of the arrests was even contemplated by the government when what may have been an over zealous [sic] programme of arrests was approved.\(^{29}\)
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The *Barisan Pemuda Sarawak* (BPS, Sarawak Youth Front) encountered similar problems to those of the SUPP. Though the BPS was formally a non-political organisation, intended to foster the development of the native peoples of Sarawak, its prominent role in the Malay community ensured that it played a political role, as it had done during the anti-secession campaign. The president of the BPS, Ahmad Zaidi Adruce Muhammed Noor, was its leading light and guiding force, who had studied at Bogor with Azahari during World War II and fought the Dutch in Indonesia’s struggle for independence. The BPS had initially backed Zaidi’s vision of a northern Borneo federation under the Sultan of Brunei, allied with

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\(^{28}\) ANA, File 3032/2/1, Part 1, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Second Secretary, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 2558, 26 December, 1962, paras. 2-3; Ong, *op. cit.*, p. 576; Chin, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

\(^{29}\) Ong, *op. cit.*, pp. 595-6.
Indonesia, but the advent of the Malaysia proposal split the organisation, with the more moderate members leaving to form a new pro-Malaysia political party, the Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak, and the rump of the BPS formally declaring its support for the new proposal in defiance of its leader.30

The relationship between the PRB and the BPS is difficult to characterise: there does not appear to have been a formal alliance or any kind of official collaboration, along the lines of the PRB’s involvement with the SUPP and the PRM. The available information suggests instead that many BPS members sympathised with the PRB’s opposition to Malaysia and its Malay nationalism, some even going so far as to join the TNKU. The following passage is especially suggestive:

Sheikh Azahari had plans of his own and was determined to persuade Ahmad Zaidi to join forces with him to reject the Malaysian concept. His right-hand-man Jais Karim was sent to dissuade the BPS leaders from becoming part of the Federation[,] insisting that the only way out was by armed struggle. Jais said the proposed Brunei Rebellion had the support of 15,000 Indonesian troops, a claim which was later proven false. Robert Jitam, an Ahmad Zaidi loyalist, went across the Indonesian border to investigate the report. Ahmad Zaidi had asked Jitam, leader of the Sarawak Dayak Association[,] to bring back a hand grenade as proof that the troops were actually waiting on the other side of the border. However, Jitam returned to inform the BPS president that this so-called invasion of Brunei, [sic] was not true.31

After the revolt, the government extended their programme of arrests to the BPS, detaining several members, including Robert Jitam, in January 1963. The BPS had already condemned the rebellion and declared that any member who was found by the government to have participated in it would be expelled. The leadership even went so far as to dissolve the Limbang branch of the association in February, which had apparently supported the revolt almost en bloc. Zaidi himself was known to have been appointed a “General” in the TNKU and was consequently placed under house arrest in Kuching; in September 1963, he quietly decamped to Indonesia, where he remained until 1968.32

Viewed as a whole, the PRB’s relationships with other political parties in the Malaysian region are best characterised as superficial alliances of convenience, with only two, those with the PRM and the SUPP, exhibiting anything resembling depth or conviction. This reflected the fact that the PRB needed to focus its efforts on its activities in Brunei, which were, after all, its primary purpose. The Malaysia proposal created the necessity for greater regional co-operation, which brought the PRB closer to those parties who also opposed the idea, but there was neither impetus nor time for these alliances to develop into something more permanent.

Having said that, these relationships were still valuable to the PRB. Alliances with foreign political parties gave the Party some legitimacy and standing in its early days, when such boosts to its credibility were particularly beneficial. The support that these parties offered to the PRB and its policies, especially those that would affect territories outside Brunei, was crucial in winning supporters within the Sultanate and goodwill outside it. The Malaysia proposal naturally lent extra weight to these relationships, since a combined opposition to the concept would be more likely to be successful than one that was disparate and isolated. In addition, the anti-Malaysia campaign needed momentum in order to induce more people to support it, and a strong, multi-party, inter-territorial alliance was the best way to achieve this.

The PRB’s links in Sarawak and North Borneo had special significance because of the Party’s commitment to the northern Borneo federation concept: without majority support in all three territories, the idea would inevitably die. Having a local political party to promote the concept, both amongst its own membership and within the wider population, brought it much closer to reality. In addition, simply having the support of any entity for its federation was beneficial; persuading the SUPP, one of the largest parties in Sarawak, to endorse the idea publicly was invaluable. The PRB’s networks of support in both colonies encouraged discussion of the concept in local communities and attracted committed adherents, who were probably more likely than a member of a political party was personally to believe in the northern Borneo federation and then be prepared to back this belief with action. Similarly,
the circumstances surrounding the Malaysia proposal made it imperative that any Bornean campaign against it was unified: the momentum that Britain’s support for the new federation created could only be reversed with complete unity and resolute determination, as was demonstrated by the PRB’s experience in Brunei.

The alliances that the PRB established with parties in Malaya were largely symbolic, though they did bestow greater standing upon the PRB in the Brunei community in its early years because of its connections in the more advanced polity of the Federation. The PRB’s alliance with the PRM was the most natural of these relationships, in light of the role the latter played in its birth and the similar characteristics, ideologies, and goals of the two parties. By contrast, the PRB’s alliances in Singapore were of marginal importance, reflecting the lack of affinity between the two territories; these relationships only started to deepen once the campaign against Malaysia commenced.

The PRB’s connections in North Borneo were, to a large extent, governed by the fact that the colony was far less politically advanced than even its neighbours were: the first political party was only established in August 1961, by which time all inter-territorial relations were determined by one’s view on Malaysia. The PRB, being vehemently anti-Malaysia, thus had no natural political ally in North Borneo, especially as the consensus grew in favour of the new federation during 1962. The Party consequently sought support amongst local communities, a grassroots campaign against Malaysia that may have borne fruit had there been more time and energy to devote to it. The most notable feature of this local network was the fact that most of its members were Brunei Malays located in the Brunei Bay area, which suggests that there was little interest in the northern Borneo federation outside of that community.

The closest relationship the PRB had with any party was that with the SUPP, the predominantly Chinese, communist front organisation that was still the Party’s most natural ally in the region, as noted above. This was primarily because of the coincidence of interests between the two parties, both being nationalist and left leaning and both being emphatically opposed to Malaysia. The BPS was another instinctive friend, heavily involved in the Malay
nationalist cause in Sarawak, though its role as a non-political cultural organisation precluded the kind of close co-operation that the PRB had achieved with the SUPP. This inherent compatibility between the two groups made the BPS’s decision firstly to support Malaysia and then to condemn the rebellion more of a betrayal than even the SUPP’s desertion after the rebellion.

**The PRB, Indonesia, and the TNKU**

The PRB’s political relationships in Indonesia and the foundation of the *Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara* will both be explored here because the two subjects are so entwined as to render their separation meaningless and counter-productive. It is also important to remember that the nature of Indonesia’s polity ensured that the PRB concentrated largely on links with the government, instead of with political parties, as in Sarawak, Singapore, and Malaya. Though a relationship was established with the Partindo, most of its connections in the Republic were with the government and the military. This reflected the progressive marginalisation in Indonesia of most of the political parties and the corresponding ascendancy of President Sukarno, the *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (ABRI), and the PKI.

As noted in Chapter III, the roots of the PRB’s relationship with Indonesia lay in Azahari’s sojourn in Java during World War II and his subsequent support for the nationalists in their struggle for independence. This experience informed his approach to politics and his ideology for the rest of his life, which, by extension, influenced the Party’s own worldview. This point is especially significant when the very existence of the TNKU is considered, since there was really no objective reason for the PRB to possess a military wing: it was Indonesia’s independence struggle that had demonstrated to Azahari that force could be used successfully to achieve self-government, while the Republic’s continuing crusade against colonialism helped to create an atmosphere of crisis and passion that enabled the PRB to justify to itself the establishment of the TNKU.
Suggestions had been made in British circles that the BRUFICO Affair was pervaded by Indonesian influence, though it is unlikely that these allegations were accurate. An example of these suspicions appeared in an intelligence report from March 1953, which stated that “it is thought likely that there has been a certain amount of Indonesian penetration of the Brunei State Police Force”. However, Hector Hales of the British Malayan Petroleum Company (BMPC) gave the impression that Indonesia’s influence was indirect, more of an example to emulate than anything else, as did High Commissioner Sir Anthony Abell. Had there been more concrete evidence of covert Indonesian activity, Abell would certainly have reported this to the Colonial Office. Overall, the tenor of the reports from Abell and Hales suggest that Azahari’s movement was a purely local phenomenon, inspired by the Indonesian example, but led by Bruneians.

This inference, that Indonesia functioned as an exemplar, is supported by a report in January 1955 that Azahari had spread the rumour that President Sukarno planned to visit Brunei in the near future and that workers might be recruited in Indonesia to “help develop” the Sultanate. At the time, Azahari and his nationalists had been attempting to build a political organisation, the Labour Party, as noted in Chapter III, so this rather improbable rumour was probably intended to promote this group and attract more members. The same objective was being pursued in October 1956 when a PRB delegation went to Labuan to meet Kartowisastro from the Indonesian Consulate in Singapore, presenting a miniature brass cannon cast in Brunei to him as a gift for Sukarno. Later, in March 1959, the Indonesian Consul General attended a dinner that Azahari gave in Singapore for the constitution delegation then en route to London.

This diplomatic contact appears to have deepened the relationship, with three PRB members planning to travel to Indonesia in 1959 to “obtain political advice and education”

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33 TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 8, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 32 Saving, 10 March, 1953, para. 2.
34 TNA, CO 1022/396, Item 1, Letter to Dr WLF Nuttall from RE ‘Hector’ Hales, Enclosure to Letter to WBL Monson from Dr WLF Nuttall, 11 February, 1953, p. 1; CO 1022/396, Item 12, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 54 Saving, 13 May, 1953, para. 6.
36 Zaini, op. cit., p. 8; TNA, CO 1030/465, Item 129, Extract from Brunei Intelligence Report – April, 1959, c. May, 1959, para. 7.
and Azahari making similar plans for July of the same year. Britain’s security organisation in Singapore had informed the Australian government in late 1957 that “one or two members of his [Azahari’s] party are believed to have associations with individuals in Indonesia whose nationalism is combined with communist affiliations”, leading to the assumption that their later contacts were also largely nationalist in character, which, in turn, suggests a solid link to the nationalist-led government. Though the available information on the PRB’s ties in Indonesia discussed thus far has been fragmentary and unsatisfactory, it does indicate that there was, at the least, a mutual recognition of the fact that each could be useful to the other, a sound basis upon which to build a closer relationship.

There is little information available on the progress of this link in 1960, with only a passing reference to the fact that Azahari had advocated closer association with Indonesia on the “basis of peaceful coexistence and cooperation in economic matters and defence” at the PRB annual congress in January, though he later denied having said so. This, of course, does not mean that no activity took place: indeed, Poulgrain has stated that the PRB made plans for the training of Party members in military tactics in Indonesia in 1960 and 1961, though he does not quote a source for this assertion and there are no further details given. It is impossible to draw any real conclusion from these two fragments of information; however, there is every chance that the PRB was too preoccupied with rebuilding its popularity in Brunei after its popularity slump in the wake of the Merdeka Mission to devote much attention to its relationship with Indonesia.

The Malaysia proposal was, of course, the catalyst that caused the PRB’s relationship with Indonesia to grow and expand. The reasons for the Republic’s opposition to Malaysia are too complex to explore in detail here; briefly, Indonesia viewed the new federation as a threat to its security and prestige, as well as an opportunity to advance its anti-colonial

38 ANA, File 3030/1/2, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Acting Commissioner, Singapore, No. 2203, 9 November, 1957, para. 2.
aspirations. In addition, a new international crisis over the Borneo territories would allow Indonesia’s many domestic troubles to be submerged and ensure that the interests of Sukarno, the PKI, and the ABRI were all advanced.\footnote{For explanations of the motivations behind Konfrontasi, see Mohammad Hatta, “One Indonesian View of the Malaysia Issue”, Asian Survey, Vol. V, No. 3, March 1965, pp. 139-43; Mackie, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 326-33; M Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 115-6; John Subritzky, \textit{Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation, 1961-5}, Macmillan Press, Houndmills, 2000, pp. 41-2.}

Indonesia did not express its opposition to Malaysia publicly before the Brunei Rebellion, largely because it was preoccupied with its campaign for the transfer of West Papua to Indonesian sovereignty and any appearance of irredentism elsewhere would damage its chances of success there. The Republic, in fact, endorsed the proposal, initially in rather faint terms, before Foreign Minister Subandrio told the United Nations General Assembly:

when Malaya told of us its intentions to merge with the three British Crown Colonies of Sarawak, Brunei and British North Borneo as one Federation, we told them that we had no objections and that we wished them success with this merger so that everyone might live in peace and freedom.\footnote{Quoted in Peter Boyce (Ed.), \textit{Malaysia and Singapore in International Diplomacy – Documents and Commentaries}, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1968, p. 67; ANA, File 221/6/2A, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 1242, 3 July, 1961, para. 2.}

In addition, \textit{Suluh Indonesia} reported that Subandrio had expressed “no opposition and no active support” for Malaysia when Lord Selkirk visited Jakarta in August 1961.\footnote{Quoted in Mackie, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 104-5.} The Republic’s Consul to North Borneo later told \textit{The Borneo Bulletin} that Indonesia had no claim to the Borneo territories and “would not object” to their accession to Malaysia.\footnote{\textit{The Borneo Bulletin}, “Consul says no claim to Borneo”, 20 January, 1962, p. 2.} All of these endorsements used similarly equivocal language, making it difficult to avoid the conclusion that Indonesia was unenthusiastic about the new federation and wanted the world to know it.

Its reticence in public did not prevent the Indonesian government from initiating covert activities in the Borneo territories in pursuit of its opposition to Malaysia:

A psychological warfare element of the Indonesian Military Intelligence Service has been operating under a Lieutenant Colonel Suparman for not less than two years on tasks directed against Malaya and the Borneo territories. Its prime concern in the Borneo territories has been, and still is, the conduct of subversive activities to win the inhabitants over to sympathy with Indonesia with the view to eventual incorporation of the Borneo territories into Indonesia.\footnote{TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 54, Telegram to the Cabinet Office and others from the CINCFE, SEC No. 474, 22 December, 1962, para. A.}
The Indonesian government is also known to have provided financial assistance to the PRB, including a donation of $500,000 in June and July 1962 for the “intelligence movement in Brunei to work in the Borneo territories”, $10,000 that Sukarno gave directly to Azahari during a visit to Japan in June, and a further, unspecified amount supplied by the Indonesian Consul General in Singapore.46

The PKI chose to make its own opposition to the Malaysia proposal explicit, with the Third Plenum of the Central Committee passing a resolution in late December 1961 denouncing the new federation as, amongst other things, “a form of neo-colonialism” and “an unacceptable colonial intrigue”.47 The party’s official newspaper, Harian Rakjat, had already condemned the proposal in similar terms in August. As Mortimer has pointed out, however,

PKI comments on Malaysia prior to the outbreak of the Brunei revolt in December 1962 did not occupy great prominence in the party’s arsenal of propaganda . . . and [Chairman DN] Aidit’s advice to the party was merely to ‘pay close attention’ to British plans.48

This was a direct contrast to its vociferous campaign for the return of West Papua.

The question of whether the PKI exerted influence within the PRB is difficult to judge. White reported in March 1962 that “Pengiran Ali is related to Azahari through his wife and is fairly certain that there is no Communist penetration into the Party”.49 Ghazali, on the other hand, has revealed that the Malayan government suspected the contrary:

I informed [Brunei Attorney General Abdul] Aziz [Zain] that the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) also was busy infiltrating and subverting Party Rakyat. Three Indonesians had been employed in a printing press owned by Azahari. Quite a common method of establishing a position by elements which were indulging in political action or espionage, and we knew for certain that they were close with Azahari – the Party Rakyat leader.50

British authorities in Singapore had information that supported Ghazali’s statement to some small extent:

47 Quoted in Boyce (Ed.), op. cit., p. 68.
49 TNA, CO 1030/1012, Item 122, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/504/62(II), 13 March, 1962, para. 3.
There have been reports in the last few months that the P.K.I. Central Committee has turned its attention to the Borneo territories in order to stir up trouble and frustrate the implementation of Malaysia, establishing contact with communist elements in the three territories and infiltrating agents from Pontianak and Tarakan.\(^{51}\)

The vagueness of this information, however, precludes a definitive conclusion on its applicability to Ghazali’s assertion.

Though the evidence is not definitive on this point, it appears that the foundations for the TNKU were laid in August 1961, when an unnamed PRB leader, described by White as an extremist, went to Jakarta to “enlist support” for the Party’s campaign against the Malaysia proposal.\(^{52}\) This was apparently the first such visit recorded by the Colonial Office, which implies that the British felt that there was something different about this particular trip from the PRB’s previous contacts with Indonesia.\(^{53}\) It is not known from the available evidence what actually occurred at the meeting, but the timing of the visit, close on the heels of the formation of the united front against Malaysia, and the lack of publicity afforded to it, strongly suggest that it was connected to the covert activities surrounding the establishment of the TNKU.

The catalyst for the decision to found the TNKU appears to have been a renewal of the split in the PRB in May 1961:

The High Commissioner reported that Azahari had resigned the Presidency of the Party Ra’ayat, apparently a purely tactical move, and that it appeared that there was a conflict within the Party between the more moderate element led by Azahari and the militant element led by H.M. Salleh. Salleh and his supporters were defeated in 1959 and Salleh went into virtual retirement. The High Commissioner reported that it seemed clear that Azahari was going to abandon his moderate attitude and become more militant. It was probable that Azahari was convinced that he would fall if he did not go with the stream and he was making his excuse for the change the procrastination and ineptitude of the Government over the elections.\(^{54}\)

The PRB had always been split between the two factions, with the moderates generally being in control up to this point. This strengthening of the militant faction was most likely caused by the threat that the Malaysia proposal posed to the Party’s position, while its ascendancy

\(^{51}\) TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 18, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 37, 7 December, 1962, para. 4.

\(^{52}\) TNA, CO 1030/1448, Item 3, Letter to the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 140/S/504/61, 16 August, 1961, para. 2. This unnamed leader was probably Yassin Affandy.


\(^{54}\) Ibid., section on May 1961.
made it necessary to take actions that would advance the militants’ agenda, the most important item of which was the creation of a force of last resort.

Various motivations have been suggested for the establishment of the TNKU. Azahari has asserted to Poulgrain that it was “idealism and nationalism” that drove the decision, elaborating in an earlier interview with *Asiaweek* that he “didn’t trust the British” to be “sincere about giving independence to us without a revolution”. 55 Zaini has stated that the provisions of the constitution concentrating power in the hands of the sultan were the cause, as well as a willingness to adopt the “revolutionary” theory of “Anarchy, chaos and new order” in order to achieve the PRB’s goal of leading the government of the northern Borneo federation itself. 56 The Colonial Office assessment was that it was “a form of insurance on Azahari’s part in case he was unable to secure his objectives by constitutional means”. 57

October 1961 appears to have been a pivotal month, with “nearly all the Party committee members of importance” visiting Indonesia for reasons that were apparently unknown to the British. 58 Azahari’s purpose was no secret: he had travelled to Jakarta for an appendectomy, and stayed there and in Bogor for three months, ostensibly to recuperate. Whilst there, he resumed contact with Sambas Atmadinata, who had previously been his commanding officer during the Indonesian independence struggle and had subsequently become a brigadier general in the ABRI and Minister for Veteran Affairs. Sambas introduced Azahari, Yassin Affandy, and Mohammad Haji Manggol to General AH Nasution, the Minister for Defence and Security and Chief of Staff of the ABRI, who subsequently denied providing anything more than moral support to the PRB prior to the rebellion in interviews with Crouch, Poulgrain, and Harun. Upon his return to Brunei in December 1961, Azahari ordered that recruitment of men “for military training” in Jakarta should begin, a clear indication that the foundation of the TNKU and this visit to Indonesia were directly related. 59

56 Zaini, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-7 (emphasis in original).
59 TNA, FO 371/169901, Item DH1061/19, “Recent Developments in Anglo-Indonesian Relations including A Record of Indonesian Activities Concerning Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei”, 2nd Proof Copy of Proposed White Paper, Part II: Indonesian Activities in the Former British Borneo Territories, 30 September, 1963, para. 4; *The Borneo Bulletin*, “Prayer for Azahari”, 28
Poulgrain has contended that it was the Foreign Minister, Subandrio, who arranged for TNKU cadres to be trained in Indonesia, rather than Nasution. Lieutenant Colonel Magenda of army intelligence had been tasked to liaise with the PRB, which would naturally imply an ABRI connection, but Magenda has also been linked to Subandrio’s Badan Pusat Intellijen (Central Bureau of Intelligence). Poulgrain has implied that Magenda’s ties to Subandrio, in this instance, trumped his duty to Nasution and he never informed the latter of the assistance that was being provided to the PRB. Britain’s post-revolt intelligence confirmed this theory: “Secret sources revealed that the Indonesian Ambassador in Manila sent a message to the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok on 27th November requesting them to assist Azahari ‘in accordance with the wishes of the Minister of Foreign Affairs’.”

The question of who in the PRB was responsible for the training programme is important because it contributes to an understanding of who originally suggested that the TNKU should be established. Azahari explicitly stated in his interview with Asiaweek that he had formed the Tentera, while the fact that Azahari was always the leader and guiding force of the PRB obliquely confirms this. The information quoted above that recruitment of cadres began only when Azahari returned to Brunei after his appendectomy also supports this supposition. On the other hand, the ascendancy of the militant faction within the Party implies that the impetus for the establishment of the TNKU originated there, and that Azahari had merely swum with the tide to avoid being swamped, which is the more likely scenario.

The precise sequence of events once the training programme had been organised is, yet again, unclear. At the time of the revolt, the TNKU was estimated by the British to number somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000; quite how the Tentera got to that size, however, is difficult to judge. A British military report compiled from preliminary interrogations of TNKU prisoners during the rebellion suggested that the majority of its members, those


generally regarded as “soft core”, were “often” recruited at gunpoint. Most of the other available information relates to Sarawak and North Borneo rather than Brunei, but points to a more persuasive process:

In the MIRI to NIAH area TNKU rank and file firmly believed the propaganda imparted to them by the BRUNEI leaders, i.e.:-

a. The only method of achieving true independence was by seizing power in the three territories. This TNKU under the leadership of AZAHARI was fully equipped to do.

b. An amalgamation of the three territories as KALIMANTAN UTARA as an independent unit outside MALAYSIA would bring advantages to the masses.

c. Assistance from INDONESIA and the PHILIPPINES would arrive almost immediately after the rising.

d. The SULTAN of BRUNEI has blessed this movement and would become the constitutional head of the new State. AZAHARI would be the Prime Minister. Many TNKU members also stated that Stephen YONG KWK SZE [sic], Secretary General [of] SUPP was expected to hold a high Government post.

In the areas affected there was also a strong feeling of fear. If a person refused to participate in TNKU activities he was convinced that he would be regarded with extreme disfavour by the new Government even to the extent of being punished.

In North Borneo, the impoverished living conditions of those recruited and the consequent promises of “immediate material improvement” in their lives were also significant, as was, in the case of several pengirans in the Brunei Bay area, the undertaking that lands that had been lost to Sarawak would be returned to them in the event of a successful revolt.

The TNKU was organised into fifteen companies of 150 men each at the time of the revolt, at least nominally. These companies were then divided into platoons of thirty and then further sub-divided into sections of six. The hierarchy of the Tentera was based on that of the PRB, with all district commanders of the TNKU being active Party officials. The commander of the TNKU, for example, was Yassin Affandy, who was concurrently Secretary-General of the PRB. It is important to emphasise, however, that the moderate

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62 ANA, File 248/5/6, Preliminary Notes on the North Kalimantan National Army (NKNA), Memorandum to the Secretary, Department of Defence from the Defence Representative, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. DRS.112, 14 December, 1962, para. 6; “Recent Developments in Brunei”, Note no. 13/1962, Joint Intelligence Committee (Australia), 14 December, 1962, p. 1.


64 TNA, WO 305/2519, “TNKU in North Borneo”, Annex H to Part VI of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 2: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 12 January 1963, 15 January, 1963, paras. 3c & e.
faction of the Party, led by Hapidz Laksamana, was not involved in any way with the TNKU, with the militant group being firmly in control of the Tentera.\textsuperscript{65}

The level of training provided to the TNKU was, at best, limited. The majority of its members received little more than token instruction in how to handle a firearm, usually using a wooden dummy because of the Tentera’s lack of weaponry. Such training was, in any case, largely moot, because most TNKU members were armed with parangs, axes, and knives, unless they happened to possess a shotgun. Nevertheless, some sort of training was known to have been conducted in Brunei and North Borneo, in makeshift ‘parade grounds’ in cleared jungle near villages or towns, including Brunei Town, Jerudong, and Sipitang. The activities at these parade grounds were described as drilling, though, in light of the widespread incompetence displayed during the rebellion, it is obvious that this training was neither useful nor intensive.\textsuperscript{66}

More details are known of those cadres who travelled to Indonesia for military training, which appear in full in Appendix IV. To summarise, two groups are known to have trekked to East Kalimantan, the first comprising 26 trainees and the second 20. The first group received “elementary training” from a local government officer and were then detained before being sent home because of the irresponsible behaviour of their leader and, probably more importantly, a lack of communication between those who organised the training and local ABRI commanders in Tarakan.\textsuperscript{67} The second group joined the first, who had spent the interval in waiting for instructions from the TNKU’s leadership, before they all travelled into East Kalimantan, where they received some military training but were virtually left to their

\textsuperscript{65} TNA, ADM 1/28626, Report on Operations in Borneo, December 1962-January 1963, CINCFE,77/63, 22 April, 1963, Annex B – Narrative of Operations – 8th December to 20th December, 1962, para. 22; ANA, File 248/5/6, Preliminary Notes on the North Kalimantan National Army (NKNA), Memorandum to the Secretary, Department of Defence from the Defence Representative, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. DRS.112, 14 December, 1962, para. 2; TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 39, Telegram to the Cabinet Office from the CINCFE, JCPE, 188, 19 December, 1962, para. 3; CO 1030/1466, Item 52A, Enclosure B to Letter to WJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/C/1/59, 29 December, 1962, para. 6.

\textsuperscript{66} TNA, CO 1030/1466, Item 34, Enclosure to Message from PM Linton (BSP), Undated, c. late December, 1962, p. 1; ANA, File 248/5/6, Preliminary Notes on the North Kalimantan National Army (NKNA), Memorandum to the Secretary, Department of Defence from the Defence Representative, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. DRS.112, 14 December, 1962, para. 5; The Borneo Bulletin, “Right Under their Noses”, 12 January, 1963, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{67} TNA, FO 371/169901, Item 1061/91, “Recent Developments in Anglo-Indonesian Relations including a Record of Indonesian Activities Concerning Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei”, 2nd Proof Copy of Proposed White Paper, Part II: Indonesian Activities in the Former British Borneo Territories, September, 1965, para. 5.
own devices. The persistent but vague assertions in contemporary and secondary sources that military training of the TNKU definitely occurred in Indonesia suggest that there may have been other trainees whose journeys to East Kalimantan were more successful, though the utter failure of these two groups makes this extremely doubtful.

The TNKU’s activities were not a secret: rumours inevitably circulated in ulu areas of the unusual movements of young men towards Kalimantan, which naturally reached both the government and the media. *The Borneo Bulletin* published a rather sensationalised report of a “Borneo Liberation Army” that was “ready to march into British Borneo” in May 1962.

Donald Stephens printed further details only three days before the outbreak of the rebellion:

> Kalimantan Utara National Army? That’s what the news said. For sometime now I have heard from friends in Sipitang and Lawas of strange happenings in the jungles there. The story was that an illegal society (which tried to get itself registered in North Borneo but failed because the police were suspicious about them) was drilling young men in cleared areas of the jungle. That ‘wooden guns’ had been used and that the object of the jungle exercises was to ‘liberate’ Sabah. The illegal society has been very active in Sipitang and recent police activities in the area show that they are fully aware of the trouble which members of the illegal society are trying to cook up there.

The police activity that Stephens refers to will be discussed further in Chapter VII.

Interestingly, there are indications that the Brunei government had information of its own on the activities of the TNKU that had not been shared with the British. Acting High Commissioner WJ Parks wrote of the *Tentera* in early December: “I think, however, that the Palace party has been aware of its existence for some months. You will recollect the radio broadcast made by Pengiran Yusuf about certain ill-disposed people plotting against the Sultan. This seems to tie in”. Parks was referring to a broadcast made by the Deputy State Secretary in July, mentioned in Chapter IV, in the course of which Pengiran Yusuf stated that there was “a small section of the population attempting to instigate unrest” and that “[s]uch opinions or feelings . . . were very dangerous and posed a threat to the peace and

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68 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 145, Savingram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 1171, 22 December, 1962, para. 2.


72 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 14, Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/59, 3 December, 1962, Enclosure to Memorandum to WIJ Wallace (CO) from JD Higham (CO), 6 December, 1962, para. 1.
security of Brunei”. It seems doubtful, however, that the Brunei government had any definitive intelligence on the TNKU, in light of the fact that this broadcast appears to have been the only action taken at the time.

The PRB’s association with Indonesia was one of its most significant external relationships, as the foregoing discussion has made clear. The Republic was a natural ally of the Party, being both radically nationalist and aggressively anti-colonialist. Its status as the dominant local power in the region enhanced the prestige attached to the relationship, though it also affected the dynamic between the two parties: the PRB had to accept whatever Indonesia was willing to offer, which proved to be an extremely invidious position when the rebellion began to founder. More importantly, Indonesia’s international reputation as a leading opponent of colonialism could be used by the PRB to advance its own cause, which was the most effective way of gaining the support that it needed for the northern Borneo federation concept on the global stage, if it was to have even a chance of realising its dream.

It is difficult to characterise the relationship between the PRB and Indonesia accurately. Though it is easy to view the PRB as the supplicant and Indonesia as the patron, this assessment of the relationship is not quite correct. The PRB provided a clear opportunity for Indonesia to foster anti-Malaysia activity in the Borneo territories, an opening made especially attractive by the Party’s popularity in Brunei and its ties in Sarawak and, to a lesser extent, North Borneo. More broadly, a close relationship with the PRB also created a foothold in the Borneo territories that could be built upon if Indonesia should choose to attempt to expand its control north of the Kalimantan border. Finally, the Borneo territories were natural candidates for liberation from the colonial yoke, a struggle in which Indonesia was determinedly and constantly engaged, and the PRB’s own efforts in this direction created an opportunity for the Republic to enter the lists in a new arena.

The most important aspect of the relationship between the PRB and Indonesia is obviously the role that the latter played in training the TNKU. Though, as was demonstrated above, the Republic’s assistance was of doubtful utility, it still constituted a genuine link between the two that impacted very deeply on both the outcome of the rebellion and later events in the region. Most importantly, Indonesia’s tangible support and the implied promise of more gave the TNKU the confidence to launch the revolt; indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Tentera would not have rebelled if it did not believe that the Republic would send military assistance if it proved necessary.

The issue of which faction of the PRB inspired the establishment of the TNKU was briefly discussed above. This question is significant solely because it indicates who was responsible for advocating the idea of revolt and thus their reasons for doing so. In this light, the fact that the militant faction was the primary driver behind the creation of the Tentera suggests that the idea was an expression of its belligerency and a natural extension of its advocacy of a hard line approach. It is thus necessary to examine its reasons for adopting militancy, the most important of which was the weakness of the PRB’s position in Brunei’s governmental structure and the frustration resulting from this. The Malaysia proposal was a significant catalysing force as well, exacerbating the Party’s impotence and increasing the urgency of its need to take action. More immediately, the postponement of the District Council elections at the end of July 1961 and the extent of public anger over government incompetence created an atmosphere of crisis that allowed the militant faction to be successful in its promotion of what would otherwise be the extremely drastic option of founding the TNKU.

The question then becomes why the militant faction, after playing second fiddle to the moderates since the inception of the Party, had gained the ascendancy during the second half of 1961. The reasons just given for the militants’ preference for the hard line are all valid in this instance, transforming moderates into hard-liners and strengthening those who had already chosen that path in their conviction. The role of Azahari in choosing to support the militant cause should also be emphasised, since there were probably some moderates who
had formerly been reluctant to commit to militancy who, once it became clear that even the party leader was advocating violent action, decided that acquiescence in the prevailing view was the safest course. All of these reasons assist in understanding why the decision was made to abandon constitutional methods.

The question of who organised the training was also discussed above and is significant only because it indicates which of the competing groups in Indonesian politics, the PKI or the ABRI, was assisting the PRB. The lack of real army support for the TNKU training programme suggests that, though it was peripherally involved, the ABRI was not the main protagonist. Subandrio, on the other hand, was generally thought to be linked to the PKI, though the extent of this relationship is now disputed, while the PKI was an early opponent of Malaysia. It is, of course, possible that someone else organised the assistance, for example nationalists connected to the Partindo, but this appears unlikely in light of the level of influence required to make the training programme feasible. The PKI, then, was the most likely candidate, which suggests that the PRB was already willing to accept assistance from whichever quarter it was offered, though, to be fair, it is possible that they knew nothing of Subandrio’s connections to the PKI and believed that the ABRI was supporting the training programme.

The TNKU training programme in Indonesia was discussed extensively above. Its most outstanding feature was, of course, its rather spectacular failure to achieve anything at all, apart from attracting the attention of the intelligence services in the Borneo territories. This fiasco may perhaps be most attributable to the weakness of the PRB’s relationships in Indonesia and the resulting irresolution with which the training programme was conducted by the ABRI. Had the Party been able to foster stronger links with a greater number of influential people and groups in Jakarta, the training that the TNKU received would undoubtedly have been more effective, intensive, and useful. In this light, the fact that Subandrio is the most likely person to have organised the training programme increases in significance, as it suggests that the ABRI was reluctant to promote the success of an
initiative originating in the Foreign Ministry in a wholehearted manner; this would not, of course, have been the case had the ABRI been the driving force behind the programme.

The failure of the TNKU training programme is equally attributable to a lack of persistence and zeal on the PRB’s part. However half-hearted Indonesia’s commitment to the project was, the Party needed to do everything it could to guarantee the programme’s success, certainly if it wanted the TNKU to be prepared for its rebellion. The debacle recounted in Appendix IV demonstrates that this was far from the case and, indeed, suggests that the PRB was not totally committed to the idea of extra-constitutional action. It is possible that the militants’ apparent ascendancy within the PRB was illusory and the founding of the TNKU was merely a sop to assuage their chagrin at being sidelined by the moderates yet again. It is, alternatively, also conceivable that the Tentera was founded as a long-term project and that the training programme was not intended to be put to the test quite as soon as it was. Then again, it may simply have been incompetence on the part of those who organised the programme and those who led the trainees in Indonesia. The first of these possibilities is the least likely to be correct because of the evidence quoted above for the ascendancy of the militant faction. The other two scenarios are more feasible: it is probable that both were, to some extent, responsible for the abject failure of the training programme.

The PRB and the Philippine Claim to North Borneo

The background to the Philippines’ claim to North Borneo was outlined in Chapter II, a necessary adjunct to this discussion of the intersection of this dispute with the PRB’s efforts to promote the northern Borneo federation. The details of the claim, the efforts made to pursue it, and the mischief it created amongst Malaysia, Great Britain, and the Philippines are not entirely germane to this thesis, but a brief description of the way in which the dispute became entangled in Brunei’s internal politics is necessary if the inclusion of the claim here is to be understood.74

74 There are numerous works on this claim, including Michael Leifer, The Philippine Claim to Sabah, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Hull, 1968; KG Tregonning, “The Philippine Claim to Sabah”, Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal
The death of Sultan Jamalul Kiram II in 1936 without a recognised heir left the Sulu Sultanate leaderless and triggered a dynastic dispute that prevented the British North Borneo Company and, later, the British colonial government from paying all the cession monies that were owed under the 1878 treaty. This situation caused the heirs to seek various forms of legal redress, including a petition to the High Court of North Borneo in December 1939 that decided which heirs were to receive money and several attempts to negotiate a final settlement of the issue after the war. The general impression that these manoeuvres create is one of a quest for greater remuneration, rather than a sincere effort to recover control of North Borneo for the Sultanate.75

The Sulu heirs’ pursuit of their claim did not receive widespread public attention until December 1961, when The Philippines Free Press began a vigorous campaign on the subject with an article entitled “North Borneo Belongs to Us”.76 This crusade continued throughout the first half of 1962 and, as Nisperos has remarked, “served as the catalyst propelling a wider and more serious consideration of the question both inside and outside the Philippine government”.77 The accession of Diosdado Macapagal to the Presidency in December 1961 probably also played a role in this process, since he had taken a keen interest in the issue as early as 1946.78

The catalyst for the Philippine government’s formal interest in the heirs’ claim was the receipt of an aide-memoire from London in May 1962 that asserted Britain’s sovereignty over North Borneo and stated that Britain would vigorously resist any claim to the territory. This document created an opportunity for Manila to take action and Macapagal wasted little time in announcing the Philippines’ intention of pursuing a claim to proprietary and sovereign rights in North Borneo; the Philippine government sought conversations with its British counterpart to resolve the issue. The British government responded in August by stating that there was no dispute to discuss because “the heirs to the sultan, whose rights to

77 Nisperos, op. cit., p. 138.
annual payment had been scrupulously observed, had no rights to transfer to the Philippine government which might affect the status of North Borneo.” 79

The PRB became embroiled in the dispute when Nicasio Osmeña, the Sulu heirs’ legal representative, wrote to Azahari in February 1962 inviting him to Manila to “discuss the political overlap between the Kalimantan Utara proposal and the claim to North Borneo”. 80

According to Azahari, Osmeña offered to support the northern Borneo federation

[b]ecause Kalimantan Utara was a territorial reconstruction of the sultanate, and seen as a part-solution by the Sulu claimants and the Philippine government, Osmeña indicated a willingness to relinquish the claim on North Borneo. Whether or not these proposals were outside Osmeña’s jurisdiction is another matter: in effect, Osmeña presented the lure of Philippine support for greater PRB defiance of the British. Using his obvious familiarity within the ruling hierarchy in Manila, Osmeña intimated that the offer of Philippine support came from the government... 81

Azahari did not accept Osmeña’s invitation until the end of October, when he travelled to Manila with Pengiran Metussin Pengiran Lampoh and Zaini. 82

Leifer has asserted that Osmeña became involved with the PRB in order to “redirect support for the Philippine claim into enthusiasm over an alternative arrangement—based, of course, on the principle of self-determination”. 83 It was also a way of ensuring that the claim remained prominent in the local media, an important consideration if its momentum was to be sustained. For the PRB, any international support was, of course, inherently valuable, while the Philippine government’s involvement in the North Borneo claim and the public backing it provided while the Party delegation was in Manila was really the only time before the rebellion that the PRB’s northern Borneo federation concept received any official support whatsoever.

Osmeña lured Azahari and his colleagues to Manila by publicly endorsing the PRB’s federation policy as part of a plan intended to settle the claim to North Borneo amicably. The Associated Press announced his real purpose: “allegedly ‘attempting to sell the Sultan of Sulu’s proprietary interest in North Borneo’.” 84 The PRB was willing to facilitate this desire:

80 Poulgrain, op. cit., p. 239.
81 Ibid.
83 Leifer, op. cit., p. 103.
The idea was first, to form NKKU [Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara] and after the formation of NKKU, the NKKU Government would negotiate with the Kiram Corporation. According to Zaini but denied by Azahari, Osmeña [sic], as Legal Adviser to Kiram Corporation, was also capitalizing on this issue. He asked the PRB delegation the amount of US$70 million (about one year of North Borneo’s earnings at that time) as financial compensation for the return of North Borneo to Brunei. During the one-hour discussion, H.H. Sultan of Sulu agreed to drop the Sulu claim on North Borneo provided that the PRB urged H.H. Sultan of Brunei upon his installation as Sri Mahkota Negara of NKKU to build a small palace in Sandakan (North Borneo) and provide a pension for him.  

Osmeña outlined the general principles of this agreement in a letter addressed to the Sultan of Brunei:

Confirming our conversations with Mr. A.M. Azahari, Chairman of the Party Rakyat, I wish to state that as Legal Adviser to the heirs of Jamalul Kiram, former Sultan of Sulu and as controlling stock-holder of the Kiram Corporation who is the assignee of all the rights and interests of the heirs of the former Sultan of Sulu, I want to express my conformity to surrender the rights and interests of the said heirs of the former Sultan of Sulu to certain portions of British North Borneo which was the subject of a contract between the Sultanate of Sulu and the North Borneo Company, at present represented by the British Government, as successor in interest to the North Borneo Company, in favor of the Sultanate of Brunei in accordance with the expressed principles of the Party Rakyat, Brunei, Kalimantan Utara. The terms and conditions under which the transfer of rights will be carried out shall be determined upon mutual understanding and agreement. With renewed assurances of our cooperation for the establishment of a unified independent Kalimantan Utara under the sovereignty of Your Highness.  

It appears that the Sulu heirs’ preferred solution remained a financial settlement from whomever it could be obtained.

During its visit to Manila, the PRB delegation held a well-publicised press conference, addressed students from the University of the East and members of the press at the National Press Club, offered financial assistance to the Philippine government from Brunei’s substantial reserves in London, and, most importantly, met with Philippine Vice President and Secretary for Foreign Affairs Emmanuel Pelaez. Reuters’ report of the latter meeting stated that Azahari had requested assistance from the Philippine government in Brunei’s struggle for independence, without specifying the form any such aid might take. Zaini has provided further details of what occurred at this meeting:

At the same time, the PRB delegation proposed a political formula to the Vice President. The formula was that the Unitary States of Northern Borneo would be prepared to recognise the *proprietary rights* of the Sultan of Sulu to a certain...
portion of North Borneo in return for political support at the United Nations. In an earlier discussion with Sultan Ismail Kiram, it was amicably agreed that the Sultan of Sulu would “surrender the rights and interest of the said heirs of the former Sultan of Sulu to certain portions of British Borneo which was the subject of a contract between the Sultanate of Sulu and the North Borneo Chartered Company in favour of the Sultan of Brunei in accordance with the expressed principles of Party Rakyat Brunei, Kalimantan Utara.” The Vice-President showed keen interest in this formula and said he would go along with it. Vice-President Emanuel Palaez [sic], indeed, made a public statement supporting the right of the people of the Northern Borneo territories to self-determination and independence just before the Proclamation of Independence for the Unitary States of Northern Borneo was made on the 8th of December, 1962.  

The British Ambassador to the Philippines, John Pilcher, summarised the effect of the PRB delegation’s presence in Manila thus:

On the one hand there is the continuing intrigue of Azahari and the [Partai] Rakyat leaders coinciding to some extent with the ambitions of Osmeña and the heirs. Proposals from these sources seem to fluctuate between the establishment of a unitary Sultanate of Sulu, comprising the present province of Sulu and North Borneo under the Kiram family, and a unitary State of all three Borneo territories under the Sultan of Brunei. There is obviously a conflict between Sulu and Brunei ambitions here, but the various spokesmen affect to be united in their public statements.

The Brunei People’s Alliance went straight to the heart of the matter: “Does the Brunei Party Ra’ayat back the Philippines’ claim to sovereignty over North Borneo or does it still believe that sovereignty should be returned to the Sultan of Brunei?” Zaini went some way toward answering this question in the very same edition of The Borneo Bulletin:

The belief that the Philippines would drop its claim to North Borneo if an independent Borneo federation was set up was expressed here by a Party Ra’ayat member of the Brunei Legislative Council. Soon after his return from an extended stay in the Philippines with Inche A.M. Azahari, president of the Party Ra’ayat, Inche Zaini Haji Ahmad told The Borneo Bulletin that an assurance on those lines had been given to him by most of the Filipino political leaders he had met.

The overwhelming impression of all this wheeling and dealing is that anything would have been agreed to by the PRB if support for its aspirations for a northern Borneo federation had been forthcoming from the Philippine government.


89 The Borneo Bulletin, “Party Ra’ayat has confused us all – Alliance”, 8 December, 1962, p. 3.

The PRB’s involvement with the Philippines and its claim to North Borneo continued during the Brunei Rebellion, with Azahari and Zaini returning to Manila before it began, ostensibly to await the arrival of the SUPP members of the delegation that would travel to New York to support the joint petition to the UN, discussed in Chapter IV. The Party leaders’ presence in the country was slightly uncomfortable for the Philippines because it imperilled their relationships with Malaya and Britain, but, at the same time, it also allowed Manila to increase the pressure on London for formal discussions about the claim. In addition, the Republic was able to enhance its anti-colonial credibility through its inferred connection with the rebels.

Azahari sought favour with the Philippine government by endorsing President Macapagal’s concept of a Confederation of Malaysia, comprising the Philippines, Malaya, Singapore, and the Borneo territories. The Filipinos, however, were inclined to “wait and see”, providing moral support only to the PRB, even in the first few days of the revolt when it was still possible that it might succeed. When it became clear that the rebellion would certainly fail, the Philippine government began to back away from Azahari and Zaini, refusing to recognise the NKKU because it included North Borneo and because it failed to meet the ordinary criteria for official recognition of a new state. The relationship between the PRB leaders and the Philippines in the aftermath of the rebellion is discussed in further detail in Chapter IX.

The PRB’s involvement in the claim to North Borneo is inherently significant because of its chronological propinquity to the outbreak of the revolt. Its primary importance, however, lies in the support that the Party received from the Philippine government. As has been mentioned elsewhere, the PRB’s northern Borneo federation concept received little support outside Brunei, with only the SUPP publicly backing it. The Philippine government’s overt

91 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Manila, No. 404, 13 December, 1962, para. 3; File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Joint Intelligence Committee (Australia) Note No. 12/1962: Developments in Brunei, 11 December, 1962, p. 1.
support for the Party in its quest for self-determination for the Borneo territories was thus the first instance of official and international encouragement of the federation. This support bolstered the Party at a crucial point in time, only weeks out from the revolt, and increased its confidence in its eventual success. In addition, the Philippines’ support would have been invaluable if Azahari and Zaini had reached the UN, a point that would be immaterial were it not for the effect that the prospect of such international patronage had on their self-assurance.

The PRB’s actions in the Philippines also had important consequences in North Borneo. The people of the colony were, inevitably, offended by the intervention of a political party from Brunei in a dispute that had nothing whatsoever to do with it, which was only exacerbated by the widespread ire caused by the claim itself. This adversely affected the PRB’s reputation in North Borneo, decreasing its support amongst the general populace and, correspondingly, increasing the number of people who actively disliked the Party. As a consequence, when the rebellion began, people were quicker to condemn the PRB and its actions and less willing to await the outcome of events before publicly opposing the revolt.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the PRB’s external relationships in order to analyse the extent to which international factors caused the rebellion. The first subject discussed was the Party’s alliances in the Malaysian region, the most salient feature of which was the support that it received from its two Bornean neighbours. The revolt would not have occurred if the PRB had not believed, however erroneously, that there was sufficient backing in Sarawak and North Borneo for its federation concept, and the public support that its allies lent to the idea provided the grounds for this belief.

The second subject discussed was Indonesia’s relationship with the PRB and the role it played in the founding of the TNKU, the latter of which was itself an important cause of the rebellion. Fundamentally, the very existence of a body known to be willing to participate in a revolt against the government increased the temptation for the PRB to take that course of
action when it believed that circumstances warranted it. Indeed, the decision to establish the *Tentera* in the first place indicates a willingness on the part of the leadership of the Party to consider extra-constitutional action, an openness to the idea of violence that helped to create the conditions for it to occur. The foundation of the TNKU could, in fact, be seen as a declaration of intent and a commitment to rebellion, especially in light of the ascendancy of the militant faction within the PRB: once the Party started down this path, it would have been almost impossible to reverse course, unless, of course, it managed to achieve marked success in the political sphere.

Clearly, the most important point about the PRB’s relationship with Indonesia, as previously remarked, was the belief encouraged by the failed training programme that the TNKU could rely on the Republic for material assistance during the revolt should it be required. Rank and file members of the *Tentera*, as noted in Chapter VIII, had been informed that Indonesia would certainly send military aid, a sure indication of the strength of the Party’s confidence in whatever assurances it had received from its contacts in the Republic, though there is, indeed, no proof that any firm promises had actually been made. It is, however, highly unlikely that the TNKU, poorly trained and inadequately equipped, would have attempted to take on the might of the British Army if it did not believe that Indonesia’s assistance was available.

The verbal support that Indonesia gave to the rebellion once it began had one significant effect, that of boosting the PRB’s anti-colonial credentials. Despite the Party’s claims to the contrary, the revolt was quite obviously directed primarily against the Brunei government, with Britain’s involvement coming only at the request of the Sultan. Consequently, the Republic’s repeated insistence that the rebellion represented a just struggle for Brunei’s independence, complemented by the PRB’s own similar protestations, lent a sheen of anti-colonial legitimacy to the event. Indonesia’s continuing campaign against the evils of colonialism was instrumental in this, adding the weight of its considerable reputation to a revolt that would otherwise have remained an obscure, parochial event.
The other notable point to make is the role that the training programme fiasco played in the utter failure of the revolt. As Chapter VIII thoroughly demonstrates, the TNKU possessed little expertise in the basic skills of warfare, let alone in such crucial matters as military strategy, tactics, and planning. The training programme offered the only opportunity for the Tentera to acquire these capabilities, yet, as was shown above, it failed to make the most of it and therefore lost a golden chance to enhance the rebellion’s prospects of success.

In addition, the majority of the cadres involved, presumably the best of the TNKU’s recruits, were stranded in Indonesia during the revolt due to the poor planning and execution of this training programme; they were consequently unable to assist the remainder of the Tentera in its own training or otherwise to influence the outcome of the rebellion.

The next subject explored was the nexus between the Philippines’ claim to North Borneo and the PRB’s promotion of its northern Borneo federation. The support that the Philippine government and media provided before the revolt bestowed an important boost in credibility upon the Party at a time when one was sorely needed, and especially for its federation concept. More significantly, as has already been remarked, the Philippines’ support increased the PRB’s confidence in its eventual success, which fed the self-assurance that was surely required if one were going to take a decision as irrevocable as to rebel against one’s government.

The Philippines’ pre-revolt support for the Party had one unintended consequence for the government of the Republic, and that was the presence of Azahari and Zaini in Manila during the rebellion. The obvious question to ask is, if the PRB leaders were going to spend the duration of the revolt outside of Brunei, why they chose Manila instead of Jakarta. Superficially, Indonesia would have been the more natural destination, largely because of the Party’s closer relationship with Jakarta. However, there were several advantages to be gained from going to Manila, foremost among which was the moral support and assistance initially offered by Osmeña and his contacts. Equally important was the fact that the Philippines was regarded as a devoted client state of the USA who had hitherto been relatively inactive in the anti-colonial movement; Manila, therefore, offered clearer air in which to promote the anti-
colonial aspects of the rebellion and, crucially, a more neutral environment that, unlike Jakarta, would not immediately relegate the PRB to the status of mere Indonesian puppets. More practically, the Party leaders’ purported reason for travelling at all, being *en route* to New York, would not have been remotely plausible if they had first gone to Jakarta.
Chapter VII: The Catalysts of the Revolt
This chapter will explore the two catalysts for the decision to begin the Brunei Rebellion, the repeated postponement of the first substantive meeting of the newly partially elected Legislative Council and the arrest of ten Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU) members in Sarawak in late November. The second of these is posited to be the most significant factor in the decision-making process, because of the clear threat that these arrests were believed to pose to the existence of the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB) itself. The two catalysts in combination were also influential, deepening the Party executive’s fears that all was on the verge of being lost as well as enhancing their sense of crisis.

The Postponement of the Legislative Council Meeting

After its victory in the elections, the PRB was eager to exercise its mandate in the Legislative Council, in the hope of achieving its goals through legislation. As noted in Chapter V, a ceremonial meeting of the Council was held on 10 October to swear in the new members, but a more substantive session was not scheduled to take place until 5 December. This was not an unusual situation, as noted in Chapter IV, with the Legislative Council meeting only infrequently since its establishment in 1959. By contrast, the District Councils were active soon after the elections, with, for example, the Brunei-Muara body approving proposals regarding the improvement of roads, the extension of electricity and water supplies to rural areas, and the provision of health and communication services to certain areas of the district as early as October. The Executive Council was also functioning, probably more frequently than the other councils, though, as High Commissioner Sir Dennis White rarely mentioned the activities of this body in his reports to the Colonial Office, there are no details available to confirm this inference.¹

The PRB began to make preparations for its debut appearance in the Legislative Council early, announcing only three weeks after the elections that Vice President Hapidz Laksamana would lead its faction in the Council. Then, early in November, Azahari publicised his party’s intention to introduce an anti-Malaysia resolution in the Legislative Council, rather

bullishly declaring that the bill would certainly pass. On 24 November, eleven motions were formally submitted to be tabled at the meeting, one of which suggested that the British government should return North Borneo and Sarawak to the sovereignty of Brunei, while another urged that the Malaysia concept should be abandoned because “it was against the wishes of the people, who desired to gain independence through their own efforts”.

The more controversial of these motions were rejected by the Speaker of the Legislative Council on 3 December because they dealt with matters beyond the Council’s purview. The meeting was then postponed twice, firstly to 12 and then to 19 December. Various reasons for these postponements have been suggested, including the comment of Lord Selkirk, the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia, that “the situation which culminated in the revolt” was to blame. John Parks, acting as High Commissioner for Brunei while White was on medical leave in England, stated that the “[p]ostponement [was] allegedly due to [the] irregularities of certain motions put up by [Partai] Rakyat members (e.g. Motion on Finance which only Government can introduce etc.)”. Several historians, citing unattributed assertions published by Abdul Rahman Karim in the periodical *Eastern World*, state that the British advised the Brunei government to delay the Council meeting because “some of the nominated members would have openly sided with the Partai Rakyat”. More prosaically, Hussainmiya has suggested that the Brunei government chose to postpone...
the meeting because more time was needed to prepare answers to the over 100 questions that the elected members had raised. Bolkiah, probably relying on information gleaned from private conversations with his father, the Sultan, has stated that

[r]ushing things, however, is against his [the Sultan’s] nature. He hates it. That’s always been his way. But one thing’s looking increasingly clear as December arrives and another difficult year is about to end. In fact, it is becoming more than clear. There’s only one way to gain the time he needs. It is now extremely urgent. He will have to take the Party on. LEGCO’s opening must be postponed.
And that is as much as he knows for sure.6

The rejection of the PRB’s proposals and the postponement of the Legislative Council meeting were an important catalyst for the Party’s decision to begin the revolt. Azahari specifically stated in a press interview in January 1963 that it was the rejection of the motions that led to the PRB’s decision to revolt: “When we received that, I knew we had no alternative. We decided to strike”.7 Behind this statement lies the clear implication that the Party leadership believed that the rejection of their Legislative Council motions indicated that all non-violent avenues of opposition to Malaysia had been exhausted. This, combined with the frustration and discontent explored in Chapter V, created the belief that the TNKU, the PRB’s force of last resort, was now its only recourse.

The Brunei government’s decision to postpone the Legislative Council meeting also appeared to be a further step in its quest to restrict the Party’s access to power as much as possible. Viewed in conjunction with the Mentri Besar’s comment to District Councillors in September that “their advice would be considered if it was not contrary to government policy”, the delay in allowing the Legislative Council to meet was seen as a denial of even the limited democracy that the elections had introduced.8 More importantly, it was a clear sign that little had actually changed in the manner in which Brunei was governed and, thus,

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6 Mohamed Bolkiah, Remember, Remember... The 8th of December, Brunei Press, Bandar Seri Begawan, p. 129; BA Hussainmiya, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III: The Making of Brunei Darussalam, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1995, p. 280. The Legislative Council is frequently referred to using the acronyms LegCo and LEGCO.
8 The Borneo Bulletin, “Councillors told advice may not be accepted”, 15 September, 1962, p. 19.
in the PRB’s chances of gaining greater influence in state affairs. This situation only added to the Party’s desperation and its fear that it was running out of options.

Exacerbating this frustration, as discussed in Chapter V, was the prospect, so tantalisingly close, that the PRB might achieve part of its agenda if even one non-Party member could be persuaded to support any of its Legislative Council proposals. This is the most likely and, indeed, the most obvious reason that the Brunei government would postpone the Legislative Council meeting: defeat in the Council on either the anti-Malaysia or the sovereignty motions would greatly increase the difficulty of the administration’s position. Having this delightful prospect snatched from its very grasp was a further sign for the Party of the administration’s determination to prevent it from making progress in its pursuit for power and, consequently, it became another reason to decide to use the TNKU for its intended purpose.

The question of Britain’s involvement in the postponement of the Legislative Council meeting, mentioned in passing above, requires some elucidation, though it is only a minor point. This allegation appears to have originally been made by Azahari in one of his many press interviews in the aftermath of the rebellion and is thus of questionable veracity. Moreover, Selkirk had informed London on this point as early as 11 December: “No discussion of any kind had been held on the subject [of the rejection of the Legislative Council motions] between the British authorities, the Brunei govt [sic] or the Speaker” 9. In addition, as has been well established elsewhere in this thesis, Britain no longer had any real authority in Brunei and, in any case, the Sultan’s government had neither the need nor the inclination to take advice on governance from anyone if it did not wish to do so.

**The Arrests at Sundar**

What is known of the roots of the TNKU was explored in detail in Chapter VI, in the course of which mention was made of an article published in *The Borneo Bulletin* in May 1962 that publicly revealed the existence of a ‘Borneo Liberation Army’ in the Brunei Bay

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area. Investigations by police in both Brunei and Sarawak in response to this report apparently failed to substantiate this information, and the journalist who wrote the story, Ignatius Stephen, later related how the Commissioner of Police reacted: “Outram ridiculed the young writer and warned him not to spread alarming and untrue stories”.10 Similar rumours recurred several times in subsequent months, generally mentioning the disappearance of people from towns and villages for military training in the jungle. However, such rumours were, as White commented in August, “usually vague and unreliable”.11

Other signs of unusual activity in the Sultanate included the radio broadcast made in July by the Deputy State Secretary, Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim, warning the population to beware of those who were “trying to wreck the happiness of Brunei by influencing the people against the Sultan”.12 White reported to the Colonial Office thus:

[N]either the Commissioner of Police nor the Special Branch was consulted [about this broadcast] and had no definite knowledge of such propaganda. The broadcast obviously had Palace approval and the Director of Information [Pengiran Yusuf] had said privately that the propaganda was emanating from Indonesia.13

The Borneo Bulletin also reported in two short articles published in July and October that the theft of firearms was becoming more prevalent; there is, however, no evidence to support the inference that these incidents are relevant in this context.14

Meanwhile, the North Borneo government had begun to entertain suspicions about the number of visits to the colony by people connected with the PRB in recent months, which were apparently related to the United Nations petition discussed in Chapter VI, as well as the activities of the TNKU. The North Borneo Special Branch consequently asked the Customs service to conduct a search of the persons of three senior PRB leaders, all of whom were

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elected District or Legislative Council members, when they arrived in Jesselton on 25 October, though nothing of interest was found. A similar search of Party branch assistant vice-president Lakim Bakar’s possessions on arrival at Labuan on 17 October had found several apparently suspicious books on anti-colonial and political subjects. The PRB swiftly complained of the second search to the Colonial Secretary, describing it as “unprecedented and undemocratic” and “an insult to the Party Ra’ayat and to the elected representatives of the people of Brunei”. 15 North Borneo Governor Sir William Goode stated in his report to the Colonial Office that “[w]e have good reason to be suspicious of secret Partai Rakyat [activity] here. Unfortunately [the] search complained of was unproductive and has been proved ill-advised”. 16

In early November, the Resident of the Fifth Division of Sarawak, AR Meikle, was informed by a reliable source that “something [was] blowing up” and a review of available intelligence with his two District Officers resulted in a warning to Kuching that “some political intrigue seemed to be going on”. 17 Police sent to investigate these reports discovered two parade grounds, 35 TNKU uniforms, and “documentary evidence of an underground military organisation”. 18 Meanwhile, North Borneo Special Branch had discovered a parade ground near Sipitang on 12 November that showed signs of recent use. Ten days later, another parade ground was located in Temburong and a TNKU uniform recovered, along with documents that suggested that PRB officials in the area were involved in these suspicious activities. There was also reported to be a sudden upsurge in the sale of “shirts and slacks made of green coloured material” in Brunei, as well as “jungle hats, Army

16 TNA, CO 1030/1448, Item 53, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 280, 7 November, 1962, para. 3.
18 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 466A, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 625 Saving, 11 December, 1962, para. 2.
webbing haversacks and sheath knives”. Meikle’s successor, RH Morris, and District Officer Zainuddin Adi noted a similar trend during a tour of the Limbang bazaar.

This accumulation of intelligence ensured that, when Lawas District Officer Bujang Mohammed Nor passed new rumours of an impending rebellion to Meikle, a small detachment of the Sarawak Field Force was despatched to investigate and ten people subsequently arrested at Sundar on 25 November, including Sebeli Damid and Daud Daim, Secretary and Chairman of the local Barisan Pemuda Sarawak branch. Documents recovered in the course of these arrests provided the fullest information available to government authorities on the Tentera up to this point:

(a) The T.N.K.U., [sic] or TENTERA NASIONAL KALIMANTAN UTARA, is a militant organisation operating in SIPITANG, LAWAS, TEMBURONG, LIMBANG, BRUNEI and BELAIT Districts, and in MIRJ District East of the BARAM. There may be representatives or members of the T.N.K.U. in other areas in the British Brneo [sic] territories.

(b) In the BRUNEI BAY area the strength of the T.N.K.U. is not less than 500 nor more than 2,000. The T.N.K.U. in the Sarawak territory is stronger near the coast than it is inland and although the membership is mainly Malay it is not exclusively so.

(c) The T.N.K.U. does not appear to have an H.Q., in the military sense of the word[,] but command seems to be from BRUNEI and it is possible that the chain of command may extend outside the British Brneo territories.

(d) It does not appear that the T.N.K.U. has any military weapons but the Committee does not discount the possibility of weapons being obtained from foreign sources.

(e) In neither the SIPITANG nor LAWAS Districts does the T.N.K.U. command much apparent popular support but unless the local population is guaranteed protection and security it will assume a passive attitude.

(f) There is no evidence of outside financial assistance and funds appear to be locally raised including the proceeds of sales of A.M. AZAHARI’S picture.

(g) There is a definite link between the T.N.K.U., and some members of PARTAI RAKYAT but there is no evidence that the Central Committee of the Partai Rakyat is involved.

(h) Unless disrupted the T.N.K.U. will increase its activities as the date of Malaysia approaches.

(i) The objects of the T.N.K.U. include: opposition to Malaysia, by force if necessary, and the unification of the British Borneo Territories under the Sultan of Brunei.

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19 TNA, CO 1030/932, Item 10B, Appendix A to the North Borneo Local Intelligence Committee Report – November 1962, 28 November, 1962, para. 22; CO 1030/1466, Item 34, Undated Enclosure to Message to the Colonial Office from PM Linton (BMPC), 28 December, 1962, p. 1; CO 1030/1068, Item 9, Telegram to the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the CRO, No. 1241, 3 December, 1962, para. 1.


21 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 3, Minutes of an Intelligence Meeting held at Lawas at 9 p.m., on November 28th, 1962, Telegram to the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal no. 40, 2 December, 1962, Part I; Leonard Edwards & Peter W Stevens, Short Histories of the Lawas and Kanowit Districts, Borneo Literature Bureau, Kuching, 1971, pp. 79-80; TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 9, Telegram to the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the CRO, No. 1241, 3 December, 1962, para. 2; WO 305/2519, “TNKU in Sarawak”, Annex G to Part VI of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 2: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 12 January 1963, 15 January, 1963, paras. 23 & 27.
Extra details gleaned from interviews with those who had been arrested were relayed to London by Selkirk:

…[They] were unaware of the identities of the leaders of the organisation, although the name of Azahari has figured in their propaganda and fund collecting. They had sworn an oath probably of a binding character and had been told that they would be invulnerable to bullets etc. Indications were that the organisation had no arms but planned to use short-guns and to raid [the] police station at Lawas[,] presumably to secure firearms. Members of the organisation are mostly Malays, but some Muruts and at least one Chinese are involved.22

The arrests at Sundar and the police activity that surrounded them were the main catalyst for the decision to begin the revolt, being a clear sign that the authorities were aware of some of the recent unusual occurrences in the Brunei Bay area, while there was every chance that the extent of the TNKU’s activities and intentions would also be discovered. The arrests and the resulting fear of further police action were, fundamentally, a clear existential threat to both the TNKU and the PRB: once the relationship between the two was definitely established, there could be little doubt that the Brunei government would seize this excellent opportunity to be rid of the Party once and for all. Even if a wholesale arrest programme turned out to be only a temporary setback, the government would not allow the PRB the opportunity to build another Tentera; consequently, the leadership would have been quick to realise that this might be their only opportunity to use the TNKU for its intended purpose.

The minor point made above, linking the radio broadcast made by the Deputy State Secretary and the increased incidence of gun theft in the state to the TNKU’s preparations before the revolt, should be clarified. It is by no means certain that either of these events is actually related to the activities of the Tentera; indeed, the theft of firearms in isolated areas is likely to have occurred regardless of other events in the state. On the other hand, the fact that The Borneo Bulletin saw fit to comment on the rarity of the crime in what was a very short article in the first instance and then remarked upon the sudden frequency with which incidents like this were occurring indicate the abnormality of these events. Pengiran Yusuf’s broadcast, too, was startlingly unusual: the Brunei government’s reluctance to communicate

22 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 18, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 37, 7 December, 1962, para. 6.
with its people has been noted elsewhere, while the absence of any apparently related events
around the time of the transmission emphasises its anomalousness. Overall, the atypicality of
both of these events and their proximity to the launch of the revolt suggest that they are most
likely relevant to the TNKU’s preparations.

Events Leading to the Brunei Rebellion

The arrests at Sundar were inevitably followed by intense police activity in the Brunei
Bay area; for example, two sections of North Borneo’s Police Mobile Force were sent to
patrol the Sipitang region, while a formal operation was mounted in the Brunei Bay area
from Sipitang to the Baram, Operation Hujan, aiming to disrupt the TNKU. More parade
grounds and TNKU uniforms were also located in Brunei. Various measures were taken in
order to enhance co-operation amongst the police forces of the Borneo territories, including
better information sharing and improved communication facilities. The Brunei government
also instituted daily meetings at the end of November amongst senior officials, including the
Mentri Besar, State Secretary, Deputy Mentri Besar, Deputy State Secretary, and the
Commissioner of Police, in order to review the available information and co-ordinate the
administration’s response.23

On 1 December, Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman informed the British
High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur that two separate sources, the Brunei Attorney
General and an employee of Radio Brunei, both Malayan, had told him of “clear evidence in
Brunei of plans for an early insurrection organised by [the] Party Rakyat”:

Anti-Malaysian and anti-Malayan propaganda has been noticeably stepped up,
Kampong Malays have been receiving instructions to buy simple uniforms
consisting of green shirts and trousers and there has been marked increase in sale of
these clothes recently. Goode in Jesselton is said to have evidence of dumping of
arms near border and it is suspected that Brunei Malays are receiving arms from

23 TNA, CO 1030/932, Item 10A, Extract from the North Borneo Local Intelligence Committee Report – November 1962, c.
December, 1962, para. 13; CO 1030/1466, Item 34, Undated Enclosure to Message to the Colonial Office from PM Linton
(BMPC), 28 December, 1962, p. 1; CO 1030/1068, Item 3, Minutes of an Intelligence Meeting held at Lawas at 9 p.m., on
November 28th, 1962, enclosed in Telegram to the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the Acting High
Commissioner for Brunei, Personal no. 40, 2 December, 1962, Part IV; Item 14, Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei
from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/59, 3 December, 1962, para. 2; Item 9, Telegram to the High
Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the CRO, No. 1241, 3 December, 1962, para. 3; Item 3, Telegram to the
Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 40, 2 December, 1962, para.
4; WO 305/2519, “TNKU in Sarawak”, Annex G to Part VI of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 2: Covering period up to
known illegal Philippine/North Borneo arms traffic. Legal Adviser says there is also
evidence that a number of potential Brunei leaders have been sent for training to
Indonesian Borneo. The Radio Brunei man adds that SUPP in Sarawak are known
to be supplying both arms and guidance for purposes of this Party Rakyat
conspiracy.

2. Sultan of Brunei is reported to be in state of terror for his own life and in daily
fear of abduction or worse. 24

The North Borneo government swiftly denied that it had any evidence of arms dumping
or trading, while Parks described the situation as “unchanged” since he had reported the
Sundar arrests on 29 November and the Sultan as being “fully informed of the situation but
[showing] no indication of craven attitude as suggested”. 25 Lord Selkirk took some pains to
reassure both the Tunku and his superiors in London that the position in Brunei was not
what the Malayans feared and then acceded to the Tunku’s request that he visit the Sultanate
in order “to leave no doubt we were still interested” in developments in Brunei. 26 A Colonial
Office assessment of all available intelligence stated that “[t]he reports received by the
Tunku are greatly exaggerated and there is no reason at present to expect an emergency”;
 “[t]he situation is reported by all concerned to be under control”. 27

Parks then wrote to White on 3 December summarising the situation as it was known to
him:

At the moment, the Brunei Police have very little information about the
ramifications of T.N.K.U. in the State. They believe it to be a militant group of
extremists within the Party Rakyat but who the leaders are is not known. From time
to time, scraps of information come in about drilling and the existence of “parade
grounds”, but so far only about four possible “parade grounds” have been
discovered and one set of uniform recovered from the Temburong area. No arrests
have been made. The local inhabitants are, naturally, reluctant to come forward and
give information about an organisation so closely connected with Party Rakyat. I
think, however, that the Palace party

He also mentioned Outram’s doubts about the reliability of the local police should they be
“confronted with their kith and kin”, a fear that White had himself frequently expressed in
his reports to the Colonial Office. Parks’ comment about the extent of the Brunei

24 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 1, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 900, 1
25 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 2, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor’s Deputy, North Borneo,
No. 312, 2 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 3, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Acting High
Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 40, 2 December, 1962, paras. 1 & 3.
26 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 8, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK
in Southeast Asia, No. 31, 3 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
27 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 5, Minute for the Prime Minister, c. 5 December, 1962, paras. 2 & 4.
28 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 14, Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei,
HCO/S/510/1/59, 3 December, 1962, para. 1.
government’s knowledge of the TNKU is supported to some extent by the fact that the Deputy Mentri Besar, Pengiran Ali Pengiran Daud, began to relay information to the police regarding “the storing of uniforms and arms in the villages” at around the time of Selkirk’s visit.29

JD Higham of the Colonial Office made this comment in response to Parks’ letter:

The impression it conveys is rather more disturbing than that given by the telegrams. I feel that T.N.K.U. may be an iceberg and that there may be a great deal more beneath the surface than we have so far been led to believe. It is the lack of information about this organisation which is disturbing.30

Sir John Martin, Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, agreed:

The situation is of course most disquieting. Although no concrete evidence of external control had been traced at the time of my visit [to Limbang in the first week of December], it is obvious from the common pattern of the illicit activities in various places that they have a single source of inspiration. It is also clear that it is connected with the Party Rakhyat [sic] in Brunei and there seems also to be some link with Indonesia.31

The staff at Far East Command (FEC), the newly amalgamated headquarters of Britain’s armed forces in eastern Asia, had not been idle since the disturbing reports from northern Borneo had begun to arrive: in response to what was described as “a vague warning” from the Inspector-General of the Malayan Police in the last week of November, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East ordered that the two relevant contingency plans for internal security problems in Brunei, Plans Ale and Demon, be updated in light of the current situation.32 On 2 December, reacting to the Tunku’s warning, the FEC reviewed the availability of forces to support Plan Ale; no troops were officially on alert, but the three services were instructed to “review their arrangements for mounting the operation”.33

29 Ibid, para. 2; CO 1030/1076, Item 6, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/59, Despatch Personal No. 25, 20 December, 1962, para. 11.
30 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 14, Comments by JD Higham on Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/59, 3 December, 1962, para. 1.
31 TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 294, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from JM Martin (CO), 5 December, 1962, para. 4.
32 Pocock, op. cit., p. 130; TNA, CO 1030/1447, Item 77B, Telegram to the MOD from the Far East Defence Secretariat, Singapore, SEASEC 48, 29 July, 1961, para. 2. Since the end of World War II, the three services headquartered in Singapore had operated separately; in 1962, it was decided that a unified command would control all land, sea, and air operations in the theatre. The new command was officially established on 28 November. Pocock, op. cit., pp. 114-5; TNA, ADM 1/28626, Report on Operations in Borneo, December 1962–January 1963, CINCFE.77/63, 22 April, 1963, Report by Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command, para. 9.
33 TNA, ADM 1/28626, Report on Operations in Borneo, December 1962–January 1963, CINCFE.77/63, 22 April, 1963, Report by Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command, para. 11. Plan Demon required that a Royal Marine Commando Carrier be available; HMS Albion was not in the area at the time the revolt broke out, so Plan Ale was used instead. TNA, WO 291/2325, “The Establishment of Rear Link Communications between Singapore and Brunei December 1962”, Operational Research Unit (Far East) Report No. 2/63, March, 1963, p. 2.
Selkirk arrived in Brunei on 5 December, returning to Singapore two days later. The purpose of his trip was not, of course, publicly announced, though rumours of his intention to discuss the security situation in the area were certainly circulating and there is surely little likelihood that the hierarchy of the TNKU would not have made that assumption for themselves in any case. Selkirk’s report to London of his meeting with senior government officials described the “general air of complacency” he had encountered, despite Brunei’s “dangerously revolutionary condition”:

The loyalty of the police is very open to question and their discipline is reported not to be at a high level. The party [sic] Rakyat represent the vast majority of the people of the State and won all the seats at the election in August, but have still not been given power. In the State of Brunei, there is in close proximity poverty and considerable wealth.34

Various measures were agreed upon to combat these worrying signs:

(a) to ask [the] Federation to loan a Special Branch official to Brunei, who had been fully briefed on the information on T.N.K.U. available in Kuala Lumpur;
(b) to ask for retention beyond the end of this month of the Malay police contingent;
(c) to have a military liaison officer from C.in.C. [Commander in Chief] Far East in Brunei;
(d) on the establishment of a consultative committee with Sarawak and North Borneo to review action against T.N.K.U.35

The possibility of recalling the recently established Brunei Malay Regiment from its training base in Malaya was also discussed, but rejected because of doubts about its “reliability and experience”; Selkirk then reported that “the Sultan wished to know about the availability of British armed forces if required. I said I hoped the latter would not be necessary but that we would, of course, be ready to fulfil our treaty obligations”.36

Something that Selkirk did not mention in his report to London but that was also apparently discussed at this meeting was the need to take direct action against the leadership

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34 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 17, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, Brief No. 33, 7 December, 1962, paras. 1 & 5; Charles, “Here and There”, The Borneo Bulletin, 8 December, 1962, p. 10; Bolkiah, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
35 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 17, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, Brief No. 33, 7 December, 1962, para. 2. A detachment of the Royal Federation of Malaya Police had been deployed to Brunei since 1956 to bolster the Brunei Police Force. They had been scheduled to return to Malaya on 31 December, 1962. *The Borneo Bulletin*, “Malayan Police ending long Brunei association”, 24 November, 1962, p. 9; DO 169/55, Item 12, Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, KL.11/599/1, 18 April, 1962, para. 2.
36 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 17, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, Brief No. 33, 7 December, 1962, para. 4.
of the TNKU. Rumours were rife that the PRB would be banned and many of its members arrested, while *The Borneo Bulletin* later linked several proposed measures to Selkirk’s visit:

That visit – The Bulletin knows – foreshadowed the reinforcing of the country’s security forces from outside – probably troops.

On December 10, the Mentri Besar (Dato Setia Marsal bin Maun) was due to make a radio address to the nation on security legislation.

Government decrees concerning security had been printed and were ready for publication. 37

Jamil Umar, now an eminent historian in Brunei, has published further details of what transpired at this meeting:

…Lord Selkirk asked the Sultan whether he was in league (*bersubahat*) with the PRB. The Sultan wished to know from where the former got that idea. A. N. Outram interrupted to say that there were rumours around. The Sultan was not satisfied and refused to sign the papers (calling for help under the treaty?) until he knew from where the rumours originated. 38

Occurring parallel to these events was the TNKU’s decision to begin the rebellion, which will be recounted in as much detail as possible. There are several versions of these events available, each of which will be summarised here; they are similar in outline, but differ in crucial details. Poulgrain has given this account:

The official on the PRB executive who was most vociferous in promoting the need for such training – and later in 1962 ‘drove the PRB executive to make the decision to revolt, then condemned the revolt’ – was H.M. Salleh . . .

The decision to revolt against the British colonial authorities was in response to a seemingly urgent predicament. The head of [Sarawak’s] Special Branch, Roy Henry, created this urgency by arresting several PRB members in Sarawak. Then, by ‘leaking’ information that he threatened similar arrests in Brunei, Roy Henry led the PRB leaders in Brunei to believe that they had only a limited time to act. This deliberately alarming message was related to the PRB by a magistrate (Jaya Latif) whose uncle (H.B. Hidup) was one of the eight executive members whose panic led to revolt. Brunei was thus brought to the edge of a political abyss while Azahari was in Manila at the invitation of Nicasio Osmeña. Azahari had only just returned to Johore in early December 1962 when his brother, Osman, arrived to break the news that the PRB was launching a revolt before dawn on Saturday, 8 December. 39

In the second account, that of Zariani, the TNKU’s First Revolutionary Council sent Yassin Affandy and Pengiran Metussin Pengiran Lampoh to Manila to inform Azahari of its decision to launch the rebellion, apparently in response to the Brunei government’s rejection of the PRB’s Legislative Council proposals. Azahari immediately cabled to Brunei to

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37 *The Borneo Bulletin*, “The revolt is smashed – yet the weaknesses remain: The government stays – but can it fill the political vacuum in Brunei?”, 22 December, 1962, p. 9; Bolkiah, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-3 & 188.

38 Mohd. Jamil Al-Sufri, *Liku-Liku Perjuangan Pencapaian Kemerdekaan Negara Brunei Darussalam*, Pusat Sejarah Brunei, Bandar Seri Begawan, 1992, p. 111, quoted in Hussainmiya, *op. cit.*, p. 325n. The papers referred to in this quotation were most likely the proclamations that *The Borneo Bulletin* mentioned, rather than a formal request for military assistance from Great Britain.

reverse this decision: “No Revolt should take place. Wait until I come back to Brunei”.

Azahari then returned to his home in Johore Bahru, where his brother, Osman Mahmud, relayed another message:

Sheikh Osman said that he was delegated by the Revolutionary Council Meeting to inform Azahari that it had decided that the Revolt was imminent, whether Azahari liked it or not. Their message to Azahari was terse and chilling: “First, you must not come back to Brunei. The Revolt will start any moment now. We will tell you. If you support us we’ll call you Leader. Otherwise we shall paint your name as Traitor in Blood.” With pursed lips and round eyes, Azahari turned to his brother in disbelief, “Are you crazy? Are they aware of the fact that they are killing the Party and the struggle? Do you all people know what is going to happen if you start the Revolt? You must not think help will come from any country.” Sheikh Osman quietly replied, “Yes, they are aware. Yes, we know and we don’t hope for any help from any country.”

Bolkiah’s account of the same events described the PRB executive meeting shortly after Selkirk’s arrival in Brunei, where it was heard that the Party was to be proscribed: “The Secretary General urges patience but there are many who thirst for stronger stuff. ‘No more talk!’ says the militant wing . . . . . and always growing more strident”. Osman Mahmud, having just returned from Johore Bahru, conveyed Azahari’s latest instructions, supported by the hotheads of the TNKU: “Action is needed, they state, or they will all be arrested and put away. The plan is ready. Activate it now, they demand. The people will surely follow them. Once it starts, they’ll have no choice”.

Douglas Hyde has provided a suggestive sidelight, an account of Azahari’s visit to the offices of Singapore’s Barisan Sosialis whilst he was en route to Manila just before the start of the rebellion:

His party had recently won all the election [sic] seats in Brunei’s Legislative Assembly, so he seemed even more irresponsible than usual when he began to hint at a coming revolution and to brag that ‘within forty-eight hours’ he would be a prime minister. The Barisan Sosialis leaders already knew him as a braggart as well as an adventurer, so they paid little heed to what he had to say. ‘The whole thing seemed futile and absurd,’ one of them told me.

Once the decision to revolt was made, word was passed to all TNKU members that the rebellion would begin at 2am on Saturday, 8 December. Inevitably, this information also reached the authorities, with a “reliable source” telling John Fisher, Resident of Sarawak’s

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40 Zariani, op. cit., p. 118.
41 Ibid., p. 119.
43 Ibid., p. 190.
Fourth Division, on the morning of 7 December that a group “presumably connected with [the] T.N.K.U.” planned to “descend on Miri at 2 a.m. tonight and create havoc”.\(^{45}\) Morris in Limbang had received a similar warning the day before, while a “less reliable source” had also observed a “gathering of armed men” in Temburong.\(^{46}\) Though Governor Sir Alexander Waddell described even the first report as “difficult to credit”, he took them all seriously enough that he sent police reinforcements to Miri and Limbang.\(^{47}\) He also informed Singapore that military reinforcement might be required and requested that the necessary preparations be made.\(^{48}\)

Selkirk had already received this information prior to his return to Singapore and he was able to pass this directly to FEC over the telephone early in the evening of 7 December, before the telegram he had previously sent from Brunei had arrived. Fisher’s warning had earlier been transmitted directly to the North Borneo Commissioner of Police, Donald Matheson, and to Parks and Outram through PM Linton of Brunei Shell. The Sultan and Mentri Besar were then informed of the situation and various precautions taken, which will be discussed in Chapter VIII.\(^{49}\)

The different accounts given above of the process by which the TNKU leadership made the decision to launch the rebellion naturally lead to the question of which is the most accurate. The obvious way to answer such a question is to weigh the reliability of the sources upon which each account is based: Poulgrain cited Azahari, Zariani may be relying on both Azahari and Yassin Affandy, and Bolkiah quoted Affandy. It is difficult, however, to be certain that these conclusions are correct because all three sources were written for non-academic audiences and thus they do not clearly state who their informants were;

\(^{46}\) TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 15, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C88, 7 December, 1962, para. 2; Pocock, op. cit., p. 130.
\(^{47}\) TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 15, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C88, 7 December, 1962, para. 1.
\(^{48}\) Ibid., para. 3.
internal evidence, though, suggests that Affandy and Azahari are, in fact, the authors’ main informants. Azahari’s history of repeatedly changing his version of events means that Affandy is usually the more reliable of the two, while the account given by Bolkiah presents the impression of being the most realistic.

The crucial question, of course, is who in the TNKU was the main driver of the decision to begin the revolt. HM Salleh is usually stated to be the culprit, primarily because of his reputation as one of the more violent members of the PRB, previously mentioned in Chapter IV. It is difficult not to infer, also, that the fact that he was the only living senior Party figure to escape imprisonment after the rebellion caused his former colleagues to suspect him of duplicity. Bolkiah’s account of the events leading to the revolt, however, does not mention Salleh by name, though it is possible that the latter was numbered among those who supported Osman’s advocacy of rebellion upon his return from Johore Bahru. More importantly, the very fact that Salleh was not punished after the revolt and, indeed, that he retained his position as State Welfare Officer indicates that the Brunei government was confident that he was not involved in the rebellion at all, let alone that he was behind its outbreak.

It is, of course, possible that the suspicions of Salleh’s colleagues were correct and that he was acting as the Brunei government’s agent provocateur. In this theory, the points used in the previous paragraph to exonerate Salleh would actually prove his guilt, with his continuation in government service being his reward for his role in the plot. The government’s motive for this manoeuvre would be to remove the Party as a viable source of opposition, as well as to alter the circumstances in which the decision regarding the Malaysia proposal was to be made. This theory, though plausible enough in light of the Brunei government’s undoubted political supremacy post-revolt, is highly improbable: the outcome of this course of action would be too unpredictable to take such a great risk, while the very real possibility that the damage inflicted on the government’s reputation and credibility amongst the people by such a major revolt against its authority would end in the fall of the Sultan and his administration would give any cautious official pause for thought.
In any case, if the government knew as much about the TNKU’s intentions as this theory implies, it would surely have been more efficient and effective simply to disrupt its plans through the arrest program and legislative measures mentioned above.

Affandy’s account, of course, stated that Azahari was the main driver, using Osman as his emissary. It is possible that Osman altered the message that his brother gave him in the belief that the situation demanded desperate action from the TNKU and out of a hitherto stymied desire to wield power himself. This is unlikely, however, because the risk of having his deception uncovered was far too great and, in any case, such a usurpation of Azahari’s authority was so unlikely as to be virtually unthinkable. This latter point is the most obvious reason that Azahari was, logically, the main driver of the decision to begin the revolt: as has been stated several times, Azahari was always the guiding light and focal point of power in the Party, and this probably also extended to his role in the TNKU. In addition, the quotation from Hyde cited above suggests that Azahari was enthusiastic in his support for the rebellion, from which it can be inferred that the claims he made after the revolt had failed that he disagreed with the decision to rebel are untrue.

**Conclusion**

Of the two catalysts discussed in this chapter, the arrests at Sundar played a more important role in the TNKU’s decision to begin the revolt. This is primarily because of the clear existential threat that the arrests posed to the PRB, which was, naturally, of far greater and more immediate concern to the Party executive than the rejection of its proposed Legislative Council motions. Political action could usually be delayed without significant loss; the potential destruction of the PRB itself that the Sundar arrests were believed to portend demanded drastic measures if such a catastrophe was to be averted. The personal impact that the potential arrest of the Party executive would have also cannot be overlooked: on an individual level, the possibility of a long period in gaol could frighten even the most stouthearted into precipitate action.
The effect of the two catalysts in combination should not, however, be disregarded. The conjunction of the arrests at Sundar with the rejection of the PRB’s Legislative Council motions increased the sense of crisis that assailed the Party and maximised the panic that its leadership felt in response to the situation. More importantly, the occurrence of both catalysts so close together deepened the Party executive’s fears that all of the PRB’s achievements since its foundation in 1956 and, more significantly, its hopes for the future were about to disappear, worsening their perception of how desperate their situation was and, consequently, adversely influencing the soundness of their decision-making.

A significant portion of this chapter also discussed events in the weeks leading up to the outbreak of the rebellion, and one issue that naturally arises from this subject is the question of the timing of the revolt and whether it occurred earlier than the TNKU had originally planned. The Sarawak government had obtained from one of those apprehended at Sundar in late November definite information, which was believed to be accurate, that “the uprising was precipitated by at least two weeks”.\(^{50}\) Leigh, likely relying on local informants, has stated that the revolt was originally planned “to coincide with the frivolity of Christmas eve and the onset of monsoon conditions--factors that would militate against [an] effective British response”.\(^{51}\) Supporting the probable occurrence of this change in plans was the Indonesian government’s failure to aid the rebellion that it should have expected and prepared for if it were to provide material aid, a clear indication that it did happen ahead of schedule.\(^{52}\)

Quite apart from its inherent interest, this topic illuminates the question of which catalyst was more important, simply because the TNKU leader who provided the information about the intention of launching the revolt two weeks later than its outbreak was arrested before the PRB’s Legislative Council motions were rejected. It may, of course, be argued that, since it was this gentleman’s arrest that was itself a catalyst for the decision to rebel, any

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\(^{50}\) TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 92, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, JICFE 185, 12 December, 1962, para. 5.


\(^{52}\) ANA, File 248/5/6, Indonesian Support for Subversion in Borneo, Department of Defence Minute Paper, 27 December, 1962, para. 2(d).
information he could provide would be invalid because he was no longer in contact with the leadership of the *Tentera* after his apprehension. However, the police activity that preceded the arrests on 25 November was surely enough for the TNKU leadership to, at the very least, begin to consider the possibility of implementing its plan to rebel, an explanation that also accounts for the lack of precision in the information that was received from the gentleman in question.

However, the most important point about the timing of the revolt is the effect that Indonesia’s lack of preparedness had on the outcome of the rebellion when the TNKU decided to strike earlier than planned. Though the level of support that the Indonesian government intended to offer to the *Tentera* in the course of the revolt is unknown, it is clear, as Chapter VIII will show, that the rebels received far less assistance than had been expected. The precise causal relationship between this outcome and the beginning of the revolt earlier than originally planned is difficult to assess, but it is probable that it was the primary reason that the TNKU received no material support from Indonesia at all. The next chapter will demonstrate exactly how the absence of this aid affected the course and, ultimately, the success of the Brunei Rebellion.
Part III
Chapter VIII: The Brunei Rebellion
MAP 2

© Maxime Plasse
The aim of this chapter is to describe the course of the Brunei Rebellion in detail, approximately geographically rather than solely chronologically. The focus is on the actions of the TNKU and how each town was re-captured by the police forces of Brunei, Sarawak, and North Borneo and the British Army, though some attention is paid to the experience of those who were not detained by the Tentera where possible. A brief exploration of the Sarawak government’s response to the rebellion in western Sarawak is also included, to provide a clear picture of the repercussions of the revolt in even unaffected areas. There is also a detailed discussion of the logistical framework behind the British forces’ operation and other associated issues.

**Outbreak**

The warnings of impending trouble discussed in Chapter VII led the governments of Brunei and Sarawak to make some preparations, with the latter administration placing police on alert, despatching police reinforcements to Miri and the Fifth Division, and activating the Auxiliary Police in support of the Field Force. In Brunei, in addition to the regulatory measures mentioned previously, Brunei Town Police Station was reinforced and detachments sent to the Mentri Besar’s residence and the Istana Darul Hana, while police throughout the Sultanate were cautioned to remain on alert. Police roadblocks were also established at strategic points approaching the Istana and the police station.¹

Governor of Sarawak Sir Alexander Waddell’s telegram relaying Fisher’s warning caused Admiral Sir David Luce, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East (CINCFE), to activate Plan Ale shortly before 6pm on 7 December. By ordering ‘Ale Yellow’, Luce placed those troops earmarked for service under this plan at the ready to depart for Brunei within 48 hours, clearly indicating that the urgency of the situation in the Sultanate had not yet been satisfied.

appreciated. The receipt of multiple reports of the outbreak of armed rebellion in Brunei in
the early hours of 8 December prompted Luce to declare ‘Ale Red’ shortly before 3am,
meaning that troops would be despatched as soon as practicable.²

Plan Ale itself provided for two companies of infantry, detachments of the Royal
Engineers and Royal Signals, and a single Military Intelligence Officer to be flown to
Borneo in order to restore or maintain law and order in concert with the civil authorities. The
basic premise underlying the plan was that the disturbance would be a small-scale internal
security problem: the only reinforcement envisaged was the third company from the
battalion concerned. There would be no involvement from the Royal Navy (RN), and the
Royal Air Force’s (RAF) contribution would cease once the troops deplaned.³

Lord Selkirk, the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia,
summarised the TNKU’s own blueprint: “The plan seems to have been to attack police
stations for arms, the Mentri Besar’s house and the oilfields and to kidnap the Sultan”.⁴ The
administration’s personnel, the primary symbols of government authority in each town, were
also attacked, as well as the only two airports in the country. The focus on the police derived
from it being the only armed force in Brunei, so, as well as being a source of more
sophisticated weaponry, it was the Tentera’s natural opposition. The seizure of government
officials, from the Mentri Besar down, would both emphasise the TNKU’s authority and
prevent the officers from becoming rallying points for any incipient opposition from the
general population. The airports were, of course, the easiest means of ingress into the
country for any British reinforcements and were thus obvious targets. The Sultan, too, was
an automatic objective, being the source of governmental authority in the Sultanate and, of
most immediate interest, the person who must request armed assistance from Great Britain
under the Agreement between the United Kingdom and Brunei on Defence and External

East Command, 22 April, 1963, para. 15; DEFE 11/391, Item 3, Telegram to Headquarters, FEAF, General Headquarters,
FARELF, and the FOCINCFEF from the CINCFE, SEC 435, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 1B, Telegram to the MOD from
the CINCFE, SEACOS 44, 7 December, 1962, para. 1.
East Command, 22 April, 1963, para. 17; Harold James & Denis Sheil-Small, The Undeclared War: The Story of the
⁴ TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 98, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK
in Southeast Asia, No. 43, 9 December, 1962, para. 3.
Affairs, 29 September 1959. Finally, the oilfields were to be seized in order to control the main driver of the nation’s wealth, an important bargaining chip should operations in Brunei Town fail.

The rebellion began at 2am on 8 December, with the reading of the Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara’s (NKKU) Proclamation of Independence by Deputy Prime Minister and General Officer Commanding the TNKU Yassin Affandy on Bukit Selilah, a low hill near Brunei Town. Amongst those present at the ceremony were Brigadier General Osman Mahmud, Colonel Mesir Keruddin, Colonel Jais Karim, and PRB Deputy Secretary General HB Hidup. A provisional constitution and a political manifesto for the new state were also produced, setting out the NKKU’s governmental structure and political ideals; as was to be expected, the PRB was far more prepared for its revolt in the political sphere than in the military one.5

It was intended that the Sultan would officially promulgate the Proclamation of Independence at 8am that morning, once the TNKU had secured control of Brunei Town. Having done so, the Sultan would become the Sri Mahkota Negara, head of state of the NKKU, and he would “withdraw to the interior for security reasons” while General Osman and his soldiers would prepare to “defend the State”.6 Tellingly, the Sultan would perform all of these duties “under protective custody”, clearly indicating that his wishes in the matter would be overruled if they happened to conflict with those of the TNKU.7 A comment made by Zaini at a press conference on 9 December is relevant here: “And if he [the Sultan] did not join us, as the British claim, the next thing you w[oul]d have heard is that he had been shot”.8

6 Zaini, op. cit., p. 36.
7 Ibid.
8 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 142, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 314, 9 December, 1962, para. 2.
Brunei Town and Muara

Two lorries carrying rebels breached the police roadblock four miles outside town on the Berakas road at approximately 1.45am and arrived outside the Secretariat building in Brunei Town ten minutes later. A party of police led by Commissioner of Police AN Outram approached the lorries, but the vehicles swiftly departed towards the nearby mosque and, as it was thought that they might have been acting as decoys, no pursuit was undertaken. At 2am, the TNKU seized control of the Power House and cut the electricity supply, plunging the capital into darkness. One report of events in Brunei Town on that day described what happened next:

At 0205 hours noises were heard from the padang [field] in front of the Police Station and a Verey light was fired. This revealed two groups of men totalling about 350, charging in the direction of the Police Station from the direction of the Post Office and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. A red Verey light was then fired which was the signal to open fire. The attack was repulsed and by the light of further Verey lights it was seen that injured persons were being removed from the padang.9

Bolkiah’s account of the initial attack on the police station is more detailed, if slightly different:

A leading group of armed and self-styled “rebels” line up outside the police station. Behind them, a mixture of green-uniformed “soldiers” and a motley crowd of “followers” wave parangs and hurl defiance at the terrified policemen inside. Inside the police station, the policemen prepare to defend themselves against what they feel will surely come. Desperately worried and frightened, they wait for the expected assault. Incredibly, to the policemen, though, it never comes . . . . . at least not with the ferocity that they anticipate from the angry, excited shouts across the streets . . . Back at the police station, however, what they are seeing is very strange. The rioters don’t seem sure what to do. It heartens the police but it also puzzles them. All the mob has to do, they know, is to go round the back where the station can’t be defended and overrun them all. Or line up half a dozen vehicles and smash their way through the entrance. The hub of government security and state intelligence would be theirs for the taking. But, instead, the Police Commissioner notes, someone has ordered them to attack head on against a much superior police armoury that matches parangs and second hand shotguns with bren [sic] guns and Lee Enfields. Many of them, he can see, are even having trouble working out how to fire their weapons. Some, at times, appear to be more of a threat to each other than to his police officers.

9 TNA, WO 305/2519, “The Opening Phases of TNKU Rebellion in Brunei Town”, Annex E to Part III of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 2: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 12 January 1963, 15 January, 1963, paras. 6-11; Mohamed Bolkiah, Remember, Remember... The 8th of December, Brunei Press, Bandar Seri Begawan, 2007, p. 211. The identity of the author of these sources is not stated, but internal evidence suggests that a member of 1/2GR is likely responsible for it. It is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix VI. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank is located across the road from the Padang at the junction of Jalans Sultan and Pemancha.
Their primary assault weapon, it seems, is to bellow in furious passion.\textsuperscript{10}

The TNKU continued to fire on the police station sporadically throughout the night, presumably to encourage the police to remain on the defensive. Once the sun rose, Outram led a party of his officers to arrest rebels near the garages of the Secretariat and to re-capture the power station. Then,

[w]hen the Police party was returning from the Power House a column of TNKU, with European hostages, was seen moving up JALAN SULTAN towards the Civic Centre. The Police Party was directed towards this place, took up positions and stopped the column. The leaders were informed that unless they obeyed Police instructions immediately they would be fired on both by the Police party and from the Police Station. They offered no resistance and were marched to the Tennis court in front of the Police Station where they were disarmed and incarcerated.\textsuperscript{11}

A witness gave a slightly different version of events:

In an eye-witness account of how the rebellion broke out, a Malayan teacher, Inche Zainal Abidin Mohamed, was quoted as saying he saw about 200 rebels, dressed in jungle green and wearing berets, suddenly open fire on Brunei Town Police Station early Saturday.

Zainal, who was evacuated to Labuan, continued: “Then I saw Mr. A.N. Outram, Commissioner of Police, rush out of the police station. He was firing at them and he demanded they surrender.

“Now the funny thing is that these people put up their hands and surrendered.

“A large number were taken into custody. I saw a number of them lying on the ground, obviously wounded or dead. The rebels had been no match for the police, who were armed with Brens. The rebels seemed to have had only shotguns and rifles.”\textsuperscript{12}

The Istana Darul Hana was also attacked shortly after 2am and, in the estimation of Leslie Hoffman, editor of The Straits Times, judging from the field of fire, surrounded by rebels.

High Commissioner for Brunei Sir Dennis White later described this as “a token attack”, but Bolkiah, writing decades later, was more sympathetic: “The desperate attempts to find sanctuary in the palace grounds and the search for weapons with which to defend the people trapped inside were terrifying. The memory is still vivid in the minds of those who shared that ordeal with him [the Sultan]”.\textsuperscript{13} Outram had sent a small detachment of police to the Istana the previous evening in order to protect the Sultan, who, by returning fire in force,

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\textsuperscript{10} Bolkiah, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 213 & 217-8.


managed to repulse the rebels several times. The inspector in charge of this detachment then telephoned Brunei Town Police Station for further reinforcement, which arrived at about 4am.14

Sometime later that morning, PRB Vice President Hapidz Laksamana and central executive member Pengiran Metussin Pengiran Lampoh arrived at the Istana to see the Sultan. There are multiple accounts of what happened next, with one account, that of the Sultan himself, stating that the two emissaries were stopped at the gate by the police and that he had refused to see them, whereupon they fled the scene before they could be arrested. Harun, quoting a description given by the historian and government official Jamil Umar, stated that the pair arrived in a car with several TNKU soldiers accompanying them in a jeep; the Sultan declined to meet with them and suggested that they should speak to the Mentri Besar instead. Harun Abdul Majid, Rebellion in Brunei: The 1962 Revolt, Imperialism, Confrontation, and Oil, IB Tauris & Co., London, 2007, p. 91; Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 1 & 24. 15

Harun, quoting a description given by the historian and government official Jamil Umar, stated that the pair arrived in a car with several TNKU soldiers accompanying them in a jeep; the Sultan declined to meet with them and suggested that they should speak to the Mentri Besar instead. Bolkiah has stated that the two emissaries arrived with four rebels bearing two large envelopes filled with documents and were told by the Sultan’s aide-de-camp that he did not wish to see them and that they should speak to the Mentri Besar instead, but before they could depart, Outram arrived at the Istana and ordered that they be arrested.16

Zaini, doubtless drawing upon conversations with his former colleagues, told a different story:

On arrival at the palace, the NKKU Ministers were welcomed by a rain of bullets of the Brunei Police under the command of Commissioner of Police, A.N. Outram. The Commissioner of Police told both ministers that the Sultan had refused to meet them but said that they should go and discuss anything with the Chief Minister, Dato Marsal bin Maun at his residency in Gadong. Without much delay, they proceeded to the Chief Minister’s residence. At a road inter-section, both NKKU ministers saw the Chief Minister’s car speeding towards town. They followed the car to the Brunei Police Station under cross-fire between TNKU men and policemen defending the station. The morning episode ended with both ministers taken into custody by the police.17

16 Bolkiah, Remember, Remember..., pp. 227-8.
17 Zaini, op. cit., pp. 36-7.
Pengiran Metussin and Laksamana themselves, in conversations with White in March 1963, stated only that they had no knowledge of what was in the envelope they were to hand to the Sultan and that they had not acted of their own volition.\(^18\) The envelope in question was believed to contain the letter addressed to the Sultan from Osmeña quoted in Chapter VI, in which he withdrew the Sultanate of Sulu’s claim to North Borneo in the event that the PRB was successful in establishing the NKKU. Further elucidation on this point is apparently impossible, because Pengiran Metussin stated in his interview with White that he had sent the envelope to a relative, “whose children tore it up”.\(^19\)

The Mentri Besar’s residence, at Gadong close to town, was attacked as well, with Jamil giving this detailed description:

[The rebels] captured the police guards and locked them up in a room. During the attack on [the] MB’s residence, Dato Setia Awang Marsal bin Maun managed to telephone the Police Headquarters for help. The Police Headquarters sent six policemen led by Inspector Ahmad to the MB’s residence. When they reached the MB’s residence they found the gate closed and entered the house via a drain at the back of the residence.

While trying to organise themselves against the rebels, the policemen were surrounded and captured. However Inspector Ahmad managed to convince their captors that if the fighting continued then there would be a lot of shooting and those who did not know how to use firearms would get killed, and their deaths could not certainly be regarded as [those of] martyr[s] for their rebellious actions was [sic] against [the] teaching of Islam. Islam forbid[s] its believers from killing each other and be[ing] traitorous to the Sultan. The rebels realized that they were wrong, and therefore laid down their arms and surrendered [sic] to Inspector Ahmad.\(^20\)

Another obvious target was the residence of the High Commissioner, *Babungan Dua Belas*, which is located a short distance along the bank of the river from Brunei Town proper. John Parks, White’s aide-de-camp, was performing many of his duties while he was in London and he gave this account of his experiences to the Reuters correspondent in Brunei, Peter Smark:

> “From the start of the trouble here in the early hours of Saturday morning, I remained at home sending messages to Singapore”, he said.
> “About 3 a.m. I went into the garden and was surrounded by eight men who said in Malay 'do not move' so I replied in Malay 'do not shoot'.
> “They took me into the house and tied me up with rope but they were not violent.
> “I asked them if the Sultan was all right and they assured me nothing would happen to the Sultan”, Mr Parkes [sic] said.


\(^{19}\) TNA, CO 1030/1467, Item 174, Letter to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/63, 5 March, 1963, para. 4; Hussainmiya, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

Mr Parkes said from then on he chatted for several hours with the rebels who “were
not unfriendly really”. About 9.30 a.m. a detachment of the Brunei Police reached his house and the rebels
immediately laid down their arms and surrendered.
Mr Parkes then went to the police headquarters to get in touch with developments
and remained there constantly until this morning [Monday].
Then with the arrival of a strong force of British troops “I had my best moment – I
went home and had a bath”. 21

The police had gone to Bubungan Dua Belas because White’s confidential secretary,
Catherine Petrie, had informed them that she had been refused access to the area by rebels
and repeated attempts to contact Parks had been unsuccessful. 22

The airport, then located at Berakas close to town, was also targeted, though the TNKU
appears to have simply blocked the runway with temporary obstacles and then, rather
perplexingly, allowed the Controller of Aviation, Ian Glass, his staff, and the Fire Brigade to
remove them; presumably, those rebels responsible for the airport decided that their services
were more urgently required elsewhere. This allowed a platoon of the North Borneo Mobile
Police Force to land safely shortly before noon to assist their Bruneian counterparts; they
were employed in defending the airport and the power station, where they repulsed several
attacks by the rebels. Two casualties were suffered, with one officer sustaining a minor
bullet graze and a second, Constable Bittie, being killed during the action at the Power
House. 23

Whilst all this was occurring, the residents of Brunei Town appear to have mostly
remained in their houses or even, in some cases, been completely unaware of what was
happening. Bolkiah has related the experience of one student at the Sultan Omar Ali
Saifuddin School:

As he walks down the road with his bag packed for the Christmas break, he stares in
astonishment at the wreckage of the night visible on every side. People are gathered
in groups.
Some stroll anxiously from one to the next. Some act more confidently, sitting on
pavements or outside the coffee shops. Others stare up at the sky, looking for
Cubans or Vietnamese, flying in from Jakarta. The odd banner is waved.
The tennis court is full of people who look as if they’ve been rounded up.

21 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 177, Extracts from Reuter’s News Service, “Brunei – Commissioner” and “Brunei –
22 TNA, WO 305/2519, “The Opening Phases of TNKU Rebellion in Brunei Town”, Annex E to Part III of Joint Periodic
Intelligence Report No. 2: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 12 January 1963, 15 January, 1963, para. 15.
8th December to 20th December, 1962, Part 1. Opening Situation, paras. 3–4; State of North Borneo, Colony of North Borneo
On turning a corner the boy shrinks back in dismay. There are bodies lying in the drain. Yet, when he gets to the bus station . . . . . the buses are still running.\(^{24}\)

*The Sarawak Tribune* published this account by one Miri businessman, whose hotel was located in Jalan Sungei Kianggeh, a lot closer to the action than the school:

Then, suddenly at 2 a.m. the lights in Brunei Town went out. At the same time I heard a lot of noise outside the hotel. My room was facing the side of Sungei Kianggeh \(\text{sic}\). I opened the window and looked down on the street. I saw about a hundred people (who I was told later were the rebels) actively busy on the street. The stillness of the night was then shattered by the noise of gun fire which came at the far side of the hotel and next to the left side of the Brunei water kampong. There was an incessant firing of guns and I saw many of the rebels jump into the Sungei Kianggeh. A speedboat started its engine and many of the others swam over to the opposite jungle while others got into two longboats and paddled away without even starting the engine.\(^{25}\)

After that I saw Brunei police and Security force[s] firing away at the rebels. Incessant gun fire continued till about 4 a.m. (Dec 8).\(^{26}\) There was then sporadic firing till about 6 a.m.\(^{27}\)

About half an hour later, I saw about ten rebels walking around the street next to the Brunei Hotel.\(\text{sic}\) They had light green-coloured shirts and trousers and a knife in each of their hands. Suddenly all of them jumped into the Sungei Kianggeh again and three of them used a small boat while the rest swam over to the jungle opposite.\(\text{sic}\) They must have seen a police car.\(\text{sic}\)

By that time we thought that we had no chance of ever getting on to the plane for Miri. But by 7 a.m. our taxi driver drove up on schedule to pick us up for the airport. On the way he told us that he not made a promise to pick us up he would not have got out of doors as there was not a single other taxi to be seen. On our way we passed the Police Station and there we saw a crowd of people looking at the corpse of two rebels killed on the street.\(\text{sic}\) The Hospital was crowded with people being treated for their wounds.\(^{25}\)

For Yassin Affandy and his companions waiting on Bukit Selilah, there was no news until a courier reached them at 3am to tell them of the failure of the initial assault on the police station. No further information being received, Affandy sent Jais Karim, TNKU Commander of the Brunei-Muara District, into town to find out what was happening at about 4.30am. Presumably after some additional information gathering, “[a]t 0830 hours after discovering that the ISTANA was still in the hands of the Police, JAIS bin HAJI KARIM decided that discretion was the better part of valour and paddled home to KAMPONG KILANAS in his PERAHU”.\(^{26}\) By the next day, Affandy and his remaining staff had decamped from Bukit Selilah.\(^{27}\)

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\(^{25}\) *The Sarawak Tribune*, “‘Lights Went Out Then Stillness Of Night Shattered By Gun Fire’”, 18 December, 1962, p. 3.

\(^{26}\) TNA, WO 305/2519, Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 1: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 5 January 1963, 8 January, 1963, paras. 21-2.

\(^{27}\) *Ibid.*, para. 23.
Earlier, at 8am, the Mentri Besar, the Deputy Mentri Besar, the Commissioner of Police, and the Head of Special Branch met at the police station to discuss the situation. Parks had yet to be released, so Petrie attended in his stead. At this meeting,

[t]he MENTERI BESAR requested that the British Government be requested to supply troops and he was asked whether this request was made with the concurrence of His Highness the SULTAN. The MENTERI BESAR stated that this was His Highness’ wish, and a signal was despatched to SINGAPORE, by Police radio requesting five companies of infantry. 28

As stated above, Ale Red had already been declared and preparations begun in Singapore to send troops to Brunei, so this request appears to have simply been a formality.

At about 2pm, the Colonial Secretary officially appointed Parks as Acting High Commissioner until White’s return and then gave him the following instructions:

Secretary of State realises situation with which you are faced and following is not, repeat not, meant as detailed instructions. He is however anxious that British forces should as far as possible avoid appearance of taking political action. Their role is restoring order and protection of Government. For example, arrests should be made under Brunei authority, if possible by Brunei police, though of course under troops’ protection if necessary. Please be guided generally by this. Good luck. 29

In Singapore, there was some confusion and disorganisation even before Ale Red had been ordered: the unit that was earmarked for Plan Ale, the 1st Battalion, the Queen’s Own Highlanders (Seaforth and Camerons) (1QOH), had one company training on the west coast of Malaya, while one of its remaining two companies had only just returned from anti-piracy operations in North Borneo. As a result, the 1st Battalion, 2nd King Edward VII’s Own Gurkha Rifles (1/2GR) was instructed to provide the troops. This unit had its own problems: two platoons were deployed in north Malaya, the Assault Pioneer Platoon was training eighty miles away in Kluang, and the Medium Machine Gun (MMG) and Mortar Platoons were in south Johore. Moreover, the battalion had begun its annual administrative inspection and had only just returned from an extensive search and rescue operation on the east coast of Malaya. 30

29 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 38, Telegram to the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Personal No. 182, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 33, Telegram to the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Personal No. 181, 8 December, 1962, para. 1.
The confusion did not end there:

The RQMS [Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant], sent with four trucks to collect ammunition from the storage depot, was told to come back on Monday. The RAF had no planes available—the aircraft were up country on bombing practice, but might be back by four in the afternoon. The HQ FARELF [Far East Land Forces] map storeman had gone to a beach and nobody knew which one. Transport to take the “Initial Force” to the airfield would be available once the school children had been brought home at lunchtime.31

Matters did not progress smoothly at Seletar airfield either:

The RAF staff was going through all the laborious procedures of passenger embarkation. Not only was the name of each Gurkha being entered on the manifests—Gurkha names are notoriously difficult to spell to those not speaking Gurkhali—but each man was being weighed with his weapon and equipment.32

For the RAF, the pressing need to fly troops into Brunei came at an opportune moment, since the Far East Air Force (FEAF) had more aircraft available on 8 December than it had had for some weeks previously. Most fortuitous was the presence of a Bristol Britannia in transit from the United Kingdom (UK), which was a dedicated troop transport aircraft that was ideal for this operation. Also employed in the initial airlift were three Blackburn Beverleys and one Hastings medium range transport (MRT). The latter was the first to depart, from Changi at 2.42pm with part of D Company, 1/2GR onboard; the three Beverleys left Seletar from 2.55pm with C Company emplaned; the Britannia carried the remainder of D Company. The Hastings and the Britannia went to Labuan because they were too large to safely land on the runway at Berakas, while the three Beverleys were able to fly directly to Brunei Town. D Company was then ferried to Brunei by RAF aircraft already at Labuan and Twin Pioneers commandeered from Borneo Airways.33

Other aircraft involved in transporting troops and equipment during this early stage of operations in Brunei were several Pioneers, both single- and twin-engined, and eight Avro Shackletons of the RAF, one C-130 Hercules from the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), and four Bristol Freighters from the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF). The

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31 James & Sheil-Small, A Pride of Gurkhas, p. 126.
Shackletons were maritime patrol aircraft that could be converted to troop transport, carrying the soldiers’ equipment in each aircraft’s bomb bay. They made a total of 19 sorties between Singapore and Labuan in the period 12 to 26 December, though some of these were coastal reconnaissance missions rather than troop transport activities; the Shackletons also performed other flights in their primary maritime patrol role.\(^34\)

The Hercules contributed by the RAAF happened to be in the area on a courier run to Malaya when the RAF requested its use and the Australian government consented on the proviso that it would be employed for transport purposes only. This aircraft flew a total of ten missions, carrying troops, vehicles, radio equipment, and navigation aids to Labuan and Brunei. The RNZAF’s Bristol Freighters of No. 41 Squadron were based in Singapore as part of the Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve and, being a specialist transport aircraft for both passengers and equipment, were ideal for this operation. These four planes “flew non-stop, day and night” and transported 89 passengers and 145,305 pounds of equipment during their involvement in the operation.\(^35\)

During the afternoon of 8 December, Luce made the following dispositions:

- (a) C-in-C FARELF to send Battalion Headquarters and a third company that night and a fourth next day.
- (b) Commanding Officer 1/2 KEO Gurkha Rifles to assume command of all ground forces on arrival.
- (c) Two minesweepers to sail from Singapore to Brunei, with additional communication personnel embarked, to provide a naval presence and assist in any way necessary.
- (d) The recall of MRT aircraft (3 Hastings) from Calcutta.
- (e) FEAF to task twin engined Pioneer aircraft already in Borneo to Brunei operations and to send a further three from Singapore to Labuan.
- (f) Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief [sic] Far East Fleet (FOCINCFEF) to provide a party of 1 officer and 11 technical ratings (later known as Naval Party ALFA) to survey and maintain essential services and radio services in Brunei.\(^36\)


Major JA Lloyd-Williams, second-in-command of the 1/2GR and commander of the Initial Force despatched that afternoon, had been directed to restore law and order under the authority of the Brunei government and at the direction of Outram. Brigadier JBA Glennie, on the General Staff at FARELF Headquarters (HQ) and appointed Force Commander on 9 December, received similarly succinct instructions from Luce: “You will proceed to Brunei and take command of all land, sea and air forces in the Borneo Territory and you will restore the situation”. 37

Lloyd-Williams’ force numbered approximately 280, of whom the first to arrive in Brunei Town was one platoon of D Company via Labuan at 7pm. By 11pm, the entire Initial Force, comprising two platoons of D Company, two platoons of C Company, and HQ Company, had deplaned at Berakas and been escorted to Brunei Town Police Station by the police. Outram and Parks briefed Lloyd-Williams and his officers on the situation thus:

a. The Police Station had been attacked at 0200 hours on 8 December by approximately 300 armed men after an electricity cut.
b. There had also been attacks on the ISTANA and the MENTRI BESAR’s house.
c. All attacks had been repelled.
d. At first light the Police recaptured the Power Station and undertook mopping up operations, enemy casualty [sic] 11 killed, 24 wounded recovered.
e. The following areas were now defended by Police:-
   (1) The Airfield
   (2) The Police Station
   (3) The ISTANA
   (4) PANAGA and KUALA BELAIT Police Stations
f. A report had been received that an enemy force was moving to attack BRUNEI Town from LIMBANG by river, estimated time of arrival within 90 minutes.
g. Curfew was in force in BRUNEI Town. 38

As a result, the Gurkhas were given three tasks: to secure Brunei Town, to recapture the Seria area and relieve Panaga Police Station, and to restore law and order throughout the country. 39

Lloyd-Williams’ first step was to despatch mobile reconnaissance patrols to enforce the curfew in Brunei Town. Of the two platoons from D Company, one was sent to the Istana to

37 James & Sheil-Small, The Undeclared War, p. 14; TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 75, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 48, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 121, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 57, 9 December, 1962, para. 1.
protect the Sultan, his family, and all the other people who had taken shelter there and the other was deployed in defensive positions around the police station. The elements of C Company present were kept back as mobile reserves, until around 12.30am on 9 December when information was received that caused them to be despatched to Seria, which will be discussed in detail below.40

In its report on the first two days of the rebellion, 1/2GR gave this description of events in Brunei Town that Saturday night:

At about 0200 hours a man was reported to be crawling up a monsoon drain near the Government Building [the Secretariat] and a patrol was sent out to investigate. Up until this time everything had been quiet in BRUNEI Town. A few minutes later heavy fire broke out from the Government Building and the Post Office area. Fire was immediately returned by the patrol and police and troops in the police station, and half the platoon remaining in the Police Station moved quickly to the NORTH EAST side of the Police Compound perimeter. In doing this 1 Officer and 4 [other ranks] were wounded. Shortly afterwards a man reaturned [sic] from the patrol to give a location report, and the Force Commander and three men evacuated it by Land Rover. The patrol had been fired on at about 25 yards['] range from [the] Government Building, and casualties were 2 Officers and 4 [other ranks] wounded, of which 1 Officer and 1 Lance Corporal later died. Enemy casualties are as yet unknown except that a lot of blood was found later on the verandahs in the Government Building . . .

In the meantime D Company Headquarters and two platoons had arrived. D Company Headquarters with one platoon reached the EAST end of the Government Building during the fire fight, and stopped in order not to come under fire from [their] own troops in what they presumed was the Police Station. Having established communications with Force Headquarters[,] D Company made known its location by flashing the headlights of the leading vehicle. No town maps were held by the Initial[,] or Main, Force. D Company was ordered to clear the Government Building from the EAST, at this time the position of the patrol from the Police Station not being known. The platoon had just started doing this when it was fired on from behind, and turned round to deal with the new threat. At the same time a patrol in jungle green was seen some 200 yards NORTH crossing the road along which D Company had come. With the possibility that it might be the patrol from the Police Station it was not engaged. D Company was then ordered to remain in its present positions till first light, about an hour later, and then to clear the town. At first light they did this – by first clearing the buildings EAST towards the river and then SOUTH towards the BRUNEI HOTEL. 14 prisoners taken in this part of the action turned out to be police and were later released. At the same time the remaining D Company platoon arrived from the Airport and was ordered to clear the Government Building. This part of the action was completed by 0715 hours (with 4 prisoners taken). By 0900 hours the whole action was completed, the following buildings having been cleared and sentries posted on the rooftops and top floors:

- Chartered Bank
- Government Building, covering Radio BRUNEI
- Post Office
- Telecoms Centre
- Power Station
- River Front

40 Ibid., paras. 8-9; CO 1030/1076, Item 6, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/59, Despatch Personal No. 25, 20 December, 1962, para. 31.
The events of that night in Brunei Town and elsewhere, as well as rumours of further impending attacks on the capital by large groups of rebels, emphasised the pressing need to concentrate on the defence of the Sultan and his government, a high priority if Luce’s orders were to be followed. As a result, the Sultan, his family, and his entourage were moved from the difficult-to-defend Istana to the Police Station on Sunday morning, which was, by now, crowded with police, army, government officials, and captured rebels. The Sultan addressed his people over Radio Brunei that morning:

In this rebellion several people were shot dead and several others were detained by the police . . . the specific aim of these rebels was to overthrow my government. This action was not only prohibited by the laws of the country but were [sic] also condemned by God . . . . In view of this and for the safety of the whole population of Brunei, the government is forced to take stern actions to stem the rebellion. The government had to impose heavy sentences on the perpetrators of the rebellion according to the provisions of the law. These leaders of the rebellion had spread false and treacherous propaganda which said that their army had my support. This is all lies. And I was made to believe that they wrested power on behalf of my government and that I was sympathetic towards their unwarranted actions.42

Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon Shakespear arrived in Brunei Town on 9 December to take command from Lloyd-Williams and immediately began to consolidate his forces’ position. The lack of reliable intelligence on the rebels’ intentions and capabilities and the necessity to treat the TNKU as though they were of the highest military calibre led Shakespear to recall C Company from Tutong, postpone the effort to recover Seria, and evacuate some women and children from Brunei Town. Explaining these decisions, Shakespear remarked:

‘These may have seemed slightly retrograde steps,’ he said later, ‘but there were numerous reports of a thousand insurgents forming up to attack this place or that, and Brunei Town was the seat of Government. The Sultan was the Head and had to be guarded. Besides the shortage of troops, all we had to move in—apart from one or two Landrovers and command vehicles—were PWD [Public Works Department] tippers. We had not as yet commandeered boats—we hadn’t the time—nor were helicopters available for deployment as HMS Albion had not arrived at this stage. All the roads and rivers which I had seen were ideal for ambush and this was what we expected from a tough, hard enemy. We were, therefore, dancing to the

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42 Jamil Umar, op. cit., p. 113; TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 565, Telegram to the CO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 6 Saving, 18 December, 1962, para. 2; ADM 1/28626, Report on Operations in Borneo, December 1962–January 1963, Annex B – Narrative of Operations – 8th December to 20th December, 1962, Part 2. Phase I – Breaking the Rebellion, para. 9. Hussainmiya has stated that this broadcast occurred late in the evening of 8 December, but both Jamil Umar and Bolkiah refer to the later date. It is, of course, possible, that the Sultan made two separate addresses. Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 297; Jamil Umar, op. cit., p. 112; Bolkiah, Remember, Remember..., p. 233.
insurgents’ tune for some days. I wanted to regain the initiative as soon as I could.\(^{43}\)

9 December was spent in patrolling the town, enforcing the 24-hour curfew, and establishing lookout posts on rooftops, road junctions, and bridges to prevent rebel incursions. At 11.30am, Luce informed London that the capital was clear by day but TNKU infiltration was expected by both land and sea at night, followed by extensive sniping, ambushes, and attacks. That afternoon, Reuters reported that British troops had been fired upon and that sniping continued in the capital. During the course of the night, several attempts by the rebels to enter Brunei Town were “severely dealt with” by the Gurkhas.\(^{44}\)

The evacuation of women and children mentioned above had brought around 200 British and Malayan people to Labuan by 9pm on Sunday. These evacuees were mostly dependents of expatriate civil servants, some of whom stated that they would not have left Brunei were it not for the growing shortage of potable water. They were initially assisted at the airport by members of the Labuan branch of the Red Cross, auxiliary police, and Boy Scouts and were then housed temporarily in school buildings and with local families in Victoria. Some of these evacuees later went on to either Malaya or England; presumably, the balance returned to Brunei when they could.\(^{45}\)

By 10 December, Brunei Town was described as “quiet”, though the TNKU was still active on the outskirts of the capital, including its continuing occupation of the gaol at Jerudong, 15 miles outside of town.\(^{46}\) Further reinforcements had arrived in Brunei and were despatched to various points, with elements of the RAF Regiment relieving those of 1/2GR who had been tasked with protecting the airport. Glennie also went to Brunei Town that Monday morning in order to take overall command of the operation, bringing with him a small Force HQ. Another new arrival was White, who had only entered the London Tropical


\(^{46}\) TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 171, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 65, 10 December, 1962, para. 5; Item 177, Extract from Reuter’s News Service, “Recapture 11 Brunei Town”, 10 December, 1962.
Diseases Hospital for treatment for an ongoing stomach complaint on the previous Thursday and who was forced to dash back to Brunei via crisis meetings at the Colonial Office and in Singapore in order to resume his official duties. Moreover, Selkirk visited Brunei on the same day because London had requested a full report on the current situation in northern Borneo and “an assessment of possible repercussions on [the] Malaysia project”. 47

Other developments on that Monday, as reported by Reuters on the first day the international press had been allowed into Brunei since the outbreak of the revolt, included the formal prohibition of the PRB, the signing by the Sultan of a warrant for the arrest of Azahari, the imposition of a 24-hour curfew in Brunei Town, the arrival of 150 Malayan police to assist their local counterparts, and a warning broadcast on Radio Brunei that piped water should not be consumed because “it might be poisoned”. 48 The same source quoted Glennie as having said that “he expected to have the main rebel areas secured quickly, and the British forces would then proceed to mop up all pockets of insurgents”. 49 Smark also vividly described the unusual activity in both Brunei Town and Labuan:

As I left Brunei Town early this evening to fly to Labuan, the airport was ringed with Gurkhas. Troops and R.A.F. men crowded the offices, the canteen, and anywhere else there was a foot of floor space to bed down in. Labuan Island, in North Borneo waters, which has been acting as a staging post for British forces flying in from Singapore, was jammed with service personnel and the airport was packed with transports and reconnaissance aircraft. 50

The situation in Brunei Town had stabilised enough by 11 December for White to despatch this telegram to London: “Military buildup most successful. Operation proceeding excellently. I feel we are over the worst”. 51 This document referred to the entire operational area, but White’s location in the capital suggests that his assessment was based mostly on the situation there, rather than in other, more severely affected towns. Another good indication of the improvement in the capital was the progressive lifting of the curfew, firstly for two

49 Ibid., “Recapture 6 Brunei Town”.
50 Ibid., “Recapture 14 Brunei Town”.
51 TNA, CO 1030/1069, Item 232, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Unnumbered, 11 December, 1962, para. 1.
hours on the 11th and then for six hours the next day. This did not mean, however, that all was quiet in Brunei Town: there was occasional gunfire on the outskirts of town when curfew breakers were spotted, as well as continuing sporadic sniping that slowly decreased as more rebels were captured. The gaol at Jerudong was re-captured on 12 December and its three occupants, apparently locals who supported the Malaysia proposal, released; as late as mid-January, three of the prisoners who had been set free when the TNKU initially seized the gaol remained at large.\(^{52}\)

Meanwhile, efforts were being made to restore things other than public order, even while the capital was still threatened by the TNKU. The Brunei government had requested assistance to run telecommunications and essential services early on 8 December because only skeleton staffs had been operating these utilities. The government of North Borneo promised to send one water engineer, three water plant technicians, and four diesel operators on Sunday, but neither they nor Sarawak could spare telecommunications technicians. The difficulty was temporarily resolved with the arrival of Naval Party Alfa, which had been despatched from Singapore to run Brunei’s essential services, as mentioned above. The rebellion, not surprisingly, had also brought business to a complete standstill throughout Brunei, with all banks closed and, as a result, bills going unpaid. The curfew in force in Brunei Town and in other towns contributed to this; criticism of the imposition of this curfew had occurred in the press, but White defended it, commenting that the curfew was “a necessary measure of military security to keep armed insurgents from infiltrating into V.P.s [vital points]”.\(^{53}\)

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\(^{53}\) TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 21, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, No. N.B.200, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 29, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 94, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 27, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 92, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 50, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Governor of Sarawak, Unnumbered, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1071, Item 299, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 75, 13 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1075, Item 565, Telegram to the CO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 6 Saving, 18 December, 1962, para. 6; CO 1030/1071, Item 293, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia,
Generally speaking, the rebellion was mostly over by 12 December, with only certain areas remaining under the TNKU’s control: “the rural districts south of Brunei Town; also pockets between Brunei Town and Seria, and possibly part of the Kuala Belait/Sibuti area”, as well as Muara and all of Temburong.\textsuperscript{54} As a result, the situation was slowly regaining its equilibrium in Brunei Town and, thus, the tempo of events had significantly decreased.

British troops were mostly engaged in sweeping kampongs on the outskirts of the capital and patrolling both on land and on the rivers, which pushed the rebels farther outside town. On 15 December, the police, with the assistance of the RN minesweepers HMS \textit{Houghton}, \textit{Dartington}, and \textit{Fiskerton} and several commandeered launches, conducted a search of Kampong Ayer at first light, looking for rebels who had sought shelter there.\textsuperscript{55}

Syd Morris, who served on HMS \textit{Dartington}, elaborated upon the use to which the locally owned river craft had been put:

For river and close inshore work in North Borneo, every conceivable small boat in Brunei, and later Sarawak, was pressed into service with a Royal Naval or Royal Marine crew. These included cabin cruisers, dories, assault boats, inflatables and canoes. Even the Sultan of Brunei’s yacht was utilised in the early stages of operations and an SRN-5 hovercraft, piloted by an SBS [Special Boat Service] officer, proved effective in the swamps near the border. Those craft crewed by the RN were usually commanded by a Midshipman or Sub-Lieutenant, with a stoker, seaman and perhaps a communicator. The smaller of the boats operating up river sometimes had a crew of just three junior rates – seaman, communicator and stoker.\textsuperscript{56}

Peter Down of HMS \textit{Fiskerton} has provided further detail:

Almost every day our “River Flotilla” took part in expeditions transporting or supporting the Marines and Army. Wherever the insurgents showed up, the locals reported it and the Brits responded. Daily Orders had a rota of tasks for the craft and there was no shortage of volunteers from both [mine]sweepers.\textsuperscript{57}

Muara had also been occupied by the TNKU, with the rebels taking control of the Police Station and, thereby, of the town; the absence of information on precisely how this occurred

\textsuperscript{54} TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 302, Ministry of Defence Situation Report No. 1 (Situation as at 1000 hours on 12th December, 1962), 12 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 298, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 74, 12 December, 1962, para. 5; CO 1030/1073, Item 401, Ministry of Defence Situation Report No. 3 (Situation as at 1200 hours 14th December 1962), 14 December, 1962, para. 1.


leads to the inference that the police did not oppose the takeover. Equally little is known of the time that the TNKU was in control of the town, only that the water and electricity had been cut off and that the rebels gave IOU notes to the shopkeeper from whom they had demanded bags of rice. The re-capture of the town was initially delayed by the limited number of vessels available to transport troops and able to dock in shallow waters, but a government launch and a lighter were eventually found to ferry A Company, 1/2GR to Muara at dawn on 14 December. While the Gurkhas were landing, two Hawker Hunter fighters performed dummy attacks on the town; in the event, Muara was re-captured without difficulty as there was no TNKU opposition, and the four police personnel who had been held by the rebels were swiftly freed.\(^{58}\)

**Tutong**

There are few details available about the TNKU’s seizure of the town of Tutong. One would assume that, as in other towns, the rebels simply took possession of the police station, described as “wooden and unfenced” in Far East Command’s (FEC) official report, thereby gaining control of the town itself.\(^{59}\) The Tentera then established defensive positions in buildings lining the main road leading to Brunei Town and dug defences on “dominating ground” nearby.\(^{60}\) The only other information that is known about the TNKU’s activities in Pekan Tutong during this time is that pro-Malaysia political leaders Ghazali Umar and Abdul Manan Mohamed were seized and held captive until the town was re-captured on 13 December.\(^{61}\)

Mentioned in passing above was the despatch of troops from Brunei Town to Seria in the early hours of 9 December:

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The road Brunei-Seria (50 miles) is twisting, runs through patches of jungle, and is very suitable for ambush. The Force Commander therefore decided to wait until first light before sending C Company 1/2 Gurkha Rifles to relieve Seria. However at 0030 hours 9th December a telephone message was received from Seria that the rebels were going to attack Panaga Police Station using European hostages as a screen. This sinister factor influenced several future operations in that it required not only speed but careful and imaginative handling to preserve the lives of hostages. As a result of the report HQ C Company and two platoons of 1/2 Gurkha Rifles left immediately in PWD transport to relieve Seria . . .

Accompanying these Gurkhas was an officer, Assistant Superintendent Raja Shahruzzaman Raja Kamarulbahrin, and three constables of the Brunei Police’s Mobile Reserve Unit.

The convoy did not, however, make it as far as Seria:

On the way they passed two minor road blocks, by-passed some rebels, killed two at another road block and drove fast into Tutong. Rebels opened fire from the Tutong Police Station. This fire was returned and the convoy drove on, until at a further road block in the town it was very heavily fired on from the upper stories of houses and shops. The fire was heavily returned and the convoy shot its way through. Unfortunately the Landrover driver of Company HQ was hit and the vehicle crashed into a monsoon drain. The signaller was also hit. Company HQ took up a defensive position on the verandah of a rebel held building, and after recovering the wireless set it moved, carrying the two wounded, to the fish market, taking an armed rebel prisoner. It lay low for the rest of the night with the enemy attempting to find it. The rest of the convoy had driven on and captured the rebel-held bridge west of the town. Here they realised that the Company Commander and HQ were missing, so they returned to look for him in Tutong. Early next morning C Company mopped up Tutong with great thoroughness.

Seven rebels are known to have been killed and 108 captured on the morning of the 9th, including many of the local leaders of the revolt, which, as a draft of the citation for the Military Cross that Captain FA Lea later received noted, had the effect of “nipping the rebellion in the bud in Tutong”.

Sergeant Sukdeo Pun subsequently recounted his own memories of events in Pekan Tutong:

As we reached Tutong the police driver, who lived there, stopped because he knew the rebels were there. He said “Stand by” and the rebels opened fire at us from an upper storey of a nearby house. Bullets flew everywhere. I tried to return fire but found I couldn’t lift my right arm as I had been hit near the shoulder and the bone was broken. I shouted out to the section commander to debus and take up defensive positions, that I was wounded and to send me the medical orderly. The orderly came, cut off my shirt with a razor blade and bound three or four first field dressings on the wound. I bled badly. I had no contact with the OC [Officer Commanding] or the platoon commander as they were still in the rear.
There were another two or three wounded men and I told the section commander to put them near the vehicle and, if the rebels were to come, to hide themselves. By this time I was in the back of the vehicle and the driver had run away. The vehicle was on the main road. I saw the rebels advancing towards us in two sections, one on the right of the road, the other on the left, by bounds. I had the bayonet on my rifle. They came to the vehicle and inspected it. One of the rebels wore a peaked hat and made a noise “eh” as I pretended to be dead. Had the rebel wanted to use my bayonet on me that would have been that but he passed on doing nothing to me. Another enemy group came up behind and looked inside the vehicle. I again feigned death. I still wonder how I stayed alive. By then there was so much blood in and on my boots that they had stuck to the vehicle floor and I could not move my feet. It was like wearing gum boots. I thought of my wife whom I had recently brought to the lines [in Singapore]. I stayed there till noon the next day. At last the OC came. We had many wounded and many rebels had been captured. I had not lost consciousness but felt dizzy.66

Lea reported that his company had suffered eleven casualties, two of whom were in a serious condition, and he and his detachment were subsequently ordered by Colonel Shakespear to return to Brunei Town.67

Pekan Tutong remained in the TNKU’s hands until 13 December, when C and D Companies of 1/2GR re-entered the town expecting significant resistance due to reports that the rebels were “well entrenched in prepared fortifications”, but no opposition was encountered.68 The immediate aftermath of the revolt in the town was later described in FEC’s official report thus:

The inhabitants seemed frightened and sullen and 1/2 Gurkha Rifles had to rehabilitate the town. They guarded the Water Works, Police Station, Power Station, WT [Wireless Transmitter] Station, PWD and the important bridge immediately west of the town. No minor official or workman would work without being actually guarded by troops.69

On two occasions after its re-capture, Pekan Tutong was the subject of further action by the TNKU: firstly, on the night of 13 December, a large group of rebels tried to sneak back in and were ambushed, losing 26 of their number, most likely captured rather than killed. The

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second incident saw approximately 40 TNKU attempt to infiltrate the town via the river in the early hours of the 16th but the rebels were repelled and 15 were captured.70

Seria and Kuala Belait

The Seria Police Station was captured by the TNKU at 3.15am, with the officer in charge, Inspector Zacharia Ibrahim, later briefly describing events there: “about 300 armed rebels attacked and overran the police station. They took 40 rifles and about 4,000 rounds of ammunition”.71 These arms were then used in the rebels’ first, unsuccessful attempt at 4am to seize the Panaga Police Station at the western end of the town, which was the primary police installation in the Belait District and, as a result, housed the majority of the police’s heavy weapons. District commander Superintendent Ibrahim Hamzah stated that the rebels attacked with rifle fire and the police responded with Verey light cartridges and gas shells; the TNKU ceased its assault shortly after dawn. At approximately 6.30am, the Assistant District Officer Pengiran Syed Shahminan Pengiran Syed Mashor and another man, Malai Othman, were brought to the Panaga Police Station as hostages in an attempt to induce the police to surrender. The District Officer, Pengiran Abdul Rahman, and Superintendent Ibrahim refused the hostages’ appeal and advised the rebels to consult the Mentri Besar instead. The TNKU then turned its attention to Anduki Airport and its small police post, capturing it at noon and blocking the runway with vehicles.72

Meanwhile, in Seria, the rebels were rounding up “anyone who was walking on the streets”, including children; The Borneo Bulletin estimated that at least 1,000 people were held in the compound of the Seria Police Station at one stage.73 The rationale behind this action is somewhat puzzling: burdening itself with so many captives when two of its three


73 The Borneo Bulletin, “Rebels held over 1,000”, 22 December, 1962, p. 8.
major objectives were still in government hands appears to have been both a waste of limited personnel and a risky concentration of effort and forces in one place that could have resulted in a complete rout for the TNKU, had the police chosen a less defensive course. On the other hand, as events subsequently showed, the rebels gained many hostages who were available for use against their remaining objectives, as well as, more generally, a means to control the wider population.

There are numerous accounts of the next attempt to capture the Panaga Police Station, some of which are reproduced in full in Appendix VI. At about 6.30pm on 8 December, the government and Brunei Shell staff who had been captured by the TNKU and taken to the Seria Police Station were separated by gender and the men had their hands tied behind their backs before being urged onto trucks. They were informed that anyone attempting to escape would be shot and then they were driven to an area close to the Panaga Police Station, where they alighted and were forced to march in three columns towards the building. Pengiran Syed Shahminan and Foo Seng Kow, a security officer with Brunei Shell, were placed at the front of this column and the former was told to shout through a loudhailer: “Don’t shoot us. I am Pengiran Shahminan. Please surrender yourselves”. 74

Superintendent Ibrahim later gave this account of the events:

Later, soon after dark, I was at the control room on the top floor of the police station, facing Jalan Tengah. I had a clear vision of the road near the commissariat. There were seven other police personnel with me in the control room. We were armed with automatic weapons, 303 rifles and gas guns.

At about 7.30, while I was in the room, I heard noises of people shouting and chanting, coming from the commissariat.

I called on my men to hold fire. Then I heard voices through a loud hailer calling on the D.O. to ask the police not to shoot and to surrender.

After three or four shouts I recognized the voice of Pengiran Shahminan.

Before the incident I had received information that rebels were using hostages as a human shield in an attack on Panaga police station.

I told the men with me in the control room to fire a first volley above the heads of the people seen.

My men did so and immediately the rebels returned fire. Police and rebels exchanged fire until dawn. Then the rebels retreated. 75

The hostages have naturally given slightly differing accounts of these events, but, generally speaking, they all agree with that of CMW Fern of Brunei Shell’s Transport Section:

As we arrived near the bus stand near the Panaga Police station [sic], I heard machine gun fire from Panaga police station and there was a slight commotion among the hostages.

The hostages in front were prodded by the rebel escort and told to keep marching. As we passed the bus stop there was a second burst of machine gun fire followed by shooting from front and rear.

Immediately after the second burst of fire all the remaining hostages dived into a ditch nearby. While this was taking place, I noticed someone turn round and drop, and two voices claiming to have been shot.

While lying in the drain, and while the shooting was in progress[,] we tried to find out who was missing and several names were mentioned.

We called out names and they answered. Then we noticed that Clifford Joseph was missing.

While in the drain, Dr. Maclean[,] one of the hostages[,] was busy attending to [the] wounded. He then wanted a look at Clifford Joseph, whose body was lying on the road.

A rebel, Mr. Roy Clark[,] and I crawled on to the embankment and brought Clifford Joseph’s body for Dr. Maclean to examine. Dr. Maclean opened [Mr.] Joseph’s shirt, wiped a wound on his chest, examined his pulse and said he was dead.”

Some of the hostages, perhaps five or six, used the opportunity that taking cover in the roadside drainage ditch presented to them to escape to the backyard of the police station. Foo Seng Kow, standing with Pengiran Shahminan at the front of the column, pretended that he had been killed in the first volley of gunfire and lay motionless in the road for about five hours until the rebels left the area, whereupon he ducked into the conveniently placed drainage ditch before seeking more permanent refuge in the police station. The sequence of events is not quite clear, but it appears that the remaining hostages were either taken to hospital or returned to the Seria Police Station shortly after the initial action occurred. There were a total of six casualties amongst the civilians, comprising the single fatality, one critical injury, two gunshot wounds, and two minor injuries.

Little information is available on what happened after this attack on the Panaga Police Station; there are merely isolated facts and details that form neither a coherent narrative nor even a vague idea of events in Seria before its re-capture. An eyewitness stated that the

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76 Ibid., pp. 2 & 9.
rebels attempted to seize Panaga for a fourth time on Sunday night and, despite “much shooting”, the police repelled them once again. FEC, meanwhile, was reporting to London that “Seria police station”, presumably meaning Panaga, was “hard pressed” and that vehicles had breached its walls. On 9 December, the Brunei government mistakenly informed the media that Seria had been recaptured without loss by the elements of C Company, 1/2GR that had actually been stopped in Pekan Tutong.

PM Linton of Brunei Shell received telephone calls from the TNKU firstly, on the morning of the 9th, threatening to “burn the oilfield and attack, using prisoners as [a] screen” if Panaga did not surrender and then, later that day, emphasising how well their captives had been treated and claiming that the previous message had been “contrary to policy”; Linton attributed the sudden *volte-face* to the presence of jet aircraft in the skies over Seria. According to the statements of two witnesses, however, others in the TNKU reacted rather differently to these aeroplanes, believing them to be signs that assistance from allies overseas was coming; as a result, the motor vehicles that had previously been blocking the runway at Anduki Airfield were removed.

Those held at Seria Police Station told Reuters of their experiences after their involvement in the attack on Panaga:

“It was then with the rebels showing occasion [sic] surliness and displeasure towards us that the heroine of Seria, Miss Jean Scott of Glasgow came into her own.”

Mr Bennett said that Miss Jean Scott of Glasgow was “the heroine of Seria” and “a real Florence Nightingale” during this imprisonment.

“One of the rebel leaders was very ill and wanted treatment at the hospital.”

“He asked Miss Scott, who is a Brunei Government nursing sister, to take him to the hospital. But she refused unless he agreed that all the women and children should come out in an ambulance with them and be driven to their homes.”

“She stood up to them and they finally agreed, and so the women and children were freed. But Miss Scott returned to the police station as she had given her word.”

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79 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 23, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 62, 9 December, 1962, para. 1.
81 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 85, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, No. 150, 9 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 124, Telegram to Shell International Petroleum Company, London from Sarawak Shell Oilfields Limited, Miri, No. 935, 9 December, 1962, para. secundo.
“This was just the start – throughout the rest of our time in jail she bullied the guards and got information out and in and the rebels treated her with the greatest of respect,” Bennett said.83

Another hostage, Mr Sargent, added:

“We were able to get the occasional message through to our families by Jean Scott who was allowed to come and go to the hospital by the rebels, and also there were one or two more friendly chaps among them who contacted our families and got some necessary personal effects for us.”

“On Sunday morning an aircraft buzzed the town and from then on more aircraft began to come over.”

“As the rebels began to realise British forces would come in[,] their attitude became much more friendly and cordial, and we had a lot less trouble.”

“We could hear firing during the past two days and then when three jets howled overhead today we knew we’d be freed soon and anyway Jean Scott had been managing to get some sort of information on British troop movements and we knew for the last 36 hours that help was near at hand.”84

As for the town of Seria itself, very few details are known. The Borneo Bulletin stated that the Anglican Vicarage had been robbed, with a radio, some clothes, and several other items taken, while some rebels had entered the Catholic Convent without harming any of the occupants. CW Hall, director of the local branch of the British Red Cross Society and one of the hostages held at the Seria Police Station, told the same newspaper that he had been forced at gunpoint to unlock the Society’s hut and to reveal the names of his staff so the TNKU could avail themselves of their services. Later, as it became clear that their ascendancy in Seria was coming to an end, the rebels donned Red Cross armbands in an attempt, presumably, to escape apprehension.85

In Kuala Belait, there was apparently no action until the evening of 8 December, though the gates of the Police Station had been barricaded all day and the occupants were standing by for the expected attack. It came at 7.30pm, when the compound was assaulted “from all sides”, as one policeman told his family over the telephone while it was happening, and a PWD bulldozer was used in an attempt to breach the station’s perimeter fence.86 The police managed to repulse this attack, as well as all of those that followed in the next two days. A

84 Ibid., “Relief 10 Seria” & “Relief 11 Seria”.
witness described the gunfire in the course of these long days as “sporadic and occasional” during the daytime but as “more drawn out, with rapid bursts” once night fell.\textsuperscript{87}

Inspector Abdul Latiff Dato Hussein, officer in charge at Kuala Belait Police Station, recounted his memory of the experience decades later:

Quarter Master Pengiran Abbas and the other policemen were pressured and willing to surrender. Pengiran Abbas was one of the few policemen who lived outside the police compound, together with their families. But Latiff Hussain resisted and refused to surrender. Then the phone started to ring endlessly. The TNKU rebel leader was on the line, bombarding Latiff Hussain, “Mr. Latiff Hussain, you are the one upsetting everything (Encik Latiff Hussain, ini yang kachau). We just want guns and ammunition.” Latiff Hussain replied, “I reserve a magazine [of ammunition] for you. You have to kill me first.”\textsuperscript{88}

The TNKU also poured petrol onto the station, a wooden building, and attempted to set it afire without success. Finally, after two days of resistance, the police were forced to surrender at 7am on 10 December, having exhausted their supply of ammunition. Inspector Abdul Latiff stated that the rebels “came through the open gate, raising their hands in surrender and waving a white flag when it should have been the other way round”.\textsuperscript{89}

For the people of Kuala Belait, the TNKU’s seizure of their town came as quite a surprise: The Borneo Bulletin stated that the only sign that anything was amiss on 8 December was the barricaded Police Station, and that the population had gone about their daily business without any trouble until dusk fell and the TNKU attacked the police compound. One group of children even walked from their bus stop in one part of town into the town centre that morning because their bus had failed to arrive, reaching the bus depot across the road from the Police Station where they noticed the defensive arrangements that had been made. One of the party, the author of the article, telephoned his father, a policeman stationed there, to ask what was happening and was informed that even the police did not know, having only been told to “stand by and be ready” by their superiors at Panaga.\textsuperscript{90} The

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{88} Zariani, op. cit., p. 162.
\item \textsuperscript{89} The Borneo Bulletin, “From start to finish – A Bulletin history of the revolt: Theirs was the glory – The gallant Panaga band”, 22 December, 1962, p. 5; Zariani, op. cit., p. 162; TNA, DEFE 11/591, Item 38, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 69, 10 December, 1962, para. 1D. Some sources state that Kuala Belait Police Station surrendered on 11 December, but the two most contemporary sources, the newspaper article and the archival document, give the earlier date.
\end{itemize}
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staff at the bus depot informed the children that no buses would be going to Seria because of “massive unrest” there.91

By the morning of 9 December, this sense of false normality had been well and truly dispelled, with signs of the night-time attack everywhere: a PWD truck outside the Police Station bearing a shattered windscreen and flat tyres, walls marred by bullet holes and broken windows, and tractors parked at strategic intersections by the rebels for use as barricades. More disturbing was the absence of movement on the usually busy streets of the town, with most people staying inside their homes and locking their doors. Only the TNKU and those in need of food ventured outside. The Borneo Bulletin subsequently described the rebels’ movements in the four days that Kuala Belait was held by the TNKU as aimless, saying that they were a rabble without leadership or cause, but on Monday they certainly had a purpose: they searched most houses in the town in an effort to procure more firearms and ammunition. They also detained two government officials, Stipendiary Magistrate Charlie Foo Chee Tung and Assistant Registrar Lai Ah Jee, at the PWD office for eight hours that day, along with four expatriates likely attached to Brunei Shell. According to one of their captors, the intent of this action was to protect them from the police; all were released unharmed on Monday night. Finally, the electricity was cut to the town at least once, for much of Sunday, and the water supply was described in The Times as “short”, while some looting occurred in several shops.92

Relief for both Seria and Kuala Belait was at hand, however, in the form of Tactical HQ and A Company of 1QOH, which arrived at Labuan at 2.30am on 10 December. Brigadier Glennie had given the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel WG McHardy, the following orders:

(a) To move his Force to Brunei Airfield to secure it properly.
(b) To carry out an air reconnaissance of Seria and Kuala Belait that morning, (10th December, 1962), and to find an [sic] landing zone.

92 The Times, “Rebels drive n from Brunei oil town: Two European hostages reported killed; Revolutionary party leaders surrender”, 10 December, 1962, The Borneo Bulletin, “Kuala Belait covered in fear, terror as rebels held power”, 22 December, 1962, p. 10; “Stipendiary Magistrate, Europeans held by rebels in Kuala Belait”, 22 December, 1962, p. 7; The Sarawak Tribune, “‘I Saw It All’”, 19 December, 1962, p. 5. The first article cited from The Borneo Bulletin is an excellent account of Kuala Belait’s experience of the Rebellion and is thus reproduced in full in Appendix VI.
(c) In conjunction with the Air Force Commander to recapture Seria and Kuala Belait by air assault as soon as the operation could be mounted.\textsuperscript{93}

Having carried out the first objective upon arrival at Berakas at 6.45am, a Twin Pioneer carrying McHardy, Outram, the commander of A Company, Major ID Cameron, and two Brunei Shell pilots flew over Seria and Kuala Belait for two hours to reconnoitre the situation. They found two landing zones, Anduki Airfield itself, now cleared of motor vehicles, and some vacant land near a golf course two miles west of Seria where Twin Pioneers could safely land.\textsuperscript{94}

The force tasked with relieving Seria was split into two elements, with 60 soldiers travelling on five Twin Pioneers to the west side of the town and 110 embarking on a Beverley destined for Anduki. All practised rapid deplaning at Berakas before departure, and the exit doors of all six aircraft were removed to facilitate this procedure. McHardy and Outram accompanied the force in a de Havilland Beaver of the Army Air Corps in order to co-ordinate the operation. The Beverley was to go to Anduki to seize control of the airfield and its environs, while the Twin Pioneers were to land ten miles away near the golf course to relieve Panaga Police Station and the Telecommunications Centre.\textsuperscript{95}

The six aircraft departed Berakas between 12.45pm and 1.00pm, with the Beverley reaching Anduki approximately thirty minutes later. The pilot, Flight Lieutenant MG Fenn, landed the aircraft about one quarter of the way down the runway, allowing the troops to disembark and the Beverley to take off swiftly without wasting any time on the ground. The aircraft was fired upon from the airfield buildings and sustained two minor bullet strikes, but it managed to return to Brunei Town without incident. The same rebels who had fired on the Beverley also attacked the advancing troops, who cleared the TNKU from the buildings and attached police post and secured control of Anduki without suffering any losses; two rebels were killed and five captured. The force then moved on to its next objective, the bridge over

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., paras. 12 & 15.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., paras. 15-8.
the Sungei Bera about one and a half miles to the west, establishing observation posts on both banks of the river and later securing the nearby Shell Explosives Area.96

The five Twin Pioneers reached their landing zone shortly after the operation at Anduki commenced, with the first aircraft to land stopping only ten yards from a ditch and informing the other four to descend from the south instead. They fared little better, with their portside wingtips brushing through a tree and one becoming temporarily bogged in the soft ground of the impromptu landing strip. The troops deplaned from the five aircraft and reached Panaga at 3pm, somehow relieving the Police Station without being seen by either the TNKU outside or the police inside. Roadblocks were then established on two of the main roads of Seria, Jalans Tengah and Utara, with the platoon sent to the latter encountering some opposition from rebels stationed in the Telecommunications Centre, but soon overcoming it and taking ten rebels prisoner while releasing four hostages. This latter roadblock was soon brought into action, capturing 13 TNKU before the afternoon was over and a further two that night, as well as various weapons and a wide array of vehicles.97

At this stage, 1QOH held the east end of Seria with two platoons and Tactical HQ and the west of the town with A Company. Seria Police Station was, of course, still in the hands of the TNKU, and the road to Kuala Belait had not been blocked, allowing free movement between the two towns, which was a concern because of the possibility of overnight reinforcement. Throughout the night of 10 December, more troops and equipment arrived at Anduki, including 1QOH’s B Company, which had just endured a fast and rough sea passage from Singapore on HMS Cavalier. It was immediately employed with A Company in clearing a safe route through Seria, which had been achieved by 2pm on 11 December after having only encountered minor opposition.98

Another important task for that day was to establish a roadblock on the road to Kuala Belait, at a roundabout west of the Panaga Police Station and near the golf course. One platoon from A Company was sent to do this, with the assistance of two sections of the Brunei Police, but they were diverted from their object when a Land Rover was noted to have remarked their approach and then swiftly departed. All exited the vehicles in which they were travelling and continued on their way on foot. When they neared the Istana Kota Mangalela, the Sultan’s residence in Kuala Belait, a car emerged from the grounds and was fired upon by the leading section; the vehicle rolled into the drainage ditch and the driver was wounded. A group of TNKU stationed in the Istana responded with gunfire of their own using a Bren machine gun and several rifles, forcing the Highlanders and police to take cover in the jungle surrounding the building and return fire.99

Major Cameron positioned the police at the north of the Istana to watch the beach for TNKU reinforcements and led his Highlanders towards the main building. One section of the platoon provided covering fire from the jungle while Cameron and three others ran towards the Istana over open ground to throw tear gas grenades through its windows in the hope of encouraging the occupants to surrender. One rebel was wounded outside the Istana before the party returned to their colleagues under cover and waited for the tear gas to take effect. The gunfire from the Istana only intensified, though, so Cameron approached the building again with one section and entered it through a window with Lieutenant McCall and one other soldier, to find an empty room. They cleared the ground floor, capturing the rebel who had previously been wounded, before the rest of the troops joined them to search the upper storey.100

The clearing of the second floor of the Istana was fairly uneventful, with six rebels surrendering without opposition, one being discovered dead on the roof, and another captured in one of the secondary buildings; five rebels were known to have escaped. The

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Highlanders had yet to establish their roadblock, however, so they continued on their way, clearing the barracks of the Brunei Police Mobile Reserve Unit and killing one rebel who had approached the platoon in a vehicle and attacked them on foot, armed with a shotgun, when his passenger was wounded. Finally, the roadblock was established covering all three roads leading to the roundabout.\textsuperscript{101}

The remainder of that Tuesday was spent in placing a cordon around the TNKU’s stronghold, the Seria Police Station and nearby tamu (market), though the possibility that the hostages might be killed if the rebels felt cornered caused McHardy to leave a significant part of this cordon on the south side of the tamu conspicuously undefended; the troops at Shell’s explosive store were shifted into hidden positions in the jungle near the railway to ambush any escaping rebels. Relief was also given to Shell employees who had manned essential services while the TNKU was in charge, and escorts provided when vital tasks like activating the filtration plant needed to be carried out. Rebel snipers, located on the rooftops of the tamu, fired on these groups without success and, presumably, observed all of the Highlanders’ movements. The British themselves established an observation post atop an oil derrick near the Police Station to provide their own intelligence.\textsuperscript{102}

Before their operations in the Belait District had begun, Admiral Luce sought permission for Hawker Hunter fighter jets to be used in a ground attack role because of the high risk of road ambushes. This request was granted, with the Acting Chief of the Defence Staff adding that, because “a swift conclusion” to operations in Brunei was desired, either rockets or guns might be employed.\textsuperscript{103} Four of these jets were utilised in dummy attacks over Seria between 7.30am and 1pm on 12 December, with one aircraft firing its machine guns directly over the Police Station into the sea “as a show of force and as further persuasion to the rebels to surrender”.\textsuperscript{104} A Twin Pioneer equipped with loudspeakers, known as a Voice Aircraft,
broadcast a call for the TNKU to surrender at 11.45am, while Inspector Mustapha of the Brunei Police had already made the same plea through a loudhailer, all to no avail.\textsuperscript{105}

At 11.15am, No. 6 Platoon, the Mortar Section, and the MMG Platoon of 1QOH exited the Community Centre and marched towards the Police Station, halting 200 yards away to establish firing positions on the roofs of a school and a block of flats overlooking the station. The Mortar Section occupied these positions while No. 6 Platoon held the area, and the MMG Platoon advanced swiftly on the Police Station, encountering opposition, in the form of rifle and machine gun fire, from a prepared position under a house about fifty yards from their objective. This gunfire was returned and the two rebels retreated from their position, but found themselves engaged again by the Mortar Section as they crossed a road; their fate is unknown but they may have escaped unharmed.\textsuperscript{106}

The MMG Platoon, in the meantime, had continued their advance until they reached the Police Station, with sections covering the crossroads near the compound and the front of the building, while Lieutenant Taylor led the rest of the platoon over a wire fence at the rear and entered the station. The building was captured and the remaining 48 hostages released without any further gunfire; the Police Barracks was then cleared by No. 6 Platoon, finding no rebels but plenty of weaponry and ammunition. The final step in the operation was to check the houses surrounding the Police Station. Five TNKU were captured, two of whom were already injured; the remainder of the rebels who had been holding the Police Station had escaped through the gap in the cordon around Seria and were apprehended in the following days.\textsuperscript{107}

Other developments in Seria worth mentioning include the fact that the tamu remained under TNKU control until sometime on 13 or 14 December: there is no detail available on what happened there at this point, but presumably the Highlanders simply entered the area

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.; James & Sheil-Small, \textit{The Undeclared War}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{106} James & Sheil-Small, \textit{The Undeclared War}, p. 25.
and swept it for rebels.\textsuperscript{108} Earlier, on Wednesday, 1QOH had cleared the waterfront area and, in the process, caused further casualties amongst the TNKU. Finally, the production areas of the oilfields were checked and found to be intact.\textsuperscript{109}

In the meantime, B Company of 1/2GR had arrived at Anduki on 11 December and been placed under the command of McHardy and the 1QOH. It had been tasked with re-capturing Kuala Belait and, upon its arrival in the area, it immediately drove to the town before exiting its vehicles and systematically clearing it of the TNKU under sporadic sniper fire. The rebels’ headquarters in the Government Offices Building was under Gurkha control before sundown and positions had been established for the night, with a platoon of Highlanders sent as reinforcements sharing the quiet night that ensued. The next morning, the troops completed their takeover of the town, re-capturing the Police Station and releasing four hostages, having again been reinforced by two armoured cars of B Squadron, The Queen’s Royal Irish Hussars (QRIH). During the course of the operation, three rebels were killed and 17 captured, while neither the Gurkhas nor the Highlanders suffered any casualty. In addition, an extensive range of weaponry and ammunition was recovered, including 25 Lee Enfield rifles, several CS gas grenades, and approximately 1,000 shotgun cartridges.\textsuperscript{110}

Two additional subjects might also be briefly mentioned here: firstly, Radio Sarawak reported on 15 December that the hospital at Kuala Belait was still held by the TNKU, but that it had been surrounded, presumably by British troops; it is likely that the building was re-captured shortly after the report had been aired. The second point concerns the state of the oilfields after the disruption caused by the rebellion:

For technical reasons, some wells cannot be operated again once production has been stopped for a couple of days. When the rebellion broke out and the plant was captured, these wells were disrupted. Mr. Linton told me that output since resumption yesterday is about sixty percent [sic] of the former production.

\textsuperscript{108} TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 334, Ministry of Defence Situation Report No. 2 (Situation as at 0900 hours on 13\textsuperscript{th} December, 1962), 13 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1073, Item 401, Ministry of Defence Situation Report No. 3 (Situation as at 1200 hours 14\textsuperscript{th} December 1962), 14 December, 1962, para. 1. The latter source did not actually mention the \textit{tamu}, but listed the areas that were still under TNKU control, so the fact that the \textit{tamu} was no longer one of these is merely inferred. The former source referred to the \textit{tamu} as “Seria Besar”, but it is likely that this was simply a transcription error, from ‘bazaar’ to ‘besar’.

\textsuperscript{109} TNA, CO 1030/1070, Item 253, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 73, 12 December, 1962, para. 1; DEFE 11/391, Item 78, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 74, 12 December, 1962, para. 3.

It will be a long time before this is increased and at most production eventually will be ninety percent of [the] pre-rebellion figure.  

More immediately, the damaged oil wells emitted both oil and gas for days afterwards, necessitating a temporary ban on smoking in the area to prevent the incidence of fires.

**Limbang and Lawas**

The TNKU attacked several key points in Limbang at about 2am on 8 December, including the gaol, the Resident’s house, and the *Kubu*, or government offices. The primary target was, naturally, the Police Station, a building that was “never intended for defensive purposes” and that had been “designed for peace, and not for war”, as Sarawak Information Officer Alastair Morrison later wrote. Salleh Sambas, who led the attack, provided these details:

> When we attacked the police station, all we wanted to do was release our friends and end colonial rule in Sarawak. Only after we captured Limbang did more people join. I ordered my men to surround the Police Station. When the time came, they were to shout at the top of their voices. By doing this, I hoped that the police would see the size of [our] force and surrender. However, things did not turn out as I had hoped. As we moved toward the Police Station, a drunken Chinese man alerted the police of our attack so they were ready for us and opened fire from inside the Police Station.

Constable Bishop Kunjan, inside the building, stated that

> [a]t 2.00am I was awoken by the sound of gunfire. I went to the charge room and got a machine gun to shoot at the rebels trying to get through the front gate. Some policemen were killed by the rebels and it made me determined to stop them from seizing the Police Station.

Morrison’s account of the Sarawak Constabulary’s defence of the Police Station has provided much crucial detail:

> The station and barrack room behind were occupied by nine of the 18 policemen then in Limbang. The rebels crept quietly close to the wire fence and opened a barrage of shotgun fire while some climbed over the fence . . . Corporal Kim Huat, who was in charge of the men in the police station, took up his station in the recreation room at the upriver end of the station building from where he fired on the rebels. Here, very early in the attack, he was hit and seriously wounded, dying a little later.

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112 *The Sarawak Tribune*, “Sultan is Confident”, 15 December, 1962, p. 3.


P.C. Wan Jamaluddin bin Tuanku Alek had dashed into the barrack room at the back of the police station to warn the men sleeping there. On his way back he attacked the rebels outside and was responsible for killing one of them. His body and the body of the dead rebel were found grouped together at the corner of the police station building the next day.

P.C. Esa bin Maratim, who was in the barrack room, fired on the enemy and killed one man who attempted to gain entry to the barrack block from the covered way leading to the station itself...

Police Constable Bishop anak Kunjan with the Bren Gun and Police Constable Sanggah anak Jampang with a rifle, hopelessly outnumbered though they were, continued to resist the rebels from the Charge Room.

P.C. Bujang bin Mohammed was seriously wounded while firing from the window of the Police Sergeant’s office and died at about 8.30 a.m. the next morning. They were completely surrounded by rebels who were now all over the police compound and even right under the windows of the office only a few feet away from the men who were still grimly holding out.\(^\text{116}\)

Constable Insol anak Chundang was also killed whilst opening the arms cage to fetch more ammunition.\(^\text{117}\)

Salleh Sambas and Constable Bishop have continued the story:

**Salleh bin Sambas**: By 6.00am, the Police were still persisting. I brought the Resident to the Police Station and ordered him to tell the policemen to give up their arms.

**Constable Bishop anak Kunjan**: We’d been fighting off the rebel attack all night. By the daylight, the Resident, Richard Morris, arrived at the front gate.

**Salleh bin Sambas**: The Resident shouted, “I am the Resident. You must lay down your arms”. The policemen recognised his voice and finally gave up.

**Constable Bishop anak Kunjan**: I was disappointed because I wanted to fight on. But I knew that if we did not give up the rebels would kill the Resident. I was very angry about surrendering because four of my colleagues had been killed.\(^\text{118}\)

More details of this aspect, from the perspective of the Resident, Richard Morris, were later related by his wife, Dorothy:

The rebels intended to make Dick and Inspector Zain persuade the police to surrender. Both were used as a ‘human shield’ to stop resistance from the local police.

Their arms upraised, they were marched forward, 300 yards down the road, towards the police station, to face the resisting police, and possible death. Prodded with guns, each yard they walked seemed a mile.

Nearing the station, heavy firing broke out. Dick and Inspector Zain were caught in the cross-fire and dived to the ground.

Dick was ordered to tell the police to surrender. He did so, knowing there was no way that help could arrive in the town in time to save the resisting police, who could not possibly hold out.\(^\text{119}\)

The TNKU is known to have lost five rebels in the attack on the Police Station, as well as a sixth, who was killed at the telephone exchange at the *Kubu*.\(^\text{120}\)

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\(^{118}\) Return to Limbang, DVD.

The Morrices had been awoken by a telephone call, from the policeman on duty at the telephone exchange, at the same time as heavy gunfire began in town, so they had attempted to escape through the back door but were captured by rebels. Dorothy Morris later recalled the time they then spent on the jungle-covered hillside behind the Residency:

We sat there with every form of biting nightlife assailing us, Dick was clad only in underpants, jockey type without much seat in them and the inevitable perished elastic band at the top and no safety pins. Having had certain security measures to take before quitting the house, he couldn’t spare the time in the dark to locate more dignified clothing. I had had the extra minute or so in which to fumble about and dress more adequately, and to find some heavy shoes. Dick was fairly savagely bound with nylon fishing cord, but my hands were free. Two decidedly hysterical little thugs squatted unpleasantly and unnecessarily close on either side of me, each clutching an arm. The thug on my left was all the time pointing a kris unpleasantly close to the middle of Dick’s back.121

Morris had taken the time before their capture to conceal certain government files in the house, rather than dressing more comfortably. The Morrices were first taken to the Kibu and then to the gaol, where King Shih Fan of the PWD and Inspectors Zain Latif and Latif Basah were already being held and from whence Inspector Zain and Morris were conveyed to the Police Station in order to force its surrender.122

Inspector Latif Besah, the officer in charge of Limbang Police Station, had rushed outside his house when it was attacked at the same time as the station, having armed himself with a Sterling sub-machine gun (SMG). He was immediately shot at from several directions and sustained a shotgun wound in the arm whilst returning this fire, whereupon he crawled across the road and concealed himself behind a riverbank. He was captured when he left the safety of his hiding place to reconnoitre at daybreak; his Sterling remained hidden in the riverbank until the town was re-captured. Inspector Latif later received a Colonial Police Medal for Gallantry, part of the citation of which read, “[t]he personal example of Inspector Abdul Latip both before and during the attack was in no small measure responsible for the very gallant defence of the Police Station by a few men for more than four hours”.123

120 The Sarawak Tribune, “Rebels Did Not Know Why They Took Up Arms: Large Numbers Surrender”, 18 December, 1962, p. 3.
121 Quoted in van der Bijl, op. cit., p. 56; The Sarawak Tribune, “Courage and Devotion: Mrs Morris Relates Experience”, 17 December, 1962, p. 3; Chanin, op. cit., p. 53.
At the Limbang Gaol, Constable Muling Kasau and another officer managed to drive off a rebel attack before Muling went to the Kubu to telephone for help. He shot and killed one man when a group of armed men entered the building, scaring the remainder of the party off. Muling then attempted to return to the Police Station, but could not reach it because it was still under attack; instead, he fired on the TNKU from its flank until his ammunition was exhausted. He was captured later in the morning, having hidden his rifle, though he managed to escape the next day and take shelter in the jungle until 12 December. Previously, Constable Zaini Titun, on duty at the Kubu, had fired on the rebels when they entered the building, but he was swiftly over-powered.124

The capture of the gaol meant that two high-ranking TNKU leaders held since their arrest at Sundar, Salleh Kerrudin and Haji Pilok, could be released and the former could resume his role as Tentera commander in Limbang; he appointed Haji Pilok as his second-in-command and gave Salleh Sambas control over the Police Station. The other occupants of the gaol were also released. Replacing the prisoners were the Morisses, King Shih Fan, the two inspectors, and three policemen, while three Catholic priests, Mr Withers of the PWD, and Fritz Klattenhoff of the United States Peace Corps were detained in the cells at the Police Station. By contrast, the District Officer, Zainuddin Adi, and several other government officials were placed under house arrest.125

Klattenhoff had arrived in Limbang in August 1962 to work at an agricultural station and to teach English at a local school; he lived in a small hut about a mile outside town. He had been awoken by the sound of gunfire from the town in the early hours of 8 December and was later told by a friend to go into hiding or to get away if he could, so Klattenhoff, not really having anywhere else to go, lay low at his home that Saturday. He might have stayed there for the duration, had he not been informed by some neighbours that his room-mate, a policeman, had been killed and left to lie in the street; Klattenhoff decided to go into town to

give his friend a respectful, if unorthodox, burial in the jungle. He then returned to his home and received another visitor:

On Sunday another acquaintance, a Chinese-Malay who had joined the rebellion, came to Fritz’s house to tell him he would not be harmed. Fritz set out to feed his animals.

“I was chatting with a Chinese friend,” he said, “when all of a sudden, down the road, I heard: ‘Stop! Stop or you die!’

“I told the Chinese chap to get out of here and he took off on his bicycle. I stopped and about half a dozen people who were on foot came running up to me with shotguns with the man who’d previously told me I’d be all right.

“Down the road from I don’t know where—no doubt they were watching the agricultural station, watching me—came two Landrovers [British jeeps] and a lorry [truck] full of rebels, about 40 of them altogether, armed with shotguns.”

Abang Omar Abang Samaudin, Limbang’s postmaster and a volunteer with the local branch of the Red Cross, also heard the gunfire in his kampong at the northern end of the town:

‘Two armed revolutionary troops came to my house’, he later wrote, ‘about 1½ miles from the government offices in Limbang town. They asked me for my daughter, Dayang Delima Asaf, who is a nurse, to come down to the hospital to carry out her duty for wounded men.’

At the time she was not with him, being in another kampong about a mile away. ‘So in this case,’ said Omar, ‘I must go with them to fetch my daughter’. They were driven to the hospital, located mid-way between the District Office and the police station. When they arrived at the hospital, they found two nurses working on the wounded. He continued, ‘So my daughter and myself work together for the wounded men with calm. Within a few minutes nine wounded revolutionary troops are dressed and we put them in the ward.’ They were unable to save a policeman [Bujang Muhammed] . . .

Afterward, Omar went to the police station. There he found a policeman lying dead in the front of the building and another lying dead inside.

I carry out my duty. I asked the Rebel troops to remove the men to the mosque for burying purposes. When all the dead men in the police station were taken to the mosque, I asked the Rebel troop if any more dead men were not taken to the mosque. So one then told me there was one more at the back of the government general office. I go with the rebels in a Land Rover to the place and took the body to the mosque to be buried by the mosque’s official staff. On my way, returning to the hospital, I saw the District Officer Abang Zainudin being guarded by armed guards. I told them to take care of the DO properly, the same as they treated me."

On 11 December, Abang Omar and other Red Cross volunteers moved all wounded rebels back to a kampong, Batu, eight miles from Limbang, at the request of the TNKU."

For those taken prisoner by the TNKU, their time in captivity was one of tension and fear, as Klattenhoff’s determination not to sleep demonstrated: he said that he would “rather be

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127 Chanin, op. cit., pp. 61-2.
128 Ibid., p. 89.
shot looking at the gun than sound asleep”. For at least the first day of their captivity, Klattenhoff, Withers, and the three priests, Fathers Daniel Cronin, John Jackson, and Joop Vaneman, were ordered to remain standing, while Morris’s hands remained bound behind his back until Abang Omar’s insistence that the hostages be properly treated was accepted on 10 December. Dorothy Morris described the conditions in the Limbang Gaol: “The cells were very small and uncomfortably hot, especially in the heat of the day. We had very little privacy and one of the most unsettling things was being glared at by the TNKU guards who had a mixture of triumph and dislike on their faces”. Another concern for those at the Police Station was the ammunition dump located outside the building, which they feared any stray gunshot might detonate.

There were positive aspects to their situation, though, as Dorothy Morris subsequently related to The Sarawak Tribune:

The local members of the Red Cross and Government staff still at liberty did a wonderful job in helping the prisoners caring for the wounded. Inche Omar and Mrs Brake of the Red Cross, Senior Hospital Assistant, Mohamed Udin bin Abdullah and Inche Kassim, an anti-malarial sprayer, stood out in her recollection. The Chinese businessmen of Limbang were most kind and at considerable risk to themselves, brought the prisoners food supplies. One businessman [sic] presented Mr Morris with a packet of cigars. Mrs. Morris was particularly touched by the kindness and loyalty of the regular inmates of the jail who appeared most concerned at the time [sic, turn] of events.

The wives of the police in the gaol were also permitted to bring food to their husbands.

On Tuesday, 11 December, all of the prisoners, except for the police, were re-located to Limbang Hospital at the request of Abang Omar. These were far more comfortable digs, since the hostages were allowed to use beds and mosquito nets, but their improved outlook was short-lived, with more than one of them overhearing a frightening conversation amongst the rebels guarding them:

Dorothy Morris: Although I only heard snatches of the conversation, there was frequent mention of the words ‘prisoners’, ‘sunrise’ and ‘executions’.
Bishop anak Kunjan: I heard the rebels talking outside my cell. They wanted to hang us!
Thaine Allison: At dawn, they expected to be hung and they were kind of figuring out how that was going to happen. The rumour was, what he was hearing, what

130 Return to Limbang, DVD; Chanin, op. cit., p. 90.
133 Chanin, op. cit., p. 76.
other people in the room were hearing, was Fritz [Klattenhoff] was going to be first because he was the biggest and they wanted to get rid of him. That has to be terribly frightening. They had no weapons, they had no contact, they had no way of knowing whether there was any help on the way.  

Constable Esa Maratim, who had concealed himself in the roof space of the Police Station when his colleagues were forced to surrender, overheard a similar conversation in which the rebels there made the decision to execute the prisoners on Wednesday morning. He later proved to be an excellent source of intelligence on the identity of rebels who had been involved in the events in Limbang.

As for the wider population’s experience of TNKU control of the town, the Resident wrote in June 1964 that the rebels “attempted to keep law and order; and the local population on their side by calling in what arms they could, and by a mixture of promises for co-operation and horrible threats as to what would happen to those who did not support them now”. The Tentera even sent parties upstream to press-gang new recruits, obtaining 150 new members to add to the 300 who had captured Limbang. Morris later reported that it had been intended to use these recruits to hold the town with a few TNKU cadres while the balance of the force reinforced the Tentera in Brunei. There are no further details definitely known about the town’s experience, but one can infer certain points from the information given above: those not detained or under house arrest were free to move around to a certain extent, while trade in the tamu and perhaps also the other shops in town continued as normal.

In Kuching, contact with Limbang had been lost at 2.45am on the 8th and it was assumed that the situation there was serious. At 9.20am, Governor Waddell reported to Singapore that air reconnaissance of the town had been carried out and that all that had been seen was a patrol of men with shotguns; police or Army reinforcement for both Limbang and Brunei.

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135 James & Sheil-Small, The Undeclared War, pp. 36-7; Chanin, op. cit., p. 155.


was requested “with all possible speed”. Kuching sent a platoon of the Field Force by launch to relieve the town on the night of 9 December, but these policemen found the TNKU to be too strong for them; they then went on to Lawas, where they were out of contact with Brunei and Singapore. All that was known for sure in the outside world of events in Limbang was that the town had been captured by the rebels.

42 Commando, Royal Marines (RM) was given the task of relieving Limbang upon its arrival at Berakas at 6am on 11 December and preparations immediately began to be made to carry out the operation the next day. It had initially been intended that the operation would commence once the two remaining companies of the Commando reached Brunei, but it soon became clear that they would not arrive that day and that they were, in any case, destined for other tasks, so those Marines of L Company and part of Support Company who were already there, numbering 89 men, were left to re-capture Limbang on their own. This task was made more difficult by the fact that there was no suitable landing ground for aeroplanes in the area and that helicopters were not yet available; nor was there a road between Brunei Town and Limbang, only a rough track that could not be traversed in less than two days. This left Borneo’s default mode of transportation, the river.

The most important aspect of the operational planning, then, was to find suitable landing craft, a task entrusted to Captain Derek Oakley, 3 Commando Brigade’s Intelligence Officer:

It took us some time to find any craft which looked suitable. Eventually we came across two what I subsequently discovered were Z-Craft which had been hired by the Brunei Government and even when we found them, they were empty except for two large yellow bulldozers. These two lonely craft that we found obviously had no forms of manpower to man them or no engineers, no nothing. They were just left on the quayside.

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138 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 25, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.90, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 23, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No C271, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 26, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, Brief No. 34, 9 December, 1962, para. 1.


141 Return to Limbang, DVD.
These lighters, actually owned by the Brunei government and named the *Nakhoda Manis* and the *Sindaun*, were unarmoured and their docking ramps were manually operated, leading Captain Jeremy Moore, commander of L Company, to decide that the Marines must simply clamber over the sides of the vessels due to the danger inherent in lowering the ramps under fire. The lighters were then serviced by technicians from HMS *Chawton* and *Fiskerton*, whose timely arrival at Brunei Town that day also ensured that the two vessels would have skilled crews. Sheets of metal were also welded to the gunwales and wheelhouses of the two vessels to provide some protection from gunfire.\(^{142}\)

Other preparations made for the operation included an aerial reconnaissance conducted by Lieutenant Colonel ER Bridges, commander of 42 Commando, and Oakley that morning, usefully augmenting what little was known of Limbang; previously, all the Marines had had was a too-large-scale map and some aerial photographs dating from 1959. Moore then created a simple plan for the operation:

> Assuming that the hostages were being held in the Police Station, L Company’s 5 Troop would land from one Z-Craft on the jetty in front of the Police Station and then assault the building direct. The second Z-Craft would lay down covering fire using Marines from 4 and 6 Troops and the most powerful weapons Moore had at his disposal, two Vickers medium machine guns.\(^{143}\)

Once the Police Station had been taken, the remainder of the Marines would land and “operations would be conducted according to information obtained”.\(^{144}\)

The two vessels motored away from the wharf at Brunei Town at midnight, aiming to reach Limbang at first light; they arrived at the entrance to the Sungei Limbang at about 2am, so the convoy lay to in a side channel until 4.30am to ensure they kept to their schedule. Brunei’s State Marine Officer, Captain EH Muton, had offered his services as pilot for the operation, though his knowledge of the Sungei Limbang was limited; he was greatly

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assisted by the nearly full moon. One of the sailors later described the difficulties inherent in this nighttime passage upriver:

Captain Moutrie [*sic*] had a large wall-mounted map from which we made sketches, but bigger craft could not go upstream of Brunei city [*sic*] and the local boat traffic did not move after dark, so there were no buoys or navigation lights. There had been no recent survey, so no depths could be confirmed but Captain Moutrie had marked his preferred channel by placing spars on the main mudbanks – which were prone to shift after the monsoon rains . . .

Our attack chart was a postcard-sized sketch with pilotage directions of the nature:

“Take main channel out of lagoon for approx 8 miles. As river bears right, take second tributary on left. Limbang town is on the left bank of wide right hand bend. Residency and police post at far end of the town on a grassy slope, about 25 yards from the riverbank. Wooden jetty with boathouse opposite police post. Believed one fathom clearance alongside.”

Other hazards of the journey included the failure of one of the engines on the *Nakhoda Manis* about an hour in, the strength of the current in the Sungei Limbang that brought them close to the town before they had planned, and “one or two frightening but harmless arguments with the Nipa Palms” that lined the riverbank.\(^{146}\)

In Limbang, the sound of the lighters’ motors carried far in the pre-dawn tranquillity, so the TNKU had time to prepare for their arrival: the lights of the town were seen to go out as the convoy approached shortly after 5am, while Salleh Sambas and his comrades were lying in wait in defensive positions outside the Police Station and elsewhere. Many people in the *tamu* area, assumed by the Marines to be TNKU, dashed into nearby houses when the *Nakhoda Manis* rounded the bend just before the Customs Wharf and then increased speed upon identifying the location of the Police Station. Whilst the lighter proceeded to a point on the riverbank around thirty yards upstream from the building, Sergeant Dennis Smith, speaking in *Bahasa Melayu*, informed the rebels through a loudhailer that the rebellion was over and demanded that they surrender; their response was to open fire on both vessels.\(^{147}\)

Two Marines were killed and three wounded in this initial burst of gunfire, including the coxswain of the *Nakhoda Manis*, so Lieutenant DO Willis, its commander, took control of

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the vessel and guided it to the bank, where part of the force disembarked. The lighter was, however, pinned down under heavy fire, so Lieutenant Willis moved it about 300 yards downstream to enable the remaining Marines to debark. The MMGs, in the meantime, had returned fire, as had individual Marines with their personal weapons, with the former being, naturally, the most effective, at least until the gunners were forced to cease firing at the Police Station when the Nakhoda Manis reached the bank, at which point they switched their aim to the tamu.\(^{148}\)

The first Marines to land were two sections of 5 Troop, which immediately separated to perform their respective roles: Corporal WJ Lester’s party passed through the TNKU’s positions and entered the Police Station from the rear, while Sergeant Bickford’s group attacked the front of the building. Corporals Lester and RC Rawlinson, under Sergeant Bickford, were subsequently awarded the Military Medal for their actions during this time and their respective citations are especially illuminating:

As soon as the craft beached Corporal Lester charged through the heavy enemy fire towards an L.M.G. [Light Machine Gun] position. His instant reaction inspired his section who all charged straight towards the enemy and overran their position. Their action was largely responsible for the subsequent collapse of the enemy positions nearby.\(^{149}\)

Soon after landing he [Corporal Rawlinson] received buckshot shots in his side from enemy flanking fire. Although in a lot of pain he successfully led his section through intense fire and cleared the enemy from their positions on one side of the Police Station. Whilst the other section was consolidating the position, he led his section to deal with the enemy flanking fire which was holding up the reserve section. Again fighting his way through intense fire he successfully attacked the enemy position, putting them to flight, and effecting a junction with the reserve section.\(^{150}\)

This reserve section had debarked from the Nakhoda Manis when Lieutenant Willis landed it the second time, under the leadership of Sergeant Walter MacFarlane and with the

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\(^{148}\) TNA, WO 305/2519, “The Assault on Limbang, Sarawak by ‘L’ Company Group, 42 Commando Royal Marines on 12th December, 1962”, Annex F to Part III of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359 hours on Saturday 26 January 1963, 28 January, 1963, paras. 34-5 & 38; T 301/34, Item 4, Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Brunei Operations, December, 1962: Recommendations for Naval Awards, HD 6437, 2 May, 1963, para. 2(1). The first source, Captain Moore’s official report of the operation, disagreed with the second, the draft citation for the award of a Distinguished Service Cross to Lieutenant Willis, in its description of how the leading lighter came to disembark its Marines in two parties; the latter was preferred because the burden of proof required for the award of a military medal was usually higher than that needed for an operational report.


\(^{150}\) TNA, T 301/34, Item 3, Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Brunei Operations, December, 1962: Recommendations for Military Awards, HD 6430, 1 May, 1963, para. 3(v).
mission of clearing the riverbank of rebels towards the Police Station. After locating the hostages at the hospital, three of the group went to the rear of the building in order to engage the rebels concealed in the jungle behind the Police Station and were all shot: Sergeant MacFarlane and Marine Robert Formoy were killed, while Marine Peter Caress was badly wounded; van der Bijl has stated that one of the priests helped him to safety inside the hospital. The remainder of the section, led by Sergeant Smith, then cleared the buildings and removed the hostages from the hospital before making contact with the first two sections near the Police Station.\textsuperscript{151}

The MMGs in the \textit{Sindaun} were, all the while, providing covering fire:

The order was given to open fire and all hell was let loose. People were shouting out directions where to fire, at windows and doorways, as we moved up towards the town. The Sergeant was moving up and down the deck looking after his lads as though we were on the ranges back home. He said the police station was coming up front and at this point the craft seemed to start to drift and the other MMG had ceased firing.

I looked down and Pete signalled that he had a stoppage. At this point I could see that the bridge had been hit, most of the glass had gone, and someone was using a brush as a crutch. The rebels in the police station could see us and the firing coming into us had intensified. I could only fire through some fuel pumps and a Land Rover, which was on the jetty. The jetty was a lot higher than us with a number of oil barrels on it and amongst them was a rebel shooting a double-barrel shotgun at point blank range, giving off two big blue smoke rings. The front of the craft started to turn out into the river and at this point I could see the front of the police station properly for the first time. I gave it all I could, and this had the right effect, silencing the Bren gun, which was on top of the police station.

It was difficult to see through the brickwork dust, steam from the MMG condenser can, and smoke from the gun. Sergeant Wakeling ordered me to “hold fire”. We sailed past the police station, a large jetty, and the next large building was the hospital. It was here I saw a Marine on the road at the side of the river. I could not say if he was an officer or NCO [non-commissioned officer], and he was pointing to a type of bungalow to the right of the hospital that was giving off rebel fire. We again opened fire with the MMG and took the bungalow apart.

The craft pulled into the side and as only an officer can, we heard the command, “Royal Marines - over the side-lets [sic] go!”\textsuperscript{152}, leaving only us, the support company troop, aboard. The ‘Z’ craft was then starting a manoeuvre to turn around when a fast motorboat tried to get across the river. This was shot out of the water and we continued to sail back down the river, giving covering fire to ‘L’ Company, who secured the town.\textsuperscript{152}

The Marines who debarked from the \textit{Sindaun} included Marine John Coombes, who later wrote of his experiences:


My section, led by Corporal Parrish, was told to secure the area around the police station and we kept to the monsoon drain firing at potential cover the TNKU might hide behind until we arrived at the road dividing the police compound from the bazaar area.

Believing the police station had been cleared, I entered the compound, checked the rear building and then went into the police station. Behind a door left open I saw movement, so I backed up to the outside door, fired two warning shots into the ground, and shouted come out. Two TNKU emerged, both very frightened, and one turned out to be second-in-command to Sallah [sic] bin Sambas. I was taking the prisoners to the perimeter fence, when one of them ran towards the river and was shot by a Marine coming to check out my two shots.153

Marine Brian Downey has recounted his own memories:

We were fighting through Limbang Town. From the Police Station area where some of us had managed to reach, I could see Jim Underwood, who was the smallest man in the company, and he was shielding wounded, he was pointing and engaging people. It was one of the greatest things I’ve seen in my life, Sergeant Johnny Bickford with 5 Troop come down this road under fire, carrying a guy called Rod Taylor who was shot in both legs. And Rod was a big fellow, he would have been 30 stone, and Johnny Bickford was small and he’s running at speed under fire. He must have gone 3, 400 metres to the hospital area. He dumped him, and came back again through the troop.154

The TNKU had established its defensive positions throughout the tamu area, in and around the Police Station compound, and along the riverbank, especially around the hospital. The frontal charge by Sergeant Bickford’s section against the Police Station cleared the rebels from their positions there, some being killed and others retreating into the jungle.

Salleh Sambas, who had been wielding a Bren light machine gun with some skill atop the Police Station, was shot several times and later recalled: “I saw my men were no longer around so I jammed the Bren gun and ran into the hills behind Limbang”; he and his brother, Rosali, escaped to the Ujong Jalan ferry on a bicycle, whence they crossed the river and headed for Bangar.155 Not all of the TNKU fled, of course: apart from the two rebels mentioned above who were captured by Marine Coombes at the Police Station, there was a third apprehended in the same location. Another man was significantly more troublesome: 4 Troop, when clearing the area near the mosque, encountered a rebel who “gave some difficulty by engaging them from a room full of women and children” in a block of shops,

154 Return to Limbang, DVD.
but he was eventually “dislodged”. Other TNKU members also remained at large: “a number of individuals held out in the town and the jungle and there was considerable movement and some sniping for a further 24 hours”.

Klattenhoff has given the following account of what he saw of the operation:

“As the first shots were fired, everybody seemed to go under the deck—under the beds—except the two fathers, who were praying in bed for all of us,” Fritz recalled. “It lasted for two to two and a half hours. The shells were coming back and forth through the windows. The rebels were trying to shoot in and get us, but they were such short people and the windows being on a higher level, their shots were going straight up.”

Morris, in a personal record of his experiences, stated that he first heard the engines of the two lighters at 6.02am and that he and Dorothy were assisted through the window of the hospital by Sergeant Smith at 6.20am, a more probable time period than that given by Klattenhoff.

Limbang having been substantially re-captured, the Marines turned their attention to systematically checking the buildings of the town for rebels and establishing a perimeter around those areas already under their control. 5 Troop regrouped, having suffered nine casualties, and then held part of the perimeter from the Police Station to an atap house just past the hospital. To do this, they had to clear the houses in that area, which led to what Captain Moore’s official report has described as “the only civilian casualty” of the operation, an elderly lady who was killed when a grenade was thrown into her house. The MMG section debarked from the Sindaun and held the southern end of the perimeter, the sole area in town where its field of fire was greater than 50 yards. 4 and 6 Troops were given the task of clearing the tamu area and holding the northern end of the perimeter; once the first few blocks of shops had been checked, 4 Troop was given responsibility for the northern end of the perimeter and 6 Troop the eastern end. The other elements of Support Company that had

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157 Ibid., para. 49.
159 Chanin, op. cit., pp. 138 & 140.
made it to Limbang cleared the buildings at the southern end of the town, including the gaol, wherefrom several more hostages were released.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, paras. 51-2.}

42 Commando’s position was further consolidated during the morning with the arrival of the Assault Engineers and a section of Mortar Troop as reinforcements, as well as 1/2GR’s Regimental Medical Officer, the Commando’s own Medical Officer not having reached Brunei yet. During the operation, Sick Berth Attendant Terry Clarke of 42 Commando had been the only medic present, arriving ashore when the \textit{Sindaun} docked and establishing a first aid post at the hospital to care for all casualties, including those who were injured when they fell through the roofs or floors of houses being cleared. The worst casualties were taken back to Brunei Town in the \textit{Nakhoda Manis} and subsequently evacuated via Labuan to Singapore.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, paras. 53 & 55-6. The leading lighter had been forced to request assistance from the second vessel after it became stuck fast upon beaching the second time. In addition, both vessels were later found to have “a couple of feet of water” in their bilges. Author Unknown, “The Sailor’s Dits: Limbang Raid”, \url{http://www.britains-smallwars.com/Limbang-2002/Dits/Limbang-Raid.html}, accessed on 16 June, 2013.}

The process of clearing Limbang was not completed that day, night approaching too quickly for the Marines; the perimeter, then, was pulled back to the first cross street in the \textit{tamu}, along a track just inside the treeline behind the town, to the \textit{atap} house previously mentioned and thence to the riverbank. The southern part of the town, including the Residency and the Gaol, which had already been checked but fell outside of the cordon, was patrolled in order to dissuade the rebels from re-claiming it. The jungle, so close to the buildings, was known to be harbouring several rebels and three had been captured that afternoon within twenty yards of the hospital, which had become the headquarters for both the Marines and the administration.\footnote{TNA, WO 305/2519, “The Assault on Limbang, Sarawak by ‘L’ Company Group, 42 Commando Royal Marines on 12th December, 1962”, Annex F to Part III of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359 hours on Saturday 26 January 1963, 28 January, 1963, paras. 58-60; Chanin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 154.}

Various other tasks were undertaken that afternoon, including the interrogation of both captured rebels and released hostages, which yielded the immediately relevant information regarding the people then still being held in the gaol and in their own houses in the southern end of the town. An escort of two Marines was also provided to an electrician so he could
repair the electricity system in safety. The TNKU’s weaponry was also collected together at
the Police Station, including, as Marine John Coombes recalled, “fifteen .303 Lee Enfields
taken from the police, one Bren gun with magazines, one Sterling SMG, various shotguns,
muskets, 202s, parangs and a selection of daggers including the wavy curved Kris”.164

One of the most important tasks undertaken that day was the collection and burial of the
dead of both sides of the conflict. The bodies of the five Royal Marines killed, Sergeant
Walter MacFarlane and Marines Gerald Kierans, Fred Powell, Ronald Formoy, and Richard
Jennings, were returned to Brunei Town on the Nakhoda Manis with the wounded and then
flown to Singapore, where they were interred at Bidadari Cemetery. Corporal Kim Huat and
Constables Bujang bin Mohammed, Wan Jamaluddin bin Tuanku Alek, and Insol anak
Chundang of the Sarawak Constabulary were temporarily interred in front of the Chinese
Temple, apart from the unnamed policeman who had been buried by Fritz Klattenhoff in the
jungle on 8 December. The 15 rebels known to have been killed during the operation were
interred in a mass grave in the jungle behind the hospital by a working party of their captured
comrades.165

Captain Moore has described the events of Wednesday night thus:

> During the night the enemy on a number of occasions fired on our positions in the
town from further to the NORTH but was not engaged because he could not be
accurately located. In the jungle on the other hand the enemy was moving about, in
all probability attempting to escape, and anything which moved was
fired upon. Enemy, animals, shadows, and banana plants were engaged. One enemy was killed
about ten yards from the ATTAP [sic] house. There was no activity in the
SOUTHERN part of town.

Morris has provided his own account of the same night:

> It was not a restful night and none of us I think got much sleep. The rebels, who the
morning before had taken refuge in the jungle, were pretty active. Some no doubt
were anxious to get away, but many, very obviously, were still inclined to be

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164 Coombes, *op. cit.*, TNA, WO 305/2519, “The Assault on Limbang, Sarawak by ‘L’ Company Group, 42 Commando Royal
Marines on 12th December, 1962”, Annex F to Part III of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359
hours on Saturday 26 January 1963, 28 January, 1963, para. 54.

Return to Limbang, DVD; TNA, WO 305/2519, “The Assault on Limbang, Sarawak by ‘L’ Company Group, 42 Commando
Royal Marines on 12th December, 1962”, Annex F to Part III of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359
hours on Saturday 26 January 1963, 28 January, 1963, para. 71; Coombes, *op. cit.* It is possible that a greater number of
rebels were killed during the operation, but that their bodies were not located amidst the thickness of the jungle behind
Limbang.

166 TNA, WO 305/2519, “The Assault on Limbang, Sarawak by ‘L’ Company Group, 42 Commando Royal Marines on 12th
December, 1962”, Annex F to Part III of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359 hours on
aggressive. The night was interrupted at irregular but quite frequent intervals by shots and two ‘36s’ went off less than a cricket pitch away from our cabin.\(^{167}\)

The next morning, the clearing of the *tamu* was completed by Support Company and 4 Troop, while K and HQ Companies arrived that afternoon to reinforce the Marines already in Limbang.\(^{168}\)

Over in Lawas, the situation was very different. As recounted in Chapter VII, the arrests that triggered the onset of the rebellion occurred nearby in Sundar and, as a result, the local authorities were unusually well prepared for any trouble. The District Office and District Officer’s Quarters were both “fortified with weapons pits, barbed wire, flood lighting, sand bagging, and trip wires”, with similar preparations being made in Sundar and Trusan.\(^{169}\)

Local police and Murut volunteers armed with shotguns manned these defences and, as Resident IAN Urquhart stated in the Fifth Division Report 1963, “the rebels there disbanded themselves as soon as they saw [that] they had failed to achieve surprise”.\(^{170}\)

Two people described as “Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara agents from Brunei” were arrested on 10 December in Kuala Lawas and a third, believed to be a TNKU leader, was apprehended in the Trusan area two days later.\(^{171}\) Police patrols in Awat-Awat, Trusan, Sundar, and Lawas also confiscated firearms from those suspected of supporting the rebellion. On 12 December, one troop of Supply Company, 42 Commando was deployed by air to Lawas, securing the airstrip and providing support to the local police and volunteers in the district.\(^{172}\)

For *ulu* areas of the Limbang and Lawas Districts, the rebellion brought uncertainty and fear:

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\(^{167}\) Quoted in Chanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-6.


\(^{171}\) *The Sarawak Tribune*, “Anduki Now Firmly Held By Security Forces: Situation Improving”, 11 December, 1962, p. 1; TNA, CO 1030/1070, Item 263, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.278, 11 December, 1962, para. 3; Item 297, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.284, 12 December, 1962, para. 5.

Great credit must be given to those people, especially in the middle and upper Limbang River, who resisted and even captured rebels, despite the fact that there were no Government officers in Limbang to give them a lead; that news was black indeed from Brunei; and that the captured rebels were continually threatening their Iban and Murut captors with the most dreadful future, when the news of their capture had been received downriver and rebel forces would rush up to release them.\(^{173}\)

One outstanding example of this fortitude was provided by Gawan anak Jangga of Nanga Medamit, who rallied a force of 300 armed volunteers to protect his community and led them in an ambush of a boatload of rebels.\(^{174}\)

Once the immediate emergency was over, the Marines’ task, as in other areas, was to consolidate their position in the towns of the Fifth Division and stabilise the situation in the ulu while detaining all rebels still at large. Incidents of note in this period include the arrival of two Ferret armoured cars of the QRIH to support 42 Commando in its mission to clear the road between Limbang and Bangar. Unfortunately, both vehicles sustained water damage when the lighter that was carrying them began to sink and had to be beached; in the event, the road was found to be free of TNKU. In Limbang itself, the situation was returning to normal as early as 17 December: “The curfew is now from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. People have returned to their homes in the kampongs and confidence is being steadily restored. Security forces are patrolling up-river to intercept rebels fleeing from Brunei.”\(^{175}\)

### Temburong

The town of Bangar suffered the worst acts of violence seen during the entire Rebellion; presumably as a result of this, fewer details are available of events there than for other places. The District Officer, Pengiran Besar Pengiran Kulla, seeing the signs of tension that were all too evident around town and hearing that PRB members were gathering in the hills with their parangs and shotguns, telephoned Brunei Town Police Station late on 7 December seeking reinforcements. All that Pengiran Besar and the other government staff in Bangar could then do was to warn “everyone they see to go home, to stick together and not to go

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near their windows”; some non-PRB members elected to arm themselves with parangs of their own.176

The TNKU began its attack on the Bangar Police Station at 1.15am, earlier than elsewhere in Brunei. The occupants held out until 5am, when the sergeant-in-charge was killed; Harun has stated, without identifying his source, that this officer was tortured prior to his death. The reinforcements requested by Pengiran Besar arrived at the jetty at some point in the early hours of the morning and appear to have immediately attacked the rebels under the direction of the District Officer, who shot at least one person himself. Bolkiah has asserted that the town was under rebel control by 3am, which conflicts with the time given in FEC’s official report for the fall of the Police Station; this is a clear illustration of the kind of confusion that abounds in the literature about what precisely occurred in Bangar.177

All that remains to be told of that long night is less a narration of events than an indication of their effect:

In the early hours of the morning, this is a meeting of terrified angry men, slashing at passing phantoms, screaming insults into the dark, firing at anything human that moves.
Soon, they are newer, even more fearful sounds. Screams of terror. Gasps of the wounded in anguish. Untold pain in the cries of the dying.178

Harun has offered a particularly evocative account of his own family’s experience:

Meanwhile, over in Temburong, my grandfather, Pehin Dato Haji Abdul Rahim, a Royalist and an Imam at the mosque, was kidnapped by rebel forces but then managed to escape. He was attacked while at prayer by his brother-in-law, using a parang. He was left for dead. The brother-in-law, who by all accounts was an obsessed, indoctrinated fanatic, then ran amok, was captured and killed.179

M Company, 42 Commando reached Brunei Town on 13 December and were despatched to Bangar at first light the next day through Brunei Bay and then up the Sungei Temburong in three lighters similar to, and most likely including, the Nakhoda Manis and the Sindaun. Sailors from HMS Fiskerton and Chawton again crewed these vessels, while a local pilot guided them upriver. The Marines disembarked before the vessels reached Bangar and marched into the town. John Bailey of M Company has described the operation:

176 Bolkiah, Remember, Remember..., pp. 206-8.
178 Bolkiah, Remember, Remember..., p. 223.
179 Harun, op. cit., pp. 100-1.
Advancing through wet boggy Jungle [sic] towards the Town, where we soon experience our first bull leeches which had some how got under our laces, and were trying to enter the seams of our trousers. We also had some air support available if necessary. However on arrival at Bangar we tactically cleared the Town and no opposition was encountered because the rebels had taken to their heels up the Temburong river.  

Before the TNKU departed, it relieved many shops of their merchandise, most of its haul comprising, unsurprisingly, food. The rebels left behind large quantities of weapons and miscellaneous equipment that would probably be less useful in their new situation.  

By 4pm on 15 December, K and HQ Companies had joined M Company in Bangar, with the assistance of a section of 69 Squadron of the Gurkha Engineers, who quickly built a raft to float the Marines’ ¼ tonne vehicles across the river. K Company had cleared part of the road between Bangar and Limbang without encountering any rebels prior to its arrival in the town, while two Hawker Hunters performed a reconnaissance mission in the area that particularly focussed on the road that ran north to south through Bangar. FEC’s official report has summarised the situation in the Temburong District at the time: “42 Commando Brigade were now in the very heart of what later turned out to be the main hard core element of the rebels. From here they started to develop relentless pursuit operations which were later outstandingly successful”.  

Seven people died during the TNKU’s attack on Bangar: Pengiran Besar bin Pengiran Kulla, Sergeant Pengiran Alli bin Pengiran Ghani, Constable Chin Tong Sang, Sabli bin Ampuan Judah, Abdul Hamid bin Ahmad, Abdul Ghani bin Abdullah, and Mohammad Hassan bin Maun, the Mentri Besar’s brother. Few details are known of these deaths, only that Pengiran Besar died on 10 December, having been “[s]ought after, tracked down and captured by rebels . . . . . taken off into the jungle . . . . . and murdered”. He was then
buried in a shallow grave, which was located in the course of police investigations into his disappearance; someone was later detained in connection with Pengiran Besar’s death, but it is not clear if this person was subsequently charged or released. The Borneo Bulletin also mentioned that three other government servants were still missing presumed dead at the time that Pengiran Besar’s remains were located; their names are most likely included in the list above.  

**Sarawak’s Fourth Division**

The warning received by Resident John Fisher mentioned in Chapter VII allowed government officials, police, and Sarawak Shell Oilfields staff in Miri to make certain preparations in the course of 7 December in order to resist any TNKU action that might occur. Sarawak Administrative Officer (SAO) Joseph YB Sim subsequently recalled some of these measures:

> I was informed by [Senior Native Officer] Datu Abang Indeh to assist in the R&DO [Resident and District Office] Operation room in view of the imminent attack of Miri by the rebels. By then our security forces were stationed in various key points to thwart off the impending military attack.

In addition, a detachment of the Sarawak Field Force was despatched to Miri, as mentioned in Chapter VII.

Finally, as Reuters correspondent Peter Smark recalled in 1995:

> Two of us scampered around for a few details, got copy out by Morse and heard Mr Fisher say the situation was very serious and he was taking the grave step of sending a red feather up the Rejang River.
> What did this mean, we asked. He explained that Dyaks up-river had answered Britain’s (well, actually King George the Sixth’s) call once before when they had come downstream and caused merry hell to the Japanese in World War II.

Smark originally reported that Fisher had sent his request for aid up all rivers in the Fourth Division, not just the Rejang, and that “[a]s many as 3,000 were expected to answer the call for help.”

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187 Peter Smark, “No Wonder the Cabinet Room was Filled with Gloom”, The Sydney Morning Herald, 3 January, 1995, p. 7.
The background to this practice is unclear, but it appears to be linked to a similar tradition in Central Kalimantan using a bowl filled with the blood, feathers, and flesh of a newly sacrificed chicken that is then sent to other Dayak groups to signify that all must “put aside their differences and unite against a common threat”. The most interesting point in this instance is the appropriation of the practice by a government official, when it was more usual for traditional leaders to make the decision to call for assistance; in this case, Fisher knew of the tradition because of his previous service under the government of Rajah Vyner Brooke, which implies that the Brookes may have used the practice for their own purposes, though this is merely an inference that falls far beyond the scope of this thesis.

Meanwhile, the local branch of the TNKU met at the residence of Haji Saban Garip on the evening of 7 December to persuade those less committed to the cause, some of whom were members of the Sarawak United People’s Party (SUPP), to provide material support to the rebellion. Special Branch later ascertained that the following occurred at and after this meeting:

AWANG OMAR and MORNI attended the meeting and stated that it was intended to attack MIRI at 0200 hours that night; the attacking party would be reinforced by some 30 TNKU members from the BEKENU area. Such reinforcements did not arrive until 0500 hours and it was decided to postpone the attack on MIRI. AWANG OMAR and MORNI then moved back with the BEKENU reinforcements to the BEKENU area. About an hour after they left, Police from MIRI arrived at [Kampong] LUAK and arrested Haji SABAN.

Those unaware of the TNKU’s altered plans still expected that Miri would be attacked, and the rumours circulating about groups of rebels travelling from Bekenu and Sibuti towards the town only increased these fears. The reports on the situation in Miri in the following days reflected this: “tense but under control”, “threatened by [a] large force from [the] South”, “quiet but tense”, and “rumours that Lutong may be attacked tonight”.

Persistent reports that around 300 rebels were in the Sibuti area with the intention of entering

Miri heightened this tension and the people of the town were described as “restive”, while some of the Chinese apparently decided that evacuation elsewhere was the best option.\(^{192}\)

Because of this sense of unease, A Company, 1/2GR less one platoon was despatched from Brunei Town on the morning of 9 December on requisitioned Brunei Shell and Borneo Airways aircraft in order to secure the airport and oilfields at Lutong and Miri. With the assistance of Sarawak Police, the Gurkhas patrolled the roads leading to the airport, enforced a curfew in Miri, and guarded government buildings in the town. A Company was reinforced, firstly with its hitherto absent platoon early on the 10th and secondly with 1st Green Jackets (43rd and 52nd) (1GJ) less one company, which debarked from HMS *Tiger* at 10.30am on 12 December; the latter unit did not stay in town, however, leaving for Bekenu the same day, as will be discussed below.\(^{193}\)

Osman Latiff, Brunei Legislative Councillor and the PRB’s representative at the fifth anniversary rally of the Miri branch of the SUPP, was arrested at his hotel and taken to Miri Police Station for questioning, in the account given by Zariani solely for the purpose of ascertaining the whereabouts and aims of Azahari. The SUPP’s rally, scheduled for 8 December, was not, in fact, held, because Party Chairman Ong Kee Hui had been asked to postpone it by Chief Secretary Derek Jakeway in view of Fisher’s warning; local branch officials were initially reluctant to comply, but the intervention of Tama Weng Tingang Wan, Vice-Chairman of the party’s Central Committee, ensured that the SUPP would not be so directly implicated in the rebellion.\(^{194}\)

Bekenu was not as fortunate as Miri, the *Kubu* being occupied and 11 government servants detained in a nearby kampong by around 300 rebels from the Setap, Bungai, and Tiris sections of the TNKU. Special Branch recorded the rebels’ intentions as being to “hold BEKENU until the arrival of administrative officers from BRUNEI who would then take

\(^{192}\) TNA, CO 1030/1070, Item 253, Telegram to the MOD from the CINCFE, SEACOS 73, 12 December, 1962, para. 2; Item 263, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.278, 11 December, 1962, para. 2.


over local government, re-employing present government servants”. The Sarawak government, in a situation report released to the press on 13 December, stated that “[i]t is understood that the local inhabitants at Bekenu resisted the rebels before Bekenu was occupied and that some casualties were sustained”; no further information on the number and severity of these casualties is available. This resistance also caused considerable damage to the residence of Abang Haji Hussaini, the SAO stationed there, as well as to the Chinese school in the town. On 12 December, Sarawak Museum Curator Tom Harrisson reported that he had seen the Indonesian flag flying over the Kubu while on an aerial reconnaissance mission, as well as the fact that his aircraft had been saluted by three uniformed rebels, who apparently believed that the plane belonged to Indonesia. The only other information available about Bekenu’s experience under TNKU control is that the rebels, as elsewhere, gave shopkeepers IOU notes in exchange for goods, as well as claiming all the radios that were available in the tamu.

B Company, 1GJ and two sections of the Sarawak Constabulary Field Force departed from Miri at 12.30pm on 12 December on a Sarawak Shell landing craft with two launches in tow, en route to a point on the coast 30 miles southwest of Miri. They arrived at that point at 5.15pm, with all but one platoon disembarking from the vessel to march overland to Bekenu; the remaining platoon trans-shipped to one of the launches and then steamed up the Sungei Sibuti to provide fire support and to prevent rebels from escaping the town. The main part of the force did not arrive at Bekenu until 9.30am the next day because of the difficult going on the main track into town, the long detours that had to be taken around two suspected ambush sites, and the need to cross the Sungei Dongales in small boats. The cut-off platoon was still ten minutes away from the town when the rebels opened fire on the


main force with their shotguns, a fusillade that the Green Jackets returned heavily. Six rebels were killed and five captured, with twelve more escaping towards Kampong Setap before the cut-off platoon was in place; two platoons then steamed up the Sungei Sibuti to Kampong Setap where they captured eight of these people and released one hostage. The Green Jackets did not sustain any casualties and released all of the other hostages, who had been held in huts in the jungle; however, one hostage, Entaban, the head of the local branch of the Parti Negara Sarawak, was reported still to be in TNKU hands.\(^{198}\)

1GJ were assisted by a group of volunteers, eventually known as Harrisson’s Force because they had been placed under his command but also referred to as Home Guards in some places, who had gathered together wherever local leaders could be found in order to “take an active part in quelling the rebellion”, as Harrisson later described it.\(^{199}\) The Marudi section, led by Penghulu Baya Malang, the Borneo Company’s Derrick Reddish, and John Bagley of the Sarawak Medical Department and comprising around 200 Kenyah, Kayan, and Iban people, moved down the Sungei Sibuti towards Bekenu to act as an additional cut off force in co-ordination with the Green Jackets. Harrisson later summarised the effectiveness of this strategy:

> This worked very well indeed and completely bottled in the rebels in that area. There was no question of their escaping inland – they were attacked from both sides and also additional troops were put in by helicopter on top of them to places I designated, on December 15. That was the earliest piece of the whole of this operation to be really mopped up. Bekenu and that whole area were effectively cleared of rebels by December 18.\(^{200}\)

Broadly, the aim of Harrisson’s Force was to prevent the escape of the TNKU into Kalimantan and to act as an early warning system in the event of Indonesian infiltration. Harrisson’s account of the activities of this force appears in full in Appendix VI, while his biographer, Judith Heimann, has provided a useful summary:

> Tom’s friend and SEMUT veteran, the paramount chief of the Kayan and Kenyah tribes of Sarawak, Temonggong [sic] Oyong Lawai Jau, and all of the other chiefs of the Baram (some of whom had also seen action in the SEMUT days) responded with enthusiasm, coming downriver with hundreds of armed Kenyahs, Kayans, and

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\(^{200}\) Ibid.
Ibans eager to man patrols or to fight. Expatriates from the Public Works Department, the Rubber Development Office, the Police, Land and Survey, Education, and Agriculture Departments all got into the Dunkirk spirit and took charge of these impromptu volunteer forces.

Meanwhile Tom, flying about in helicopters and Single and Twin Pioneers with the Royal Air Force, helped the newly arrived British forces (1/2nd Gurkha Rifles and the First Battalion, Queen’s Own Highlanders, chiefly) reconnoiter [sic] the Bornean interior. Wherever they landed, Tom would rally up-country volunteers to cordon off the interior along the rivers and the jungle tracks to prevent the escape of rebels inland.201

Back in Bekenu, the VHF radio station had returned to the air by 14 December and the town was reported to be “going back to normal”, having warmly welcomed the Green Jackets upon their arrival.202 The same day, 40 bags of rice were despatched from Miri with the District Officer, CAR Wilson, because, The Sarawak Tribune implied, the TNKU had appropriated all that the shops had had in stock. By this time, the rebels who had managed to escape capture at Bekenu, perhaps as many as 300, were believed to be in the Setap area moving towards the Sungei Bakong, though they had already encountered security forces and some of their number had been apprehended. On 16 December, 1GJ was reported to have killed six TNKU, wounded another, and captured 94 others.203

Sibuti, located downriver from Bekenu, had a similar experience, though far fewer details are available. The Sarawak Annual Report 1962 gave this summary: “In Sibuti rebel Kedayans captured the fort [Kubu] and Government staff and held out for several days. The station was recaptured by a detachment of the Green Jackets. Five rebels were killed in the operation”.204 The only additional information known is that a company of 1GJ had arrived on landing craft on the morning of 13 December, and a sixth rebel later died from wounds incurred during the operation.205


Niah, 20 miles southwest of Bekenu, suffered comparatively little during the rebellion, though the police station was evacuated; Corporal Saini Bakar, the officer in charge, was able to return daily to report the local situation to his superiors in Miri. The Kubu was still in government hands on 9 December when the archaeologist Barbara Harrisson arrived from the Niah Great Cave on her weekly visit to use the telephone, but the TNKU had raised its flag there and the building was empty when she returned on the 11th with Sarawak government surveyors GR Noel and EL Woolley. Harrisson and some of her colleagues had gone upriver to the nearest Iban longhouse on 9 December to seek intelligence and assistance, bypassing Malay and Kedayan villages that were suddenly deserted of inhabitants; the Ibans readily agreed to place a watch on the river, with support from Harrisson and her colleagues, and a makeshift bar was constructed to prevent undetected movement in either direction.206

There were rumours that the reason for the TNKU’s failure to hold the Kubu at Niah was that the “foreign rebels” who had been sent to lead the rebellion there were prevented from doing arriving by rough seas at Kuala Sibuti and Kuala Niah, while the Special Branch attributed it to the “determination of the local MALAY Kampong to resist” the TNKU.207 The local branch of what was to become Harrisson’s Force had been organised by Corporal Saini, Barbara Harrisson, Woolley, and Noel in order to defend Niah and the archaeological site at Rumah Pasang against the rebels. At 6pm on 12 December, C Company less one platoon of 1GJ, accompanied by a section from the Sarawak Constabulary Field Force, arrived from Miri to a warm welcome from the inhabitants, from whence one platoon went upriver to Rumah Pasang while the other stayed in Niah; both platoons patrolled rivers in the area with the police and made many arrests.208

At Marudi, an inland town on the Sungei Baram very close to the Brunei border, the TNKU was not active, presumably because it did not have a presence in the area. The town

did, however, become a key centre of activity for Harrisson’s Force, with local leader Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau taking a central role in calling his people, the Kayans, Kenyahs, and other Orang Ulu, to support the Sarawak government and he and NR Coysh of the Rubber Development Office being entrusted to lead the approximately 1,000 people who volunteered. These activities are detailed at length in Appendix VI, but, briefly, the volunteers patrolled the area with the assistance of 1GJ as other sections of Harrisson’s Force did, crewed government launches that trawled the Sungai Baram for a distance of 100 miles, and laid ambushes along the Brunei border.209

SAO Stewart Ngau Ding later related his own experiences in Marudi during this period:

When I came back to Marudi in the evening, the town was very quiet. A curfew was enforced and the shops were closed. However, the food market and eating stall owners were directed to open their stalls to provide food for volunteers who were guarding the town. The volunteers were given food coupons. After a tip from the kampong people in Marudi, the Police arrested six rebels who came over to Marudi to recruit potential volunteers. They were interrogated by the Police in Marudi and later sent over to Miri for further interrogation. The next instruction given to me was to get in touch with all the URAs [Upriver Agents] to inform the Temonggong, Penghulu, to bring as many young men as possible to come down to Marudi. In the next few days, Marudi was swarm with upriver people, bringing with them shotguns, blowpipes, parang ilang, etc. My father, Penghulu Jok Ngau, came with two long boats loaded with people and weapons. My quarters were overflow with people sleeping like sardine. The same happened to other government quarters. Two Canadian Colombo Plan teachers, serving in Baram, Mr Toynbee and Mr Bailey, looked after rations for all the people who defended Marudi town.210

Western Sarawak

The First, Second, and Third Divisions of Sarawak emerged from the Rebellion unscathed, in the sense that no TNKU activity occurred in any of these areas. Despite this, events elsewhere naturally had numerous repercussions for these Divisions. At Sibu, in the Third Division, for example, two platoons of reservists were activated to join the platoon of the regular Field Force permanently stationed there, while firing positions were constructed at various sites in the town, including outside the Police Station and at the Field Force Camp.


In addition, a guard was set at the Police Station and visitors were searched before they could enter, while all police officers in the district were directed to carry weapons.  

In the Second Division, 79 auxiliary policemen were recruited from Saratok, Kabong, and Roban alone, with many volunteers turned away, as occurred elsewhere with Harrisson’s Force. In the Saribas District of the Division, recruits were so eager that, within a few hours of the call for assistance being made, all vulnerable points in the area were sufficiently protected. At Simanggang (now known as Sri Aman), 200 people, largely retired police and Sarawak Rangers, volunteered to join Harrisson’s Force and were employed in patrolling the area at night and securing government offices and installations in the town, as well as at the outposts of Pantu and Sungai Tenggang.  

The focus of activity in the First Division was, naturally, Kuching and, as already noted above, Sir Alexander Waddell, the Governor of Sarawak, had been quick to request that military forces be sent to the town, both by telegram to London and in person on a visit to Brunei on 12 December. The reasons behind his anxiety were neatly summed up in FEC’s official report: “…Indonesian sympathy with the rebellion, the proximity of Kuching to Indonesia and the ease with which the frontier could be crossed in many places”. The outcome of Waddell’s appeals was the despatch to Kuching of HMS Woolaston and Wilkieston on 12 December, a battery from the 20th Regiment, Royal Artillery (RA), sans guns, and HQ 3 Commando Brigade on HMS Blackpool on the 13th, and 40 Commando, RM on the 14th, as already noted. Sixty-one Malayan police were also sent to the town to reinforce their Sarawakian counterparts. This force had three main roles: to “reconnoitre widely”, to “make its presence felt in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions”, and “to be in a position to assist the civil power in restoring law and order if required”.  

40 Commando carried out patrols towards the border from its base at Kuching, while HMS Woolaston, Wilkieston, and Alert were, on 17 December, at Sibu, Lundu, and Pending, respectively, with, in the case of the two former vessels, detachments of the Commando onboard. HMS Woolaston also steamed 170 miles up the Sungei Rejang to reach as far as Kapit at one point. There were only two incidents in western Sarawak thought to be notable enough to be mentioned in FEC’s official report: accounts of a large group gathered at Lubok Antu and increased river traffic nearby at Engkilili in the Second Division, and information that around 100 rebels were travelling towards the Indonesian border in the Bintulu area of the Third Division. The first report was found to refer to a group of Harrisson’s Force, while the second could neither be proven nor disproven due to the difficulty of access to the area and repairs being made to the airstrip at Belaga, but it was thought that the rebel band had never existed since no other sighting of the group had been reported.215

The Sarawak government moved quickly to bolster the colony’s ability to maintain law and order in the face of the emergency, bringing the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, 1962 into operation only hours after the rebellion began and making various orders thereunder. As a result, private possession of explosives was prohibited, individuals were first encouraged to voluntarily surrender their firearms and ammunition to the police and then ordered to do so unless they had a licence, various publications of the radical left in Singapore and Malaya were banned, and the entry into Sarawak of officials from the Singapore All Trades Union Organisation, Parti Rakyat Singapore, Barisan Sosialis, and Malayan People’s Socialist Front was prohibited. Four officials of the Barisan Sosialis who were already in Sarawak felt the immediate effects of this when they were deported from the colony the day after the order had been published. Various societies were also proscribed,

including the TNKU, *Angkatan Rakyat Anak Sabah*, and all groups known to be associated with the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO).²¹⁶

The CCO, as noted in previous chapters, had long been of much concern to the Sarawak government, especially since it had implemented its open front tactic within the SUPP, so, amidst fears that it would exploit the situation to its own advantage, the decision was taken to arrest the most important and most dangerous members of the organisation. Operation Straw, as it was known, began on 11 December and, by the 15th, 47 of the 62 people earmarked for arrest had already been apprehended; three more had been detained by 12 January, 1963 and one person released. Of the remaining twelve, all but one were known to have escaped and were believed to be in hiding, including two of the most important cadres, Yeung Chu Chung and Yap Choon Ho. It was not known at the time whether those who had avoided arrest were going underground in order to prepare for the armed struggle or solely to escape detention, but British intelligence stated that no physical arrangements for the former appeared to have been made, despite the CCO’s longstanding belief that government action was coming, so it is likely that the cadres chose the latter course simply for the purpose of survival.²¹⁷

The SUPP, in common with all other political parties in Sarawak, dissociated itself from the rebellion in a radio broadcast on 9 December, with Chairman Ong Kee Hui saying, “As you know we are pledged as a Party to seek political changes and have matters put right by constitutional means. Armed revolt is therefore not in accordance with our policy”.²¹⁸ This declaration had apparently been made without consulting other party leaders, so CCO elements within the SUPP soon attempted to change the policy. The resolution passed


²¹⁷ TNA, WO 305/2519, “Action taken by Sarawak Special Branch to Disrupt the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO)”, Annex K to Part VI of Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 2: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 12 January 1963, 15 January, 1963, paras. 1-2, 8, & 12: CO 1030/1073, Item 402, Ministry of Defence Situation Report No. 4 (Situation as at 1330 hours 15th December 1962), 15 December, 1962, para. 5. The fate of the 12th person who had not been apprehended up to the date of the former source is not stated.

unanimously by the Council Negri, including Ong and his four SUPP colleagues on that body, would doubtless have been similarly unpopular:

This Council unreservedly condemns the armed rebellion in the State of Brunei and the invasion and capture by the rebels of Sarawak territory and repudiates in the strongest terms Azahari’s claims to speak for the people of Sarawak. This Council urges that all possible steps be taken to bring to justice any traitorous inhabitants of Sarawak who took part in organising or carrying out that treasonable enterprise.219

As noted in Chapter VI, Operation Straw had the effect of denuding the SUPP of most of its leftist elements, though the party lost many of its native and moderate members at the same time in mass resignations, also mentioned previously. The CCO leadership, in the wake of the Brunei Rebellion, decided that the time was right to begin preparing for the armed struggle, though no immediate action was then possible because of the “formidable difficulties involved in mounting and sustaining an armed revolt”, perfectly demonstrated by the PRB’s recent experience.220 As a result, the CCO began instructing its members to go underground, either into the jungle or over the border, to be trained for this armed struggle; by July 1963, between 750 and 1,000 young people were estimated to have decamped to Indonesia, including the aforementioned Yeung Chu Chung and Yap Choon Ho.221

The SUPP had joined with the PRB and the Pasok Momogun to petition the UN to intervene in the proposed formation of the Federation of Malaysia, as discussed in Chapter IV. When the rebellion began, the two remaining petitioners, after the Pasok Momogun’s decision to switch to support of the majority, pro-Malaysia view in North Borneo, were due to travel to New York to make their presentation in person before the Committee of Twenty-Four. The SUPP’s delegation had, in fact, been scheduled to leave just prior to the revolt, but had been delayed when one member, Tahir Hassan, missed his flight from Limbang to Kuching and Stephen Yong, the delegation leader, decided to wait for him since he had never before travelled overseas. This, as Ong later pointed out in his autobiography, saved the SUPP from being directly implicated in the rebellion simply by virtue of being in Manila.
with Azahari when it began. The delegation still intended to go to New York, however, initially planning to leave on 11 December but then postponing their departure, allegedly “in view of the recent event” but more likely because the Sarawak government requested that some members of the delegation surrender their passports.\textsuperscript{222} In early January, Yong announced that the party would formally withdraw from its joint memorandum with the PRB and submit a new petition of its own.\textsuperscript{223}

Overall, the primary outcome of the rebellion for Sarawak, as summarised by a Radio Sarawak correspondent, was this:

\begin{quote}
The general effect of this armed rebellion by the Brunei insurgent forces, in Brunei and in the border areas of Sarawak and North Borneo, has been to make glaringly clear to all races and classes in Borneo that there could be no possible satisfactory alternative to Malaysia. It seems now to be perfectly understood why Azahari and his political associates in Sarawak were demanding independence before Malaysia which, of course, meant out of Malaysia. It is difficult to find any remaining doubts on this score and for this reason alone the rebel leader, Azahari, has defeated the very cause he claimed to promote.\textsuperscript{224}
\end{quote}

**North Borneo**

The rebellion came as a profound shock to North Borneo, though it was itself barely touched by it. Only the small town of Weston suffered the sort of attack experienced in Brunei and Limbang, which was described in some detail in North Borneo’s *Annual Report* for 1962:

\begin{quote}
At the same time as the armed revolt broke out in the early hours of the 8\textsuperscript{th} December in the State of Brunei and neighbouring areas of Sarawak, about sixty members of the T.N.K.U. from the villages of Kampong Lubok in Sipitang and Gadong Padas, near the mouth of the Padas River in the Klias Peninsula, assembled at Kampong Lubok and, armed with seven shot-guns, four homemade cigarette tin bombs, and parangs, made their way to Weston, the small township on Brunei Bay at the mouth of the Padas river [sic] and the rail-head of the branch line from Beaufort. The party relieved the village constable of his Greener gun, collected about seven more shot-guns, and raised the T.N.K.U. flag. At daylight it was joined by a further small party from Kampong Lubok. The enlarged party advanced a few miles up the railway line to Lingkungan, where contact was made with a small party of Police and fire was exchanged. Unnerved by a mortal wound inflicted on one of their number, which exposed the fallacy of their supposed invulnerability, and discouraged by the failure to arrive of expected reinforcements from Brunei, the party withdrew to Kampong Lubok. Next day the majority surrendered to the
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[222] *The Sarawak Tribune*, “SUPP UN Trip Deferred”, 11 December, 1962, p. 1; Ong, *op. cit.*, p. 594. Delegation members Tieu Sung Seng and Hollis Tini were later arrested during Operation Straw, suggesting that theirs were the passports that had been confiscated.
\item[224] *The Sarawak Tribune*, “Who Are Azahari’s Supporters In Sarawak?”, 15 December, 1962, p. 2.
\end{footnotes}
Police, without putting up a fight. About twelve took to the jungle, but later surrendered themselves with their arms, and about four left for Brunei.\(^\text{223}\)

Six miles outside Weston, the rebels established a roadblock, presumably to prevent police reinforcements from reaching the town, which was successfully attacked on Saturday night by around 60 police as the rebels were pushed back towards Weston. A road construction base camp in the area was also captured by the TNKU, but was liberated after only a few hours by a group of labourers in a bulldozer and two trucks armed only with pick-handles, whose arrival caused the rebels to retreat precipitously. Much of the TNKU’s time in control of Weston appears to have been spent in gathering more weaponry, and one such foray in the Lingkungan area resulted in a clash with a Land Rover full of police, during which six rebels ambushed the vehicle, firing on it with a rifle and lobbing a homemade bomb into it. The police naturally returned the fire, as well as throwing the bomb from the Land Rover before it exploded; no one was injured during this incident on either side and the police were eventually forced to withdraw because the rebels’ position was too well concealed.\(^\text{226}\)

Substantial Field Force reinforcements arrived at dawn on 9 December and immediately began to pursue the fleeing rebels, as one witness recounted decades later:

Lawes said the Field Force was split up to pursue the rebels who were heading in the direction of Batu-Batu in powered boats.

“We too got hold of perahu (sampans) and chased them across the Bay. As they (rebels) landed, we fired warning shots over their heads. There were no casualties because we didn’t shoot to kill but merely to scare them.”

According to him, the rebels ran up behind Kampung Batu-Batu into the trees and decided to surrender shortly after because they were no match for the machine guns.\(^\text{227}\)

Reuters reported at the time that four policemen had been wounded during this incident, but North Borneo government sources stated that there were no casualties. By 9am on the 10\(^\text{th}\), 73 people had been arrested and nine shotguns, two rifles, and one bomb seized; the number of those in detention had increased to 254 within three days. Governor Sir William Goode

\(^{223}\) State of North Borneo, op. cit., pp. 10-1.


described the participants in the attack on Weston as “a rather miserable bunch of simple people led astray”, a description that might be accurately applied to much of the TNKU.\footnote{228 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 551, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 337, 13 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1068, Item 136, Extract from Reuter’s News Service, “Fighting 3 Brunei Town”, 9 December, 1962; Item 143, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 328, 10 December, 1962, para. 1.}

There were also minor disturbances in the Sipitang District:

T.N.K.U. personnel also assembled from other villages in Sipitang District with the purpose of carrying out attacks on Sipitang District and Sindumin, a small village near the border with the Lawas District of Sarawak. In the event these attacks came to nothing, as expected reinforcements of men and arms from Brunei were not forthcoming, and because of the presence in the district of two sections of the Police Mobile Force.\footnote{229 State of North Borneo, op. cit., p. 11. The first sentence, mentioning people gathering to carry out attacks on Sipitang District and Sindumin, likely referred to Sipitang itself.}

North Borneo was otherwise undisturbed by the rebellion.

The North Borneo government also took various precautions in response to the revolt, as Sarawak had done, including activating Sections 3 and 4 of the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance and enacting the Detention of Persons (Special Provisions) Ordinance, which enabled the government to detain in North Borneo persons who had participated in the rebellion in Brunei and/or Sarawak. Two reserve units of the police, the Special Constabulary and the Police Reserve, were also placed on an active footing, with the former sent to the Beaufort area and the latter, comprising 164 officers, probably more generally employed; the Police Reserve, especially, was praised highly for its service in the \textit{Annual Report}. As for the Police Force itself, preparations had been made and officers deployed to areas adjacent to Brunei before the revolt thanks to the warnings of trouble that had been received.\footnote{230 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 28, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 324, 8 December, 1962, para. 3; State of North Borneo, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 129, 134, & 136.}

The North Borneo government also provided various kinds of assistance to Brunei and Sarawak during the emergency:

Other measures of assistance given included the loan of a police launch to Sarawak, and the despatch to Brunei of water and electricity technicians. A police wireless operator who had been sent to Lawas towards the end of November maintained vital communications between Lawas and North Borneo during a crucial period. Labuan, with possible local disturbances on the part of a Partai Rakyat dominated local organisation not materialising, became the scene of intense activity as the port of
arrival for all large R.A.F. aircraft and troop reinforcements for Brunei, and also the reception centre for refugees and casualties.\textsuperscript{231}

The Legislative Council, still comprised of government officials and appointed members, unanimously passed a resolution on 11 December condemning the rebellion in no uncertain terms:

\textit{be it resolved that this house condemns the action of A.M. Azahari and his conspirators of Party Ra’ayat and the so-called Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara for rebellion in Brunei and border areas of Sabah and Sarawak and that this House denounces as barefaced lies the statements made by Azahari that he is Prime Minister of Sabah and that he has the support of the people of Sabah.\textsuperscript{232}}

Because of North Borneo’s ongoing problems with piracy originating from the Philippines, British forces had been operating in coastal areas of the colony for several months, including naval patrols with the assistance of Shackletons and, later, an infantry company with the support of Short-Range Transport (SRT) aircraft conducting air, sea, land, and river patrols. At the time the rebellion broke out, D Company, 1QOH was deployed on this operation, known as Chisel, working from bases at Sandakan, Tawau, Lahad Datu, and Kudat. Its presence in the colony was reassuring in itself, as well as being of assistance to a Police Force that was described by Governor Goode as “fully stretched” even as early as 7am on 8 December.\textsuperscript{233}

As discussed in Chapter VI, one of the Highlanders’ patrols discovered about 60 uniforms on the outskirts of Tawau, mostly at the Borneo Abaca Limited Estate, which were very similar to those worn by the TNKU. Flags depicting symbols like fish, stags, cockerels, and the garuda were found at the same time, though no firearms were located and no direct evidence of links with the Tentera was identified. The owners of the uniforms claimed that they wore them on special occasions, while other possible reasons for their existence included being given as gifts, being worn as a homage to the heroic deeds of long-dead Bugis ancestors, and being worn as camouflage to deter pirates from attacking them whilst fishing. British intelligence had not determined the purpose of these uniforms as late as 14

\textsuperscript{231} State of North Borneo, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{232} \textit{The Straits Times}, “Azahari Claim is Condemned”, 13 December, 1962, p. 8.
January, 1963, but it was supposed, for the purposes of prudently assuming the worst, that they pointed towards the existence of a militant organisation.234

This assumption was reinforced by the information volunteered by the Chairman of the Indonesian Association, quoted in Chapter VI, viz. that a secret organisation had approached him to provide support for an uprising in the Tawau area; this group was said to be well armed and in possession of radio transmitters. The police made some arrests in connection with this report and Chisel Force was placed under the direct command of Brigadier Glennie, the Commander of British Forces in Borneo (COMBRITBOR). Goode requested on 14 December that a second company be despatched to Tawau, but the pressure of operations elsewhere meant that Glennie could only send four Hawker Hunters to fly low over Tawau and Darvel Bay as a show of force on four of the next five days.235

Glennie was finally able to despatch B Company, 1/2GR from Kuala Belait on 17 December, and its arrival at dawn that day was said to have “bolstered local morale and considerably helped the police”.236 Contributing to this effect was the manner of its arrival, with the Resident and his officials in attendance:

The aircraft had hardly stopped moving when the doors banged open, the ramp was dumped and Land-Rovers and trailers hurtled out, followed by the Gurkhas who rushed in all directions to take up tactical positions around the airfield. The pilot pulled everything shut, taxied out, opened up the engines and took off. From start to finish the operation had taken two-and-a-half minutes!237

Tactical HQ, 40 Commando, RM was sent to Jesselton shortly afterwards to co-ordinate the activities of these troops and advise the Governor on related matters, while the Gurkhas were

replaced by C Company, 40 Commando within three days. 1QOH were relieved by 1GJ early in January, 1963.\textsuperscript{238}

The destroyer, HMS \textit{Barrosa}, was also sent from Singapore on 20 December to patrol the waters off Tawau, as well as conducting river patrols with detachments from the Police and 40 Commando. Another of the vessel’s tasks was to intercept Azahari, should he perchance leave Manila by sea in order to return to Borneo. One incident involving the \textit{Barrosa} occurred when an Indonesian gunboat sank two sampans and captured their crews; the British ship intercepted and boarded the Indonesian vessel, but it was not clear if the sampans were Indonesian, or whether the incident had occurred in North Borneo waters.\textsuperscript{239}

\textbf{The Build-Up of British Forces in Northern Borneo}

All military operations, whatever their size, require extensive logistical support to ensure that they function smoothly, including reinforcements, supplies, and sundry other people and items. This operation was no different: the two companies of 1/2GR initially sent to Brunei Town were in the process of being reinforced even whilst they were in the air, with one company \textit{en route} to Labuan by sea and the battalion’s fourth company scheduled to depart Singapore by air on the morning of 9 December. HMS \textit{Albion}, a Commando Carrier with 40 Commando, RM embarked and \textit{en route} to its new commission with the RN’s Far East Fleet when the rebellion began, was ordered to “proceed [to] Labuan with all despatch” early on Sunday once its stores, cargo, and personnel had been suitably adjusted at Singapore, though by the time it arrived at Labuan on 15 December, \textit{Albion} had stopped at Kuching the afternoon before to land all but one company of the Marines.\textsuperscript{240}
The departure of so many troops from Singapore at one time required that additional units from elsewhere replace them in order to maintain an appropriate force level to guard against internal security disturbances, and the first to arrive was 1GJ from Penang and one troop of the QRIH from Ipoh. Singapore’s ever-simmering political agitation caused Admiral Luce to accept Malaya’s offer of the 4th Battalion, Royal Malay Regiment, which would remain at its base at Mentakab in Pahang unless the troops were required. More drastically, Luce was forced to request reinforcements from the Strategic Reserve in the UK and the 1st Battalion, the Royal Welch Fusiliers, was ordered to depart for Singapore on 11 December. Then, the 1st Battalion, the Royal Leicestershire Regiment, part of the War Office reserve, was placed on 72 hours’ notice to go to Singapore from midnight on 13 December, though it did not actually leave the UK in this instance. Later, on 22 December, the majority of the 1st Battalion, the 7th Duke of Edinburgh’s Own Gurkha Rifles (1/7GR) was sent from Ipoh “to be prepared for internal security operations [in] Singapore or reinforcement [in] North Borneo”. 241

Even with these measures in train, further reinforcement was required, but no other troops could be sent from the UK on such short notice, so approval was given for a tentative approach to be made to the Australian and New Zealand governments to see if their units of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve could be released for this purpose. The latter gave this reply:

Such a question would raise for the New Zealand Government grave problems of both an international and a domestic political nature and is not one on which the New Zealand Government could in advance of an actual situation arising, give any decision as to what its attitude might be. 242

Australia’s reaction was similarly non-committal. 243

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241 ANA, File 248/5/6, Telegram to the Department of Defence from the Australian Defence Representative, Singapore, SAC 49, 22 December, 1962; TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 163, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS/8, 9 December, 1962, para. Eighth; DEFE 11/391, Item 30, Record of Tele-Conference to Singapore 1700 hours Sunday, 9th December, 1962, Part 1, COS.1794/9/12/62, 9 December, 1962, para. 10; CO 1030/1068, Item 132, Telegram to the CINCFE from the MOD, COSSEA 64, 9 December, 1962, para. 1; DEFE 11/391, Item 96B, Memorandum to the Minister for Defence from the Chief of the Defence Staff, 14 December, 1962.

242 TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 21, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to New Zealand, No. 563, 15 December, 1962, para. 2; DEFE 11/391, Item 69, Chiefs of Staff Committee: Extract from COS (62) 79th Meeting, held on 11th Dec 1962, 11 December, 1962, para. 1.

243 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 180, Chief of Staff Committee, Extract from COS(62) 83rd Meeting held on 27th December, 1962, 27 December, 1962, para. 1A.
Admiral Luce also despatched smaller units to northern Borneo, including one squadron of the RAF Regiment, sent to secure the airports at Labuan and Brunei Town. Naval Party Alfa, a detachment of electrical and radio technicians from HMS *Mull of Kintyre*, a minesweeper maintenance ship based at Singapore, had arrived at Berakas with 1/2GR on the night of 8 December, charged with repairing and operating Brunei Town’s power station and communications facilities. 12 Battery, 20th Regiment, RA was sent to Kuching on 13 December in an internal security role until 40 Commando, RM arrived in the town the next morning. A 100-strong detachment of the Sarawak Rangers, a unit of the British Army recruited from Iban volunteers, departed Singapore in the afternoon of 15 December to assist the various British units in jungle operations. In addition, 150 Malayan police were flown to Brunei Town to aid their Bruneian counterparts in maintaining public order, as well as 10 Singaporeans lent by their government on the express understanding that their presence would not be publicly announced.\(^{244}\)

The scale of the operation in Brunei necessitated the despatch of headquarters and administrative units to support those troops who were in action, with the former category comprising HQ COMBRITBOR and HQ 99 Gurkha Brigade. Administrative units sent were more diverse, with 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron sent to manage communications, detachments from 69 Independent Gurkha Field Squadron and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) to provide engineering services, and much of 16 Field Ambulance to offer medical support. Also despatched were detachments from 31 Company, Gurkha Army Service Corps, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, and the Psychological Warfare Unit, the latter of which will be discussed in detail in Chapter IX.\(^{245}\)


\(^{245}\) TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 293, Record of a Tele-Conference with Singapore held on Wednesday 12th December, 1962, at 0900 hrs., para. A8.
Curiously, the Brunei Malay Regiment (BMR), training in Malaya when the revolt began, was not called home in the hour of its country’s greatest need. An article appeared in *The Borneo Bulletin* on 29 December that stated that a plan to fly the Regiment home to assist in quelling the rebellion was abandoned when seven soldiers were discovered amongst the TNKU whilst in Brunei on leave. The article went on to claim that steps had then been taken in Malaya to ensure that there was no further trouble with the BMR, with one source even claiming that the soldiers had been disarmed. The OC of the Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Tengku Ahmad Burhanuddin, denied this report, stating that all personnel had returned from their leave and that only one soldier had been detained, at a roadblock for possession of a *kris*. *The Bulletin* stood by its report, stating that the source of its information had been the security forces.246

In February 1963, one soldier of the BMR was sent to the detention camp at Berakas and another two discharged from the Regiment for refusing to join their colleagues in re-pledging their loyalty to the Sultan; 19 others had also declined to do so but remained in the Regiment. No further information about this incident is available, so the reason for the refuseniks’ differing punishments is not clear. High Commissioner EO Laird later speculated that their motivation was to avoid participating in the search for the remnants of the TNKU, which might involve them in “hunting and shooting down their close relations, brothers and fathers.”247 Laird also stated that there was some “upheaval” in the Regiment at the time of the rebellion, partly caused by the difficult relationship between the Malays of Malaya and Brunei explored in Chapter IV and partly by the sympathy felt by some of the soldiers with the PRB and its cause.248

Shortly after the operation began, a Force HQ was established as an *ad hoc* headquarters, with four officers despatched from Singapore to Labuan. The arrival of Brigadier Glennie and Air Task Force Commander Group Captain RD Williams, who was usually Station

247 TNA, FO 371/175105, Item 1512/16, Letter to P Jenkins (CRO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/520/2/64, 20 July, 1964, para. 3.
248 Ibid., para. 4.
Commander at RAF Seletar, on 9 December led to an important conference between these officers and the OC, 1/2GR, the RAF Station Commander, Labuan, and the District Officer and other North Borneo officials being held, at which the situation and the immediate priorities were assessed. The Force HQ then remained at Labuan that night because of the curfew and the risk of ambush on the road between the airport and Brunei Town.249

The RN was a crucial pillar in the process of despatching troops and equipment from Singapore to northern Borneo. In addition to those vessels already mentioned above, HMS Tiger, a cruiser, conveyed 1GJ to Miri, B Squadron, QRIH to Labuan, and a detachment of Marines to the island of Papan, off Labuan, to secure 400 detainees held there. The destroyer HMS Cavalier, en route from the Commonwealth Games in Perth to Singapore when the rebellion began, arrived at Singapore Naval Base at dawn on 8 December and embarked one company each from 1/2GR and 42 Commando, RM, destined for Labuan. Once these troops debarked, Cavalier became a communications hub and source of ship’s boats and labour for miscellaneous purposes, including establishing the detention camp at Papan, until it returned to Singapore on 14 December. Similarly employed as factotums were the minesweepers HMS Wilkieston and Woolaston, despatched to Kuching to provide military support there, though there was no sign of rebel activity, and Fiskerton and Chawton, sent to Brunei Town on 11 December. The latter two vessels distinguished themselves in their support of the operation to re-capture Limbang and in a myriad of other ways, such as controlling all marine activity in Brunei Harbour, maintaining communications with Singapore, and securing the riverine approaches to Brunei Town. Two frigates, HMS Alert and Blackpool, were sent to Kuching with Brigadier FC Barton, elements of HQ 3 Commando Brigade, and one company of 40 Commando aboard; the Brigadier was to liaise with the Governor of Sarawak, with Alert to remain as his command ship. Blackpool disgorged its troops and then sailed to Labuan to offload the vehicles and stores it had also carried. HMS Woodbridge Haven, a minesweeper support ship, went to Labuan to take over Cavalier’s role as Senior

Naval Officer there on 13 December, and also to perform a similar variety of tasks as Chawton and Fiskerton. Three vessels of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary were also despatched to Labuan to support the operations in northern Borneo, with RFA Gold Ranger and Wave Sovereign, both fleet tankers, arriving on 12 and 13 December, respectively, and Fort Charlotte, a stores support ship, docking on 17 December.²⁵⁰

The RAF, too, played a pivotal role in supporting the operation, once the initial airlift was over. Most of its contributions came in the form of transporting freight and personnel from Singapore to Labuan, with two Britannias and one Hastings, as well as the RAAF’s C-130 Hercules employed in this role; three Beverleys and four RNZAF Bristol Freighters then flew everything on to various locations in Borneo. Five Twin Pioneers operated over northern Borneo in an assault role, two of these being configured as voice aircraft to serve also in psychological operations. The four Hawker Hunters already mentioned above operated from Labuan, while three English Electric Canberra light bombers, employed in a photographic reconnaissance role, covered the operational theatre from their base at Singapore.²⁵¹

On 11 December, an Air Task Force HQ was established at Berakas, staffed by personnel from the squadrons from which the aircraft in use in the operational theatre originated and FEAF staff, numbering 57 in total. The following figures for the number of flights made between Singapore and Labuan or Brunei Town for each aircraft type up to 17 December demonstrate the intensity of the RAF’s participation in the operation: Hastings 72, Bristol Freighter 20, Britannia 20, C-130 Hercules 7, Beverley 8, Vickers Valetta 6, and Shackleton 15. Also despatched to northern Borneo by 13 December were aircraft from No. 656 Squadron of the Army Air Corps, with one Auster AOP9 at Kuching, four more Austers at

²⁵¹ TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 302, Annex C to Situation Report No. 1 (Situation as at 1000 hours on 12⁰ December, 1962), 12 December, 1962, paras. 1-3 & 5-6.
Brunei Town with three *en route*, one de Havilland Canada-2 Beaver also at Berakas, and another Beaver at Sandakan; by the 15\textsuperscript{th}, there were a total of seven Austers at Brunei Town.\textsuperscript{252}

FEC’s official report demonstrated the scale of the RAF’s operational effort between 8 and 20 December:

This airlift [from Singapore] was accomplished in 167 aircraft sorties, during which time (13 days) the following quantities were carried:-

(a) 3,209 Passengers.
(b) 113 Vehicles (assorted and guns) plus 78 Trailers.
(c) 13 Dogs.
(d) 2 Aircraft (Austers).
(e) 1 Refueller (weighing 31,000 lbs).
(f) 624,308 lbs of equipment/freight.\textsuperscript{253}

Within Borneo, the figures were:

(a) **Transport Aircraft**
Transport aircraft flew 546 sorties. They uplifted 4,751 passengers and casevacs [casualty evacuations] and 1,189,160 lbs of freight. Total flying time was 707 hours 5 minutes.

(b) **Civilian Aircraft**
Civilian aircraft assistance in these tasks involved 69 sorties and 51 hours 35 minutes flying time. The number of passengers and freight uplifted is not known.

(c) **Offensive Operations**
Hunter aircraft flew 52 sorties, and consumed 60 hours 20 minutes flying time. In addition 3 Photographic Reconnaissance (PR) missions were flown by Singapore based aircraft.

(d) **Summary**
In the thirteen day period, therefore, 837 sorties were flown by RAF and civilian aircraft, carrying 7,959 passengers and casevacs and 1,813,468 lbs of freight (just over 900 short tons).\textsuperscript{254}

Another indication of how extensive the RAF’s contribution to the Brunei operation was is the massive increase in the number of aircraft movements at both Labuan and Berakas: from 190 per month in the previous year for the former to 1028 in 13 days and slightly less than 190 per month to 1160 in 12 days for the latter.\textsuperscript{255}

\textsuperscript{252} TNA, ADM 1/28626, Report on Operations in Borneo, December 1962–January 1963, Annex B – Narrative of Operations – 8th December to 20th December, 1962, Part 2. Phase I – Breaking the Rebellion, para. 26(c); DEFE 11/391, Item 107, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCSE, SEACOS 93, 17 December, 1962, para. 5; CO 1030/1071, Item 334, Annex to Situation Report No. 2 (Situation as at 0900 hours on 13\textsuperscript{th} December, 1962), 13 December, 1962, para. 7; CO 1030/1073, Item 402, Annex B to Situation Report No. 4 (Situation as at 1330 hours 15\textsuperscript{th} December 1962), 15 December, 1962, para. 7.


\textsuperscript{254} *ibid.*, para. 6.

When the first two companies of 1/2GR had departed for Brunei Town, they took ten days’ worth of reserve rations and other essential equipment that could be airlifted with them, as required by Plan Ale; anything else they subsequently found themselves in need of had to be purchased locally. Units that followed later only brought five days’ rations, while all left some rations, ammunition, and stores behind in Singapore because of the constraints of the airlift, which were subsequently the first reserve stocks used. Thereafter, stores and equipment were largely sent via RN ships from Labuan, apart from those that were urgently required, such as ammunition, medical stores, and wireless stations, which were usually despatched within eight hours of being requested.256

Arriving with the first two companies of Gurkhas were a captain and a sergeant from 3 Army Air Supply Organisation, who spent the next 72 hours running the joint load control system at Brunei Airport by themselves. An officer from Quartermaster (Movements), when found to be unneeded by HQ 99 Brigade at Brunei, went to Labuan on 12 December where he became Port Commandant of Victoria Harbour, in conjunction with the Naval Officer in Charge and the Harbour Master. A second Quartermaster (Movements) officer and a Lighterage Troop of 10 Port Squadron were deployed to Brunei on 13 and 14 December; the latter relieved naval personnel from the minesweepers who had been operating landing craft for 42 Commando and 1/2GR.257

The establishment of a Brigade Maintenance Area was an essential step in consolidating the organisation of logistics for operations in northern Borneo, though the placement of this facility presented some problems. The first and most obvious candidate was Brunei Town, which would allow units to be maintained and supported via road and river, but nowhere in the capital was found to be suitable: the airport was already over-crowded and the Sungei Brunei was unnavigable for the large ships that typically carried freight. Labuan was, consequently, selected as the location for the Brigade Maintenance Area, with its deep-water

port and RAF airfield; a small Brigade Administrative Area was established at Brunei Airport to store especially well used items.\(^{258}\)

The SS *Empire Kittiwake*, a Landing Ship Tank, arrived at Labuan on 14 December with a floating Ordinance Field Park (OFP), six 3 tonne vehicles, stevedore and lighterage troops of 10 Port Squadron of the Royal Engineers, a detachment from 10 Infantry Workshops, and stores of ammunition, pack rations, and cigarettes aboard. Congestion at Victoria Harbour and a shortage of lighters delayed the unloading of stores from the ship, though everything was eventually offloaded to 99 OFP in Labuan. The *Empire Kittiwake* then became a mobile crane, due to a shortage of that important machinery, as well as a base for the troops who were working Victoria Harbour. The Stevedore Troop of 10 Port Squadron had unloaded 11 ships by 20 December, including 300 vehicles and over 1,000 tonnes of freight.\(^{259}\)

By 19 December, the need to provide support for the operations in northern Borneo had settled down enough that it was possible for FARELF to inform London: “With the build up of stocks in North Borneo, particularly of ordnance stores, the demands for long range air supply from Singapore are diminishing.”\(^{260}\) There were still several refinements to be made, including building up stocks, increasing the support from the REME for heavy vehicles and, more generally, making preparations to switch over to road and river supply in most of Brunei. Units in the Kuching area were already being supplied directly from Singapore using civil shipping services; Straits Steamship Company vessels on their weekly trips to Labuan had also been used.\(^{261}\)

Communications between Brunei and Singapore were a major problem, with the only military link between the two before the outbreak of the rebellion being a Wireless/Transmitter (W/T) circuit located at RAF Labuan. Five soldiers from 249 Signal Squadron, Royal Corps of Signals under the command of Corporal RD Holdsworth were despatched from Singapore with the Initial Force, travelling with a Land Rover equipped

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\(^{258}\) *Ibid.*, para. 41.

\(^{259}\) *Ibid.*, paras. 40 & 42.

\(^{260}\) TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 42, Telegram to Operations, Quartermaster General’s Office, War Office from FARELF, Q(Ops)/Plans/4, 19 December, 1962, para. Fourth.

with a High Frequency W/T set. This detachment established itself at Brunei Town Police Station and commenced attempts to contact General Headquarters (GHQ) at Singapore at 1.30am on 9 December, but both rebel activity and technical difficulties prevented its success for any appreciable length of time until 2pm on the 10th. An investigation into the cause of these problems later found that the main culprit was “almost certainly the use of inappropriate and badly maintained aerials at the GHQ [FAREL] Wireless Room”. 262

Civil communications encountered some problems as well: the loss of electricity and the TNKU’s seizure of some telephone exchanges, combined with the absence of some staff at those exchanges that had remained in government hands, disrupted telephone service throughout the country. When a Canberra bomber collided with the primary VHF tower in Brunei Town, it destroyed many of the aerials and temporarily interrupted the radiotelephone network that connected the towns of Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo. In addition, the High Commissioner’s office struggled to cope with the sudden increase in cypher telegram traffic to such an extent that they requested that messages be passed through military channels where possible. 263

These military channels, despite the slow start just described, were fairly extensive. The RN ships in the area were naturally already connected by radio and communicating with Singapore; a party was despatched from HMS Cavalier on 11 December equipped with radios to link the ships directly to the shore. The arrival of HMS Albion in the vicinity, with its “first class communications facilities”, greatly strengthened the quality of this network. 264 The RAF, with its base already at Labuan, needed only to establish a direct link between Labuan and Brunei, which was achieved with the placement of C11 radios at Brunei Town and Brunei Airport; a radio teleprinter link was also created between Singapore and Labuan.

263 Webb, op. cit., p. 178; TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 587, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Transcript of Original (Item 567), 13 December, 1962, p. 6; CO 1030/1074, Item 551, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. Brief 67, 15 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1071, Item 333, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Unnumbered, 13 December, 1962, para. 1. The Canberra bomber managed to reach Labuan safely. CO 1030/1075, Item 587, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Transcript of Original (Item 567), 13 December, 1962, p. 6.
The Army units sent to Brunei usually travelled with their own rear link wireless detachments from 248 Signal Squadron, but it had been decided that the entirety of this squadron would remain in Singapore in case of an internal security situation there; as a result, the Air Support Signal Troop of 249 Signal Squadron went in its stead. Corporal Holdsworth’s detachment was reinforced by another Land Rover and its associated personnel on 12 December, and a communications centre established at Force HQ by the 18th Signal Regiment on the same day. Elements of 248 Signal Squadron were sent later in the week once concerns about Singapore had eased and a third unit from 249 Signal Squadron was also despatched to Kuching.265

The disparate nature of these communications systems led to the decision to establish a Joint Force Communications Centre to better co-ordinate the flow of information. Initially, the staff for this Centre was simply borrowed from the units already working in this area in Brunei, with some reinforcement from the UK, though the FEC official report, dated April 1963, observed that the general increase in traffic in the Far East theatre would soon make it “more difficult to find personnel from local resources”.266 A radio relay chain between Force HQ in Brunei Town and RAF Labuan was established on 26 December to expand the range of available channels and then further manual wireless circuit units were despatched to Kuching and Jesselton. Despite these advances, the radio link to Singapore had begun to be heavily overused and transmission delays were becoming too frequent, so a D11 VHF transmitter was sent to Brunei on 29 December in order to “save the day”, as Major PHF Webb of the Royal Corps of Signals later characterised its impact.267

Conclusion

This chapter has described the course of the rebellion itself, beginning with the TNKU’s plan, the cornerstone of which was the capture of the Sultan: gaining control of his person would grant the rebels control over the government, the use of his moral authority and

265 Ibid., pp. 178-9.
popularity amongst the people, and the ability to dictate the content of any communication with Singapore. Even the appearance of control over the Sultan, in the form of isolating him in his Istana, would have been beneficial, preventing him from requesting military assistance from Singapore and helping to demoralise the Police Force in the first critical hours of the rebellion. Another significant component of the Tentera’s plan was the element of surprise, which would have allowed the TNKU to carry out its attacks on police stations while the occupants were unprepared and unwary, exponentially increasing its chances of success.

Also absolutely vital to the success of the TNKU’s plan was the seizure of Brunei Town, because it was the centre of political power in Brunei and its capture would act as a strong incentive for the remainder of the country to capitulate. In addition, the mere fact that the government hierarchy was virtually exclusively based in the capital made its seizure an urgent priority, as did the presence of the airport at Berakas and the wharf in town, both potential means of ingress for foreign troops, both hostile and friendly. The weaponry and equipment at the Brunei Town Police Station, as well as the personnel trained to use them, were significant attractions, too, since they were, as already noted, the only opposition that the TNKU initially faced in the Sultanate.

The TNKU’s plan had major deficiencies, as well, including the absence of any attempt to seize Radio Brunei, which would have given the rebels control of the most immediate means of mass communication in the Sultanate. Even more catastrophic for the success of the rebellion was the startling decision to leave the lines of communication with the outside world intact, which allowed Parks to telegraph word of the rebellion to Singapore. The TNKU’s need to seize more advanced weaponry from the police was another weakness, which could have been alleviated if material support had been offered by Indonesia or another foreign source located. Allied to this is the fact that the Tentera did not appear to have made any attempt to capture the Shell Explosives Area in Seria, which could have made a great difference in its efforts to seize the Panaga Police Station if it were willing to go to such lengths.
Of course, even the perfect plan would have been of little use when the TNKU did not have the ability to execute it properly. Numbered amongst its many shortcomings was its inexperience, lack of modern weaponry, weak organisation, and poor leadership, all of which had a decisive influence on the course and, ultimately, the success of the revolt. Several former rebels later made telling observations in interviews with Harun:

they were very young and had no guerrilla warfare experience let alone military training in tactics. Looking back at the events of those first crucial hours, they are horrified at the very simple errors that were made in planning. They had no experienced seniors to guide them and one made the telling comment:

If I knew then what I know today we would have succeeded. Brunei Town was ours for the taking and we could have secured the air field properly long before the British came with their troops.268

Zaini has offered a more forgiving view: “[The TNKU was] but a group of nationalists whose only arm was the will to fight and exist as a free and independent nation”.269

One of these elements, poor leadership, deserves special attention, because leadership was the one thing the TNKU should have had in abundance, given the PRB’s political experience. It was, therefore, a major failure on its part, especially when the lack of military knowledge and experience of the vast majority of rank-and-file rebels is considered. Even if few of the Tentera’s leaders had any military or police expertise themselves, the leadership skills many had gained during the PRB’s six years as Brunei’s premier political party should have provided some guidance, at the least, in their new role. The marked contrast between the success initially achieved by the Limbang rebels and the failure of those in Brunei Town might be partially explained by the differing kinds of life experience possessed by their leaders, with Salleh Sambas having served with the Sarawak Police and retaining considerable skill with a Bren gun, a decisive factor in the capture of the Limbang Police Station. By contrast, the leaders of the attack on the Brunei Town Police Station demonstrated their lack of military knowledge when they neglected to investigate alternative entry points into the building, as well as their failure to take advantage of the instances noted above when small groups of police or even Outram alone ventured away from the protection

268 Harun, op. cit., pp. 93-4 (italics in original).
269 Zaini, op. cit., p. 32.
offered by the Police Station, which might have resulted in demoralising casualties for the police.

The rather revealing comment made by Zaini in Manila, that the Sultan would be shot if he refused to cooperate with the Tentera, illustrates an essential truth about the rebellion: no matter how incompetent and half-hearted much of the TNKU proved to be, there were those who were committed enough to the cause to kill deliberately and even ruthlessly. Whether or not Zaini’s remark reflected anything that the Tentera actually intended to do, it was certainly an indication of the seriousness with which the leadership of the PRB, at least, approached its purpose. Fundamentally, also, it again highlighted the importance that the TNKU ought to have placed on capturing the Sultan if the rebellion was to succeed, as well as the necessity of either winning or, more likely, forcing his cooperation once they had done so.

There has been some discussion, at the time and since, about the suitability of Plan Ale as a response to the rebellion and, more broadly, the efficacy of the arrangements made by the British to manage internal security problems in Brunei. The marked disparity between the scale of the revolt and the size of the force initially sent to quell it, as well as the subsequent despatch of so many reinforcements, made it all too apparent that Plan Ale was simply inadequate for the situation that it addressed. It also demonstrated the unfortunate effect that inaccurate and incomplete information regarding events in Brunei could have on both the initiation and execution of the Plan. Finally, the absence of naval involvement at any stage of the Plan presupposed that air access to Brunei would remain open, a dangerous assumption to make when there were only two airports in the entire country, both of which were virtually undefended.

On the other hand, it should be emphasised that Plan Ale was a contingency plan designed to deal with a small-scale internal security situation, rather than a full-scale rebellion against the government and, as such, should not be criticised for its inadequacy. The question should instead be asked why a more suitable plan had not been created: anti-government revolts are not so uncommon that governments need not prepare for them.
Another mitigating factor when discussing the shortcomings of British defence planning for Brunei is the fact that, though Great Britain was formally responsible for both internal and external security, the Sultan’s government had not allowed any military exercises there since 1959 and, as a consequence, the British believed that the “Sultan would be likely to take action” in the event of any civil disturbance.270

However, the attitude of the Brunei government towards the possibility of any internal strife appeared to be one of complacency, if the response to the arrival of Major PHF Webb of 249 Gurkha Signal Squadron in March 1962 to assess the communications situation is any indication: “Webb was greeted ‘with incredulity as if to say how anyone could be so stupid as to imagine an internal security threat arising in Brunei’”.271 The Special Branch’s weaknesses, the doubts about the willingness of the Police Force to quell any major disturbance caused by the PRB, and the failure to address these problems are all clear indications that the government had not been expecting trouble on this scale until it was far too late. The formation of the BMR might be viewed as a step towards preparedness, but it was very much a long-term project that was far from complete when the rebellion began.

Several points arise from the revolt itself, too, such as the question of what criteria the TNKU used to decide whom to take hostage. Some people were automatic candidates, like police officers and government officials, while others appear to have been seized simply to clear the streets. The puzzle about why so many people were detained in Seria and Kuala Belait, mentioned above, is relevant here, demonstrating an indiscriminate approach to hostage taking that appeared to have had few benefits and many disadvantages for the TNKU, as already noted. The detention of two pro-Malaysia politicians in Tutong was also an anomaly, since similar politically motivated arrests did not take place elsewhere. However, the majority of people were confined to their houses, or simply chose not to leave them, which was certainly the most practical policy, for both the TNKU and the general public.

270 Hussainmiya, op. cit., p. 297.
271 van der Bijl, op. cit., p. 46.
The marked differences in how the hostages were treated in some towns should also be highlighted. Most obviously, the resort to the use of a human shield in Seria appears especially brutal when compared to the generally humane treatment experienced by the majority of the hostages, particularly when the great risk of more fatalities is considered. On the other hand, this appears less remarkable when the events in Bangar are recalled, as well as how close the hostages in Limbang came to being executed. On balance, one would say that two of these unusually cruel instances occurred at times when the TNKU was desperate and on the brink of utter defeat, so it could not be said to be particularly representative of the behaviour of the Tentera as a whole.

The events in Bangar occurred both before the town was captured and afterwards, so they are more difficult to explain or rationalise. Indeed, it is impossible to do so while so little is known about what happened there. However, the very absence of extensive information indicates that both participants and witnesses remain reluctant to relive their experiences and thus implies that particularly traumatic events occurred. Bolkiah has provided a hint of an explanation that may apply to these events: “[people had been] engaged in random violence and the settling of local scores . . . .”272 Why, precisely, such things seemed to happen primarily in Bangar is not clear, though its isolation, small population, and perceived remoteness from authority may be relevant. On the whole, however, one can only say that there is not enough information upon which to base any rationalisation.

For the CCO, meanwhile, the outbreak of the revolt presented a prime opportunity to launch its armed struggle while the Sarawak government was distracted by events in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions. Had the TNKU warned the communists of their intentions and collaborated with its preparations, it is possible that Sarawak might have been faced with two separate armed rebellions at once. As it was, there was a small window of time, before the Sarawak police were fully mobilised and British troops were despatched from Singapore, when the CCO may have been able to seize the opening created by the insurrection, had it chosen to do so. However, having had no time to train its cadres and no knowledge of the

272 Bolkiah, Remember, Remember…, p. 45.
TNKU’s plans, the CCO was so far from being in a position to begin its armed struggle that many leaders were forced to flee to Kalimantan simply to avoid arrest, as was previously mentioned.

For the SUPP, the Brunei Rebellion was a defining moment. The party came so close to being implicated in it, merely by virtue of its UN delegation travelling with Azahari when it began, that one wonders if Tahir Hassan may have missed his flight deliberately. The consequences for the SUPP if they had been so implicated would have been dire: at worst, the party could have been banned and its leaders, both moderate and communist, arrested, which would have removed all legitimate opposition to the Malaysia concept in Sarawak. The SUPP suffered even without this implication, as noted previously, with its CCO-connected members being arrested or fleeing to Kalimantan and its moderate and native members choosing to leave the party, partly because of its links to the CCO and partly because of its association with the PRB. Having said that, this forced purge of the SUPP benefitted the party in the future by removing those at the extreme left end of the political spectrum and those who were not fully committed to its aims, which enabled the SUPP to dissociate itself from the CCO and seek support elsewhere. Partly as a result, the SUPP had become a major part of Sarawak’s state government by 1970.

The TNKU’s absence from most of North Borneo requires some explanation, since the disparity between the incidence of events there and elsewhere is glaring. The primary reason for this is that most of the TNKU’s support came from Brunei Malays and Kedayans, and the populations of these communities in North Borneo were quite small; as noted in Chapter VI, these groups were largely located in areas contiguous to Brunei. Other communities in North Borneo were not particularly keen to return to the sovereignty of the Brunei sultans, making the PRB’s scheme of a Brunei-led northern Borneo federation especially unattractive, however nominal the role of the sultan might be. The same effect is noticeable in Sarawak as well, with incidents only occurring in Limbang and areas of the Fourth Division close to Brunei. The failure of the TNKU to make any move in Lawas might also be partly attributed to the small support base the Tentera had in the district.
The key role that the revolt played in promoting the advantages of the Malaysia concept to the peoples of Sarawak and North Borneo needs to be recognised. The rebellion quite clearly demonstrated that the security that Malaysia promised was neither illusory nor unnecessary, especially in light of the involvement of their two closest neighbours, Indonesia and the Philippines. The PRB’s prominence in the anti-Malaysia campaign also did much to discredit that side of the argument completely, as opposition to Malaysia became identified with support for the revolt and its perpetrators; the arrest campaign against the CCO contributed to this effect as well. In addition, Britain’s prompt response to Brunei’s request for assistance showed that it kept its word, so the promises that had been made and the assurances given about the benefits and advantages of Malaysia could be believed and relied upon. Finally, the rebellion was a vivid demonstration of the ill effects that instability and disunity could bring to Sarawak and North Borneo, and Malaysia had been represented as being the very opposite of these things.
Chapter IX: The Aftermath of the Rebellion
The purpose of this chapter is to explore the aftermath of the Brunei Rebellion, starting with efforts to reform the Brunei government in response to the widespread concerns about the performance of the administration that had been exposed by the revolt. The central concern in this endeavour was the restoration of public confidence in the government that was so vital if a complete recovery from the trauma of the rebellion was to be overcome, which was attempted through the recruitment of expatriate officers from Britain and elsewhere, a major review of the functioning of the administration, and high-profile minor works programmes undertaken throughout the Sultanate. The mopping up operations to round up those rebels still on the run once the revolt was over were another major element of this recovery, preventing a recurrence of the rebellion and returning Brunei to its formerly peaceful state.

The question of whether the punishments meted out to those who had rebelled were fair and just is also discussed, the conclusion being that the vast majority of rebels were handled fairly, if leniently; only those held for decades in indefinite detention received unjust treatment. Finally, the international aspects and implications of the revolt are explored, including the effect that it had on the Philippines’ ongoing claim to North Borneo, Indonesia’s attempts to drum up support for the rebels at the United Nations (UN), and the beginnings of Konfrontasi. The main issue discussed, however, is the extent of Indonesia’s involvement with the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU).

**Governance in Brunei During and After the Emergency**

The outbreak of the Rebellion had completely and utterly disrupted the government of Brunei, making the re-establishment of a functional administration an essential element in restoring the Sultanate to normal once it became clear that the TNKU would not be successful. This process began as early as 8 December, when the Mentri Besar activated certain sections of the Public Order Enactment, enabling a curfew to be imposed, the possession and use of firearms and explosives to be prohibited, and persons to be detained under suspicion of acting or intending to act “in any manner prejudicial to the public safety.
or the maintenance of public order”.¹ Two days later, Marsal declared the *Partai Rakyat Brunei* (PRB) to be an unlawful society under the Societies Enactment because it had “been used for purposes incompatible with the peace and order or welfare of the State”, as well as “for purposes at variance with its professed objects”.²

On 12 December, the Sultan promulgated a Proclamation of Emergency under Section 83 of the Constitution, the relevant parts of which were quoted in Chapter III. On the same day, the Emergency Orders, 1962 were issued, under Section 83(3) of the Constitution, which allowed the Sultan to “make any Orders whatsoever which he considers desirable in the public interest”.³ These Orders proscribed a diverse array of items and activities, all of which could be described as directly relating to the act of rebellion; for example, they prohibited the possession of firearms, ammunition, and/or explosives, while the Mentri Besar was given the power to order the detention of any person for up to two years. In addition, the Orders banned the possession of offensive weapons other than firearms, consorting with persons in possession of firearms, ammunition, and/or explosives, and withholding information concerning offences against these Orders. Police and military forces were also given the power to arrest anyone contravening these Orders without a warrant and to search the persons, vehicles, and premises of these individuals for evidence of any offence.⁴

The next major step in this process occurred on 19 December, with the promulgation of the Emergency (Suspension of Constitution) Order, 1962. This Order effectively replaced the Executive and Legislative Councils with an Emergency Council, to comprise the Sultan, four *ex officio* members (the Mentri Besar, State Secretary, Attorney General, and State Financial Officer), the High Commissioner for Brunei, and ten unofficial members to be nominated by the Sultan. The Order dissolved the Legislative Council and vacated all seats on the District

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⁴ TNA, CO 1030/1456, Item 9, The Constitution of the State of Brunei, 1959 (Orders under Section 83(3)), The Emergency Orders, 1962, 12 December, 1962, Orders 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, & 22.
Councils, while suspending several enactments and orders pertaining to the functioning of the Legislative and District Councils.\(^5\)

The issuance of this Order caused some controversy in government circles, with High Commissioner Sir Dennis White already having informed the Sultan that this suspension would be neither constitutional nor advisable. The Attorney General, Abdul Aziz Zain, had, at the Sultan’s request, asked his Malayan counterpart, Cecil Sheridan, for assistance in drafting an Order to “suspend the Constitution to get rid of the Elected Members” with “Legislative and Executive Council powers to be exercised by him [the Sultan] with the advice of the Executive Council”.\(^6\) Once an Order was drafted to meet all difficulties envisaged by the two Attorneys-General and John Fiennes, a legal draftsman who was Sheridan’s primary assistant in this matter, Abdul Aziz persuaded the Sultan to sign it into law and a broadcast was made over Radio Brunei to announce that the Constitution had been suspended. This soon made its way into the press, with Reuters reporting on 21 December that “[t]he Sultan of Brunei today took control of all state affairs through a new Emergency Council, after suspending the Sultanate’s three-year-old Constitution”.\(^7\)

White protested in strong terms to the Sultan and the Mentri Besar about this process and the former then concluded that he had been “tricked into signing and demanded an explanation from the Attorney General”, according to the High Commissioner’s account.\(^8\)

Lord Selkirk, Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, then sought guidance from the legal advisor to the United Kingdom (UK) Commission in Singapore, G Starforth Hill, concerning the validity of the Order, who opined that the Sultan’s powers under Section 84 of the Constitution were already quite adequate to meet the current situation. The main issue, in White’s view, was the way that the public had been allowed to think that the entire

\(^5\) TNA, CO 1030/1456, Item 3, The Constitution of the State of Brunei, 1959 (Order under Section 83(3)), The Emergency (Suspension of Constitution) Order, 1962, Sections 2 & 3, Section 1, First Schedule & Second Schedule.

\(^6\) TNA, CO 1030/1456, Item 6, Letter to the Attorney General, Federation of Malaya from the Attorney General, Brunei, 14 December, 1962, para. 2; Item 9, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/C/65/59, 18 January, 1963, para. 1.


\(^8\) TNA, CO 1030/1456, Item 9, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/C/65/59, 18 January, 1963, para. 3.
Constitution had been suspended when, in fact, only those parts concerning the role of the elected members of the Legislative Council were affected; a press release was later issued to correct this impression. The primary outcome of the affair was the return of Abdul Aziz to Malaya, at the express request of the Sultan.9

The Emergency Council itself had been created, as a government spokesman had remarked, “because the State affairs had come to a standstill following the outlawing of the Party Ra’ayat”.10 Its primary roles were to set government policy and, as already stated, to act temporarily in place of both the Executive and Legislative Councils. Though there is little information available specifically about the Council’s achievements and PM Linton of Brunei Shell commented shortly after its establishment that “members have not been named and meetings are unlikely in the immediate future”, the Council was certainly active.11 Angus MacKintosh, White’s successor, stated in a telegram to the Colonial Office (CO) that the Emergency Executive Council had decided at the end of March to delay the construction of a new Police Headquarters in Brunei Town, while the progress made on the Malaysia negotiations during the first half of 1963 implies that the Council was, at the very least, formally involved.12

The day-to-day role of governing the country was delegated to the Emergency Executive Committee, under the leadership of the Mentri Besar and comprising PH Meadows, Osman Bidin, George Newn Ah Foott, Pengiran Abu Bakar Pengiran Omar, and Ian Glass, the Emergency Executive Officer. Lord Selkirk described the members of this committee as “persons of authority and drive who would command respect throughout Brunei”, while Linton commented that the aim appeared to be to “build up Marsal the Mentri Besar but not

9 TNA, CO 1030/1456, Item 9, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/C/65/59, 18 January, 1963, paras. 4-5 & 8; DO 187/33, Item 142, “Suspension of the Brunei Constitution”, Memorandum by G Starforth Hill, 21 December, 1962, para. 6; The Sarawak Tribune, “Suspension of Constitution: Amplification”, 14 January, 1963, p. 3. Section 84(2) stated that “nothing in this Constitution shall be deemed to derogate from the prerogative powers and jurisdiction of the Sultan and, for the avoidance of doubt, it is declared that the Sultan retains the power to proclaim a further Part or further Parts of the law of the Constitution as to him from time to time may seem expedient”. CO 1030/1457, Item 6, The Constitution of the State of Brunei, 1959, p. 197, Part XI, Section 84(2), p. 200.
12 TNA, CO 1030/1468, Item 221, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 83, 9 April, 1963, para. 1.
the rest of the ‘old gang’. More pertinently, Linton’s observation was that the committee was actually a “front” for White and Meadows, who were “really running the State”. Formally, Meadows described the Committee as the instrument by which the Deputy High Commissioner was enabled to advise, reorganise, and set into motion those measures that were necessary to revivify the administration and ensure co-operation and co-ordination between the Civil Administration and the Security Forces.

Meadows, formerly Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office in Singapore, had been appointed Deputy High Commissioner in order to “assist as may be required in [the] rehabilitation and restoration of morale in Brunei” and, more basically, to coax the government into moving again. After his arrival in the Sultanate on 18 December, he quickly assessed what needed to be done to improve the functioning of the administration and was soon implementing the necessary changes and programmes. MacKintosh later provided a good summary of his role and progress:

Until recently [the] pressure of emergency enabled Meadows to galvanise [the] Brunei Government into [a] sense of urgency and effective action and he has done a first rate job. But even so he required [the] backing of his position as Deputy High Commissioner and had to do a good deal of bulldozing. There is now a danger of Brunei slipping back into [its] old lethargy and although bulldozing is therefore more necessary than ever, it is increasingly resented and may become counter productive.

This prediction proved accurate, with MacKintosh later writing to a colleague in Singapore:

“By the time Meadows left, the Mentri Besar was in a mood to oppose any suggestion [made] by the former, whatever its merits”.

The dissolution of the Executive, Legislative, and District Councils was, as MacKintosh noted,

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13 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 491, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 369, 18 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1466, Item 34, Message to the CO from PM Linton (BSP), 28 December, 1962, para. l(b); The Borneo Bulletin, “To Get Things Running”, 29 December, 1962, p. 2.
14 TNA, CO 1030/1466, Item 34, Message to the CO from PM Linton (BSP), 28 December, 1962, para. l(b).
16 TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 355, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 60, 13 December, 1962, para. 1.
18 TNA, CO 1030/1469, Item 405, Letter to RGA Hetherington-Smith, Phoenix Park from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/C/6/60, 1 July, 1963, para. 2.
always regarded as temporary, and immediate consideration was given to [the] restoration of constitutional government, as soon as circumstances permitted, through [the] revocation of [the] Suspension Order and [the] reconstitution of [the] Executive and Legislative Councils.19

The Emergency (Suspension of Constitution) Order, 1962 was repealed on 22 July and, on the same day, the Constitution (Amendment) Proclamation, 1963 came into force, having been issued on 13 May. This proclamation reconstituted the Executive and Legislative Councils, with the former to have 11 members, six of whom would be ex officio and four selected by the Sultan from the Legislative Council, while the Sultan would be chairman.

The primary difference between the old and new Executive Councils was the exclusion of the two wazirs and the inclusion of the Deputy Mentri Besar, Pengiran Ali Pengiran Mohd. Daud. The Legislative Council would have 35 members, six ex officio, ten official, and 19 unofficial members nominated by the Sultan “representing [the] widest possible range of people, interests, areas, etc. in the state”; preparations were being made for elections as soon as possible and the intention was that, when they were held, candidates would be directly elected to the Council.20

Complementing the temporary legal structure created in the wake of the rebellion was the effort to re-build and re-shape the government of Brunei itself, a task of some magnitude in light of the dysfunction that had been one of the main causes of the revolt. The process essentially began when the Sultan and his officials were able to re-enter the Secretariat building on 10 December, TNKU and British activity having prevented them from doing so any earlier. Several factors, including the imposition of a curfew, the need to use the Secretariat to house Headquarters (HQ) 99 Brigade, and, most importantly, the involvement of many public servants in the revolt, delayed the resumption of normal governance, while

19 TNA, CO 1030/1456, Item 28, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 142, 21 May, 1963, para. 4.
the shock and fear still prevalent in the immediate aftermath and in the weeks following the rebellion also played a prominent part.\textsuperscript{21}

Meadows was not the only officer added to the Brunei government from CO and private resources, with the need for a Deputy Commissioner of Police, a Deputy Head of Special Branch, someone of Superintendent or greater rank to oversee the Belait Police District, and, as already noted, a new Attorney General identified. The Special Branch position was filled by an officer of the Hong Kong Special Branch for two months, who was described by HP Hall, a visiting CO official, as “first class”.\textsuperscript{22} By contrast, Deputy Commissioner of Police JRH Burns of the Royal Federation of Malaya Police (RFMP), who had taken the position in the Belait District, had been given instructions by his superior officer in Kuala Lumpur that he could not disclose to Outram, presumably to report on events in Brunei, and, one infers, returned to Malaya early as a result. Selkirk also despatched Lawrie Pumphrey, a member of his staff in Singapore, as his personal representative to the Sultan and as intelligence co-ordinator throughout northern Borneo. Finally, White’s aide-de-camp, Parks, had been severely shaken by his experience during the rebellion and was replaced on a temporary basis by a Colonel Turner.\textsuperscript{23}

A delicate approach was required with this reinforcement programme, however, as the High Commission could only absorb so many additional staff before it became bloated and, more importantly, the autonomy of the Brunei government had to be respected as much as possible. As a result, many of those employed were engaged directly by the administration, which, in turn, made attracting suitably qualified individuals especially difficult, in light of the situation in the Sultanate at the time and the deleterious effect that the rebellion had inevitably had on the government’s reputation. The senior members of the administration


\textsuperscript{22} TNA, CO 1030/1466, Item 29, Letter to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from HP Hall (CO), 24 December, 1962, para. 5; CO 1030/1073, Item 434, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 66, 15 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; CO 1030/1075, Item 587, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Transcript of Original (Document 567), 13 December, 1962, para. 4.

had a decided preference for British staff, which was undoubtedly a reflection of the
difficulties that had previously been encountered with the Malayan officers.24

In the meantime, White had offered to resign as High Commissioner on the grounds that
he had “underestimated both the gravity and the imminence of the threat to the security of
the State, and had been inclined to accept Azahari’s assurances that he intended to employ
Constitutional methods to attain his ends”.25 He had, in any case, originally accepted his
commission on the understanding that he would retire after three years instead of the
customary five and, additionally, before the rebellion, had concluded that a tougher line
needed to be taken with the Sultan in order to encourage the latter to make a decision on the
future of his state, a role for which White believed himself unsuitable. Selkirk did not oppose
White’s resignation, though he was keen to ensure that his departure was not blamed on a
disagreement with either the Sultan or the Secretary of State. When his retirement was
publicly announced, health reasons were stated to be the cause of his decision.26

The functioning of the government remained less than smooth, however, with numerous
reports in The Borneo Bulletin providing a useful commentary of this. At the end of
December, for example, a regular columnist wrote of the problems that continued to plague
the Medical Department, while the newspaper reported on the refusal of teachers from
Singapore and Malaya to work in Brunei as a result of the rebellion, which led the
government to offer positions to recent school graduates. Civil servants, meanwhile, were
disgruntled because the Public Service Commission, as had happened before the revolt,
ignored their advice concerning promotions on merit, as well as by the fact that a much-
needed re-organisation of the entire public service had not yet been undertaken. In addition,
the sudden denudation of staff caused by the detention of such a large number of people

24 TNA, CO 1030/1466, Item 52, Letter to WJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/62(II), 5
January, 1963, para. 6; CO 1030/1075, Item 587, Letter to WJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei,
Transcript of Original (Document 567), 13 December, 1962, para. 5.
25 TNA, CO 1030/1466, Item 52A, Draft of Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for
Brunei, HCOC/1/59, Despatch Personal No. 29, 31 December, 1962, Enclosure to Letter to WJ Wallace (CO) from the High
Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/C1/59, Undated, Enclosure to Letter to the High Commissioner for Brunei from WJ Wallace
(CO), 17 January, 1963, para. 4.
26 Ibid., paras. 2-3; CO 1030/1450, Item 8, Telegram to the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs from the Commissioner-
General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 4, 5 January, 1963, para. 1; The Borneo Bulletin, “New High Commissioner for
nearly ground the work of many departments to a halt, with many essential services being run by skeleton crews.\(^{27}\)

Meadows’ report on the functioning of the Brunei government, reproduced in Appendix II, analysed the situation before the revolt and made several recommendations for improvements that could be made immediately, including a crash development programme, which is discussed further below. Another important change was the appointment of new District Officers, who were the government’s primary representatives in the districts and were thus significant figures in re-setting the community’s relationship with the administration. Meadows credited the Brunei, East Sarawak, Labuan Emergency Committee (BESLEC) and District Emergency Committees (DECs), established at the direction of the Director of Operations, General Walter Walker, with improving government efficiency because “Civil and Service officers were able to meet regularly on joint executive bodies to tackle and resolve day to day problems as well as policy matters”.\(^{28}\) Some of Meadows’ long-term recommendations included, briefly, the re-organisation of the Public Service Commission, the adoption of all recommendations made in the Divers Report, discussed in Chapter V, the institution of a Development Board to oversee the implementation of both the crash programme and the Development Plan, and the employment of organisation and methods consultants to improve the functioning of the administration.\(^{29}\)

In his report, Meadows also addressed the need for political change:

It is, of course, clear that political problems cannot be solved by administrative methods and that a solution of the above administrative problems without a solution to the central political problems will not bring about the long-term solution of either or lead to a progressive and stable future. In Brunei as elsewhere, the central political problem is the control of power . . . It is considered, therefore, that continuation of the present system would not serve Brunei’s long-term interests. Any modification in the composition and membership of existing Councils, Boards and Authorities would help to demonstrate new intentions on this subject whilst publicly made assurances by H.H. the Sultan of his intention to establish representative Government as soon as possible may help to restore confidence, although cynicism on this score will not easily be dispelled. Political opportunities under the Malaysia scheme of things may also help restore confidence if properly explained and projected. In other words, [a] State election should be held as soon as


\(^{29}\) \textit{Ibid.}, para. 5.
possible and not as late as two years hence. The early formation of a political party will help offset doubts, and would be of particular value if moderates of the Party Rahyat [sic] can be included. Their individual and collective endorsement of Malaysia whilst condemning violence as a means to resolving [sic] political differences will also be very helpful. Such steps should be accompanied by a genuine expression of clemency if a permanent sense of embitterment or even more serious consequences are to be avoided.  

One of the first priorities of the Brunei government once the post-revolt situation had settled somewhat was “to formulate and implement [a] plan of rural and welfare development with fairly free expenditure”, which Selkirk described the Sultan as being “particularly anxious” to begin.  

This programme was directly overseen by the Emergency Executive Committee, who were given “explicit orders to get [the] development programme going on [a] crash basis[,] not tolerating interference or delays from above or below”, a strong indication of how vital it was believed to be to the process of re-building the government’s relationship with its people.  

A relief scheme was also instituted to support needy families, especially in the ulu, with initial cash grants of $5 per adult and $3 per child added to weekly supplies of foodstuffs distributed according to family size at the direction of the DECs. These committees were made up of the District Officer and senior police officer in each district, as well as a representative of the military unit based in that area. Their purpose was to “give the booster to administration and morale that is so necessary”, as Meadows wrote.  

The details of the crash development programme are related in Appendix II, but, to summarise, it began with certain projects selected from the Five-Year Development Plan that could be carried out immediately, namely the construction and improvement of roads and bridle paths in rural areas. In addition, houses would be erected and electricity and water supplies extended to certain kampongs. Meadows, in his report on the Brunei government, recommended that other schemes be added as well, including the visit of teams of officials from the Health, Forestry, Agricultural, and other relevant departments to give aid and

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30 Ibid., para. 6.  
31 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 491, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 369, 18 December, 1962, para. 2.  
32 TNA, CO 1030/1466, Item 34, Message to the CO from PM Linton (BSP), 28 December, 1962, para. I(b).  
assistance of all kinds to even the remotest kampongs. The construction of local roads, culverts, and drains by kampong residents under technical supervision and the competitive bidding for the use of temporary buildings at the Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin School as community centres, information rooms, and clinics were also suggested.34

However, this programme encountered difficulties very early on, primarily a shortage of skilled labour due to 80% of the Public Works Department’s (PWD) workforce having been known to be involved in the revolt and the marked reluctance of overseas workers to remain in Brunei after that upheaval, as well as the floods that badly affected all of northern Borneo in mid-January. Nevertheless, road construction had begun by late January, while $8,500 was allocated to bridle path construction in Belait and the clearing of waterways begun at the end of March. Paths were built between Kampons Lumut and Liang and Kampons Bukit Sawat and Merangking, while a short stretch of the Sungei Teriam was cleared in order to improve access to Simpang Labi. In Tutong, meanwhile, eight bridges had been constructed by May, six along the Kampong Batang Mitus road and two on the Bukit Udal road.35

Allied with these relief and development efforts were the addresses made by the Sultan over Radio Brunei and reported in The Borneo Bulletin and elsewhere on various occasions, which were intended to reassure, encourage, and re-connect the people with their monarch. The first of these, quoted in Chapter VIII, was made at the height of the emergency on the morning of 9 December. The Sultan took to the airwaves again in the afternoon of 15 December in order to highlight the PRB’s culpability for the rebellion:

> Even as the Party Rakyat members were taking their oaths on appointment, swearing loyalty to myself, they were plotting to overthrow my Government and capture power. What lies have they told you my people. [sic] Did they tell you that I was aware of their plot, that I would become Ruler of the neighbouring territories as well as of Brunei; that they would give you money, better houses, higher salaries, or what? Did they tell you that they intended to attack my Palace, attack the houses of


my Government officers, storm my Police Stations, and cause the misery and bloodshed that has befallen?36

The Sultan had also held a general press conference on 14 December, which was attended by around 20 foreign and local correspondents. The majority of his comments were naturally focussed on his experiences during the rebellion, but his main priority was to “show he had never supported the rebels, never hoisted the rebel flag and never been in rebel hands”, as Azahari had been claiming.37 He also stated that he believed that the “great majority” of his people remained loyal to him and his government.38 The Sultan also revealed how he felt about the possibility that the revolt might be successful: “I believed God will protect those who are just and right as God is always on the side of righteousness, and right will always triumph over evil”.39

On 19 December, the Sultan made another address, this time focussing more on the need for the rebels still at large to surrender:

I now appeal to all my people who are loyal but have been misled and forced by the rebels, to surrender themselves quickly and let us together once again work to restore peace in Brunei.
I give you an assurance that if you all surrender yourselves quickly, I shall consider a pardon for you who are sincere and are prepared to repent. I think that by offering you clemency I shall be giving you an opportunity to live a new life.40

He also addressed the subject of volunteering information to the police and security forces:

Give your fullest co-operation to my government in its efforts to restore peace, safety and prosperity in Brunei. In that way you, who love peace and desire Brunei to remain peaceful and prosperous[,] should give information to the lawful authority on those who are supporting the rebellion. Give the information as quickly as you can.
I believe that this is the only [way] by which we can restore peace and safety quickly in this country so that by the will of Allah the livelihood of the people in the entire state will return to normal.41

The Sultan’s annual New Year message repeated the plea for rebels to surrender: “Do they not realise that in their selfishness they are causing the miseries of loneliness and want

36 TNA, CO 1030/1468, Item 243, Text of a Speech by His Highness the Sultan to be broadcast through Radio Brunei on 15th December, 1962, at 1.45 p.m.
40 TNA, CO 1030/1468, Item 243, A message from His Highness the Sultan broadcast by Radio Brunei at 1.30 p.m. on 19th December, 1962.
41 Ibid.
to their women and children. [sic] Do they not realise that they are delaying progress and reform”?

He also encouraged his people to renew their faith in his government:

I call upon you all to listen to Radio Brunei so that you may know and understand what my government is doing to relieve suffering, to provide employment, to reorganise education and to strengthen the department of government. I call upon you all to take your troubles and difficulties to the government officers whose duty it is to guide and help you in any way they can... I dedicate myself once again to your service. I pledge myself to work for a peaceful solution to our problems. With God’s blessing we shall succeed in building a happier state.

By the time of Hari Raya, also known as Eid ul Fitr, in late February, the Sultan had turned his attention to giving thanks for the preservation of Brunei:

I am grateful to God for having saved Brunei and all my people from those wicked elements. I am convinced that all my people had been misled by people whose only intention was to destroy our country. I thank God they failed... On this auspicious day let us, while offering our gratitude to God[,] also remember the magnificent contribution made by our allies and friends, the security forces, the British troops, police and others who have come immediately to help us all in Brunei when we were facing the dangers of the rebellion. We can always repay our debt in gold but for acts of kindness we shall ever be grateful and it is for us all to show our gratitude in return by giving proof that we, the people of Brunei[,] will not forget their readiness to come to Brunei from distant lands to serve us in order to save us. I wish them all Selamat Hari Raya.

There is some evidence that these attempts to re-engage with the people were successful: the Chinese community, for example, despatched a delegation led by Dato Temenggong Lim Ching Choo to an audience with the Sultan in late December to emphasise its loyalty to both he and his government. Community leaders from Tutong followed suit in the same week, with 22 penghulus and ketua-tua kampong pledging their every effort to the restoration of peace and order in the Sultanate. Belait community leaders, including representatives of the Chinese population, ketua-tua kampong, and heads of government departments, did the same during the Sultan’s first official visit to the district since the rebellion on 26 January, condemning the activities of Azahari and the TNKU and vowing that the community would support government projects. Orang Kaya Setia Haji Abdul Rahim Akim also expressed the people of Temburong’s gratitude to the government for its assistance in alleviating the distress caused by the revolt when the Pengiran Pemancha visited Bangar on a similar visit on 20 February whilst he was acting as Regent. Moreover, the Sultan said in a statement to

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43 Ibid.
44 The Borneo Bulletin, “Malaysia, the safest, most logical road, says Sultan”, 2 March, 1963, p. 11.
the press in early February that he had received over 20,000 letters from his people “pledging [their] loyalty and condemning the revolt very strongly”.\(^{45}\)

On the other hand, the depth of these professions of support and loyalty is somewhat doubtful, with Selkirk telling his Australian diplomatic colleagues late in December that there were yet to be any “signs of popular rallying to the Sultan after the revolt”.\(^{46}\) Equally, the length of time that the remnants of the TNKU remained at large suggests that there were at least some who were disaffected enough with the government to aid the rebels, though other motives were likely primarily responsible for this. There was also little prospect of the discontent and disaffection demonstrated by the rebellion just disappearing, whatever the good impression made by people connected with the government during the revolt and the efforts made to improve governance and re-engage with the community afterwards. On balance, then, the conclusion might be drawn that, at best, the people of Brunei were willing to accept the failure of the revolt and give the Sultan and his advisors another chance to better govern the state.

On a somewhat related matter, the question of whether the Sultan was actually complicit in the rebellion received some anxious attention from British officials in the region in its immediate aftermath. Selkirk, for example, commented on 13 December that “it is difficult to believe that many in Brunei were not aware of [the] plot till so late in the day”, while, five days later, he remarked that “the rebels were convinced the Sultan was on their side”.\(^{47}\) White, meanwhile, formed the view that the Sultan had “had a severe shock (which does not exclude the possibility that he hedged his bets)”, a comment that he expanded upon in his official report on the rebellion for the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

I find it difficult to acquit the Sultan and the ruling clique of some pre-knowledge of what was going on . . . With the widespread Brunei irredentism in respect of their lost territories, it is not beyond possibility that the Sultan himself and his ruling clique have indeed entertained from time to time dreams of restoring Brunei’s

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\(^{46}\) ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 339, 27 December, 1962, para. 1.

\(^{47}\) TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 344, Telegram to the CO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. Brief 62, 13 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1074, Item 491, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 369, 18 December, 1962, para. 6.
sovereignty over the lost areas. Was he tempted? Did he procrastinate and temporise to the last moment, as he does on issues great and small? We know that Azahari had told the Tunku of his plan to reunite the Borneo Territories under the Sultan and then take them into Malaysia. I suspect, in fact I am almost sure, that Azahari discussed this with the Sultan.

Whether or not the Sultan was attracted and had promised to consider the proposal, but thought he had more time to procrastinate than he had, in fact, got, I have little doubt that the rebels thought the Sultan was with them.\textsuperscript{48}

This latter assertion was corroborated during interrogation by an unnamed rebel:

> A captured TNKU leader later stated that the Sultan knew of the impending insurrection and was prepared to sign a proclamation of independence, provided that the revolution was successful and that he was to be Head of State of the three territories.\textsuperscript{49}

There is additional evidence in the Australian National Archives that is suggestive only, with around two lines redacted to obscure what one can only surmise is a sentence about the Sultan’s knowledge regarding the intentions of the TNKU:

> (Later in the day I had an interesting talk with Mr. Bradbury of the Education Department who said some years ago he had known the Sultan personally . . . He remarked also that the Sultan had grown increasingly out of touch with his people. [Redacted] The Mentri Besar, Marsal bin Maun[,] is said to have been similarly implicated.)\textsuperscript{50}

Without being able to read the expunged sentence, however, it is necessary to emphasise that this is merely an assumption and mentioned solely to demonstrate that White and Selkirk may not have been the only ones who suspected the Sultan of having, at the very least, foreknowledge of the revolt.

There is plenty of evidence on the other side of the question, however, including Selkirk’s account of a conversation with the Sultan on 10 December: “He left me in no doubt of his contempt for Azahari and all he stands for, root and branch, and was delighted to hear that we had withdrawn his [Azahari’s] passport, and [that] the United States w[ould] probably refuse him a visa to enter their territory”.\textsuperscript{51} White’s immediate assessment of the situation upon his return to Brunei was also more sympathetic than his later views: “I am beginning to feel convinced that the Sultan was as much taken by surprise by the revolt as we were. The

\textsuperscript{48} TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 565, Telegram to the CO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 6 Saving, 18 December, 1962, para. 8; CO 1030/1076, Item 6, Letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/59, Despatch Personal No. 25, 20 December, 1962, para. 29.

\textsuperscript{49} TNA, DO 169/561, Item 1, Report on Brunei 1959 to June 1965, August 1966, para. 68.

\textsuperscript{50} ANA, File 3030/21, Part 3, Notes on Visit to Brunei by Second Secretary (Consular Affairs), Enclosure to Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Acting Commissioner, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 1291, 6 June, 1963, para. 4.

\textsuperscript{51} TNA, CO 1030/1069, Item 237, Telegram to the Ambassador to the Philippines from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 65, 11 December, 1962, para. 3.
Palace party had given the Police various items of information on arms and uniforms, but they themselves seem to have had no idea of the scale”. The Brunei government’s own defence of the Sultan, when British Member of Parliament Arthur Bottomley later accused him of complicity with the TNKU in the House of Commons, was:

There is no doubt that the rebellion in Brunei would have been successful and the help of British troops would not have been needed nor would they have been requested by His Highness to come to Brunei if what had been said by the British member of parliament were true. The historian Anthony Stockwell has drawn his own conclusions on this question:

Holed up in the istana on the morning of 8 December, [Sultan] Omar Ali may have been unsure which course to take, but, whether his decision not to support the rebellion was determined by the presence in the istana of the British-led police contingent or whether Selkirk’s ‘visit to him the day before the revolt just swung him against it’ [as the Commissioner-General later wrote], it is certain that his highness [sic] had no natural affinity with either the PRB or the TNKU. We have already seen how he manipulated constitutional change to contain populist politicians and obstruct democratization. Moreover, just as the Malay rulers had been affronted by Dato Onn’s successful bid to attach them to the mass campaign against Britain’s Malayan Union policy in 1946, so the Sultan of Brunei would have regarded the TNKU’s plan to take him into ‘protective custody’ as lèse majesté, if not treason. Indeed, while his highness subsequently showed clemency towards those rebels who repented, those who did not were detained without trial for long periods.

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The Long Aftermath of the Rebellion

The re-capture of the main towns of Brunei and Sarawak recounted in Chapter VIII did not, of course, automatically bring the rebellion to an end: hundreds of rebels remained at large and it was feared that the TNKU might regroup and make another, more successful attempt to topple the Sultan’s government. The months following the failure of the revolt, therefore, saw a concerted campaign by British forces and the police forces of both Brunei and Sarawak to detain those rebels who had managed to escape capture. This was, in many ways, a simple operation, merely apprehending people who were on the run, many of them in an unfamiliar and extremely hostile environment. Equally, however, there were also complicating factors, primarily the threat posed by Indonesia and its campaign against the formation of Malaysia.

52 TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 587, Letter to WJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Transcript of Original (Document 567), 13 December, 1962, para. 2.
54 Stockwell, op. cit., p. 804.
The precise moment when suppressing the rebellion turned into dealing with its aftermath is difficult to pinpoint, though the re-capture of Limbang is usually cited as such in the literature. The arrival of M Company, 42 Commando, Royal Marines (RM) at Bangar may, however, be a more appropriate event by which to denote the end of the rebellion proper, since it was the last of the larger towns to be recaptured by British forces, though the absence of TNKU opposition to their entry makes it appear less significant than it really was, when compared to the courageous and bloody landing at Limbang. Howsoever that may be, the transition from major operations such as these to the months-long mopping up phase demonstrated that normality had started to return to those parts of northern Borneo most affected by the rebellion and that the TNKU had virtually ceased to be a threat to the peace and tranquility of Brunei and Sarawak.

The overall strategy for the British forces in their pursuit of the rebels was described in Far East Command’s (FEC) official report on the Brunei Rebellion thus:

> It was now necessary to give the rebels no respite but to split them up into smaller groups and mop them up. The obvious tactics were to block all escape routes into the interior before the rebels could fade into the jungle and start a long campaign on the Malayan pattern.\(^5^5\)

Two vital elements in this strategy were the helicopters of HMS *Albion* and 66 Squadron, Royal Air Force (RAF), which “conferred…increased tactical mobility and enhanced logistic support”, and Harrisson’s Force, which provided local knowledge of the *ulu*, manned many of the stopping points, and served as an early warning system in the event of Indonesian infiltration.\(^5^6\)

Major-General Walter Walker, Commander of the 17th Gurkha Infantry Division, was appointed Director of Military Operations and Commander, British Forces in Borneo (COMBRITBOR) on 15 December, replacing Brigadier Glennie in the latter role because Glennie was required to return to his position with Far East Land Forces (FARELF) in Singapore. Walker had been selected because of his experience with similar operations during the Malayan Emergency, as well as the need for a high-ranking officer to liaise with

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\(^5^6\) Ibid., paras. 2 & 8.
the two Governors and the High Commissioner, the co-ordination of the campaign with the civil administrations being the primary role of the Director of Operations. Walker had been in a remote area of Nepal when the revolt began and had had quite a journey to make before he could even get back to Singapore, so he did not arrive in Brunei until 19 December.\textsuperscript{57}

The forum for this necessary governmental co-operation was initially known as the State War Executive Council, comprising the High Commissioner or Governor of the territory where the meeting was held as chairman, COMBRITBOR, political and police representatives from each of the three territories, the Director of Intelligence and colleagues, and the psychological warfare advisor. The name of the Council was later changed to the Borneo Security Council (BOSC) to avoid the possibly embarrassing international implications of the original title. The role of the BOSC was to ensure that “the collection of Intelligence, joint planning and the relevant operational action” were “effected with the utmost speed”.\textsuperscript{58}

The first meeting of the Council was held on 13 December, the achievements of which were later summarised in FEC’s official report:

> The meeting considered the probable future intentions of rebel forces and many co-ordinating arrangements were made for the first time between the three territories. In particular the passing of information was organised. A complete assessment of escape routes available to the rebels was made[,] together with an assessment of the various Tribes in between Brunei and Sarawak who would be likely to assist [sic] in blocking these routes. The expert knowledge and experience of the High Commissioner [for] Brunei was invaluable in making these assessments. Further assessments of local resources, boats, equipment, jungle landing[sic] strips, etc. were made.\textsuperscript{59}

A second meeting of the Council was held at Labuan on 16 December and a third on the 19\textsuperscript{th}, with Walker in attendance.\textsuperscript{60}

Operating under the aegis of the BOSC was the Borneo Operations Committee (BOC), which was responsible for “the assessments of intelligence, the planning of operations


\textsuperscript{58} TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 165, “Command Structure: Borneo Territories Operations”, Annex to Memorandum to the CINCFE from the Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, CINCFE(62)13, 22 December, 1962, paras. 1–3.


including psychological warfare, and the co-ordination and allocation of forces”. The Director of Operations chaired this committee, with representatives of the Army and/or the RM, RAF, Royal Navy (RN), and the police forces of the three territories, the Director of Intelligence, and the psychological warfare advisor making up the regular membership; others would be added as necessary. FEC’s official report mentioned the existence of similar committees at District level, called District Executive Committees, which, from the description given, appear to be the District Emergency Committees mentioned above.

The psychological warfare advisor referred to above was Wing Commander AF Derry, who arrived in Brunei on 11 December with his colleague, a Flight Lieutenant loaned by the Far East Air Force (FEAF), bringing with them a Twin Pioneer voice aircraft that was later joined by four Land Rovers equipped with loudspeakers in order to carry out their work. Initially, their role was solely to encourage the surrender of rebels with their weapons and included appeals to release hostages unharmed, reiterations of the Sultan’s radio broadcasts, and offers of clemency to those who had been misled or coerced by the TNKU. By January, their goals had expanded to include fomenting dissent amongst the rebels, persuading the public to provide information to the authorities, and assisting the Government Information Services to restore confidence in the administration.

The psychological operations team also produced leaflets and pamphlets for distribution amongst the populace, all but the first batch of which were printed using the machinery of the Brunei Press in Kuala Belait and the Light Press in Brunei Town. These documents covered similar subjects to those broadcast by the voice aircraft and were distributed by air and by hand by the operators of the loudspeaker vehicles, to the tune of 712,500 leaflets in December and January alone. The recordings for the voice aircraft and loudspeaker vehicles were produced in Brunei as well, using the facilities of Radio Brunei. The subjects for these
tapes were similar to those of the leaflets, but also included calls for support for the Sultan, appeals for co-operation with the government, and requests for rebels to return to their homes. The loudspeaker vehicles, initially just the Land Rovers despatched from Singapore but later also including boats, commenced operations on 15 December throughout Brunei and in the Limbang District, manned by operators from the Queen’s Royal Irish Hussars (QRIH), 42 Commando, RM, and 1st Battalion, 2nd King Edward VII’s Own Gurkha Rifles (1/2GR). Radio was also used, for the purpose of “informing the public of rewards for information about TNKU activities, for offsetting and rebutting rumours and encouraging the rebels to surrender”, while press releases were also issued to local media to promote the activities of the government and security forces.64

The content of these recordings, live broadcasts, and documents, generally speaking, addressed the following subjects:

(a) Exploitation of the Security Forces’ successes designed to show the futility of continuing the armed struggle in order to encourage surrender.
(b) Ensuring that the TNKU were aware:-
   (i) Of [sic] the extent to which the rebellion had failed;
   (ii) of the selfish and unworthy motives of the instigators of the rebellion;
   (iii) that no help from outside would reach them;
   (iv) of how to surrender in safety and how to use safe conduct passes;
   (v) that fair and just treatment could be expected after surrender;
   (vi) that clemency would be offered.65

In mid-January, the psychological operations team planned a concerted publicity campaign for the rewards scheme, which compensated those who provided information on the whereabouts of rebels still at large. It was intended to use all means at its disposal for this campaign, including voice aircraft and leaflet dropping, but the awful weather that caused the floods that affected Brunei and eastern Sarawak at that time grounded the aircraft that would have participated and so the team had to rely on loudspeaker-equipped boats and motor vehicles and the distribution of leaflets by hand in populated areas. In addition, the team was drawn into the flood emergency, with the loudspeaker equipment being used to

support rescue operations, broadcast relevant information to those affected, and publicise those precautions that health authorities thought necessary. The effectiveness of the rewards scheme, meanwhile, was proved early on when $2,000 was paid out in only its first week of operation.66

Another difficulty encountered by the psychological operations team occurred when the amplification equipment on the voice aircraft failed on 15 December and then could not be repaired until the 19th because the necessary parts were unavailable. In addition, of the four aircraft that had initially been used by the team, one was recalled to Singapore for internal security duties there and another crashed in February, meaning that less than one sortie per day could then be conducted due to the scarcity of loudspeaker equipment. An entirely different problem arose from the uncertainty surrounding Brunei’s political future, which prevented the use of pro-Malaysia or pro-independence propaganda that may have helped to persuade people to volunteer information more readily and easily.67

The effectiveness of the psychological operations team’s efforts is difficult to quantify, largely because there was not enough staff to interrogate those who surrendered to discover their reasons for doing so. Nevertheless, FEC’s official report concluded that “not less than half [of] the surrendered personnel were influenced to some degree by psychological warfare operations”68. In addition, the leaflets and other written material produced by the team were known to have been acted upon by the general populace and the reward scheme had paid out over $100,000 in Brunei alone by March 1963.69 Perhaps the best way to assess the effectiveness of psychological operations during this period is to consider the goodwill that flood relief efforts garnered for the security forces and the wealth of information that was

offered on the location of TNKU leaders and their associates, both of which will be discussed further below.

The mopping up operation itself was, as already noted, focussed on the apprehension of those members of the TNKU and PRB still at large in the aftermath of the rebellion, some of whom were thought to have fled into the *ulu* whilst others had sought refuge in the kamponds. FEC’s official report of its operations in northern Borneo summarised the nature of these activities in the initial stages:

> While Harrisson’s Force and other stops kept the ring, energetic pursuit operations were carried out by all units making full use of the mobility and logistic support of helicopters and SRT [Short Range Transport] aircraft . . . It is now apparent that many escaped rebels were turned back or diverted by these various Stops and that their freedom of movement was seriously curtailed. Commander 99 Brigade quickly appreciated, and it has since been proved, that the general tendency was for any rebels actively continuing to fight to move eastward into the Limbang/Temburong area.\(^70\)

Until 20 December, the operation was mostly focussed on clearing areas around towns that had been held by the TNKU. The Bekenu region, for example, saw 333 rebels and large numbers of shotguns captured by 17 December, by which point the area was thought to be substantially free of fugitive TNKU. By contrast, the Kuala Belait/Seria locale was described as “heavily infested by rebels” and a major effort was required to dislodge them, encompassing cordon and search operations and extensive patrolling on land and in the air.\(^71\)

The Tutong and Brunei-Muara Districts came under the purview of 1/2GR, who conducted numerous operations at short notice in response to Special Branch intelligence, including a night ambush on seven longboats on the Sungei Tutong. Operations in Temburong and Limbang were more complicated, requiring control to be established over three rivers, the Pandaruan, Temburong, and Batu Apoi, as well as bases to be established in nearby kamponds and a 24-hour curfew to be placed on river movements. Kampong Batang Duri, thought to be the local rebel headquarters, was occupied by F Troop, 145 (Maiwand) Commando Battery, Royal Artillery (RA) on 20 December to enhance 42 Commando’s domination of the area with heavier artillery. Though operations in the region were far from


complete, by the same date, 264 rebels had been captured, as well as many weapons, including a Bren machine gun and 15 rifles.\textsuperscript{72}

FEC despatched a report to London early on 18 December that described the situation in Brunei and contiguous areas of Sarawak:

Many reports of minor contact with rebels throughout area of operations. There is evidence of rebel move south from Labu and southwards along Tutong and Temurong [sic] rivers. Band of rebels and associates estimated [at] 1500 being rounded up south of Miri. Police and troops helped by helicopters are carrying out concentrated search for arms and suspects in general areas [of] Bekenu, Loak Bay, Tempuan Telisa and Seria. One sentry at Seria wounded by sniper. Prisoners include a local commander, many weapons recovered and some documents captured. There are reports of low rebel morale and that both rebels and local population in some areas are very short of food.\textsuperscript{73}

FARELF provided further details a few hours later, including a comment that the 1,500 TNKU members and associates south of Miri were “NOT fighting rebels” who were expected to surrender shortly.\textsuperscript{74} 1/2GR had captured 24 suspected rebels near Muara and searched all kampongs close to Tutong, detaining ten people and seizing 90 shotguns. 42 Commando were reported to be in contact with a group of 140 rebels four miles south of Bangar, while 11 people had been apprehended in the Labu area. A food shortage in some areas necessitated the airdropping of supplies to assist the local population, while the Joint Intelligence Committee (Far East) (JICFE) in Singapore concluded that there were “indications that the hard core [of the TNKU] (between 250-500) is attempting to extricate itself from the present area of operations”, but whether it intended to re-group in Indonesia or resume hostilities in the ulu was not clear.\textsuperscript{75}

The Sarawak Tribune, meanwhile, reported from Limbang that the situation was quiet and that a man had surrendered to a helicopter crew on 16 December. In Miri, the PWD had been forced to build two kajang huts each capable of holding 80 people because the gaol was too small to hold all the rebels who had been captured in the area; a total of 217 people, both TNKU and those arrested under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance, were

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., paras. 17-8.

\textsuperscript{73} TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 485, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 94, 18 December, 1962, para. 3.

\textsuperscript{74} TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 145, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS/16, 18 December, 1962, para. First (A).

\textsuperscript{75} TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 122, Telegram to the Cabinet Office, the British Defence Liaison Staff, Canberra, and the British Defence Liaison Staff, Wellington from the CINCFE, JICFE 188, 18 December, 1962, para. 2; Item 145, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS/16, 18 December, 1962, paras. Second (B) & (C); CO 1030/1073, Item 482, Ministry of Defence Situation Report No. 7 (Situation as at 1200 hours, 18\textsuperscript{th} December 1962), 18 December, 1962, para. 2.
detained in the town at the time. Coastal towns and *ulu* areas of the First and Second Divisions of Sarawak were being patrolled by troops from 40 Commando and 12 Battery, 20th Regiment, RA, with reports of armed men near Tebedu, a small kampong on the Indonesian border, leading to two patrols being despatched posthaste to investigate without result. On 19 December, the newspaper announced the capture or surrender of a further 41 rebels in the Limbang area and more than 40 around Sibuti, including, it was believed, some TNKU leaders.76

On 19 December, FEC reported that several deserted camps had been discovered, one of which was thought to have been a training site. A party of 13 TNKU had also surrendered in an unspecified location, with a further 20 rebels in the area described as being willing to surrender, which was thought to be an indication of low morale amongst the fugitives. Some of the weapons recently captured included Greener guns and tear gas grenades that had been taken from the police during the rebellion. At Limbang, four people were observed breaching the curfew and were fired upon by security forces stationed at the wireless tower; one person was believed to have been wounded during this contact. Further upriver, at Danau, a patrol of Sarawak Rangers engaged in a ten-minute firefight with rebels sheltering in an isolated longhouse during which one person was fatally shot, two wounded, and 13 arrested. Reuters also reported that six police, described as the last hostages held by the TNKU, had been released without opposition on the same day from a hut in Badas, near Kuala Belait, by a group of Iban volunteers led by Alastair Kerr-Lindsay.77

The southward movement of the rebels caused the focus to shift to the establishment of cut off points on all possible escape routes, including one at a disused airstrip near the junction of the Sungei Limbang and Sungei Medamit manned by a mixed group named Pug Force, which comprised one company from 40 Commando, platoons from 1/2GR and the

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Sarawak Rangers, and a unit from the Special Boat Section (SBS). FARELF reported on 20 December that 1st Green Jackets (1GJ) had carried out a cordon and search operation at Loak Bay near Miri that resulted in the arrest of a known TNKU leader, while 1st Battalion, Queen’s Own Highlanders (1QOH) captured three rebels at Kuala Belait and 1/2GR rounded up several suspects in its area of responsibility, Brunei-Muara and Tutong. Kuching, meanwhile, informed London that eleven young Chinese had crossed into Kalimantan from the Bau area on 17 December and were believed to be seeking assistance from the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI).78

By 21 December, it was clear that the TNKU had ceased to exist as an operational unit; as FEC’s official report observed, there was “no cohesion, no direction and certainly no offensive spirit”.79 In fact, Reuters had reported on 20 December that Force HQ in Brunei Town had announced that “operations in Brunei are now entering the final phase. Provided there are no new developments the roundup of the majority of the rebel forces in Brunei and Sarawak should be completed in the next two days”.80 As a result of these developments, security force activities until the end of the year consisted of cordon and search operations, harassment of the rebels through patrolling, the establishment of bases in the kampongs to gain the confidence of the locals, and the consolidation of the strategy to block all escape routes into Indonesia.81

Three large-scale cordon and search operations took place during this period in Kuala Belait, Seria, and Kampong Ayer, which saw each searched for rebels with the latter, in conjunction with other actions taken elsewhere in Brunei on the same day, resulting in the arrest of 70 people and the recovery of 162 shotguns. D Company, 1/2GR marched from Lamunin to Danau and then on to Nanga Medamit at the junction of the Sungei Limbang and Sungei Medamit, from whence it conducted harassment operations. A Company, 40

78 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 511, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE. SEACOS 97, 20 December, 1962, para. 2; DEFE 11/391, Item 137E, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS 9, 20 December, 1962, para. Second; CO 1030/1074, Item 508, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 304, 20 December, 1962, para. 1.
Commando was so successful in similar endeavours around the Sungei Limbang that, by the end of December, the area was declared clear of overt TNKU activity. Finally, the remaining measures to establish an outer circle, that is, to cut off all routes into Kalimantan, were taken, with 40 Commando despatched to Lawas, elements of the Sarawak Rangers and Harrisson’s Force sent to Long Semado and Long Lutok, and a platoon of 1/2GR arriving at Long Seridan. FEC’s official report described the success of this outer circle operation thus:

No signs of rebels escaping to Indonesia or setting up bases from which to conduct guerilla [sic] warfare were found. The local population regained their confidence and it was considered by the end of the year that a viable screen had been established.82

As was mentioned in Chapter VIII, western Sarawak was only peripherally involved in the rebellion itself, but its proximity to and the ease of access from Indonesia, as well as the threat posed by the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO), ensured that the security forces spent plenty of time there. British forces deployed to the area on 21 December comprised two minesweepers at Lundu and Sibu respectively, HQ 3 Commando Brigade and HQ, B, and S Companies of 40 Commando, 12 (Minden) Battery, 20 Regiment, RA, and one Auster reconnaissance aircraft. These units engaged in regular patrols in border areas from bases at Bau, Serian, Simanggang, Sibu, and Belaga, with some groups transported to their patrol areas by the HMS Woolaston on its journey far up the Sungei Rejang. A series of major cordon and search operations in a large area between the 17th and 19th Miles on the Serian Road as well as in Tundong, near Bau, from 4 to 14 January, 1963 netted several suspected CCO members and a quantity of communist literature.83

In North Borneo, Chisel Force was placed under the command of COMBRITBOR on 5 January, though the rebellion had barely touched the territory. When 1GJ was tasked to replace the company that had been employed on Operation Chisel before the revolt began, it was decided that the Green Jackets should assume responsibility for the entirety of North Borneo under the aegis of 99 Gurkha Infantry Brigade Group. Later, 1GJ also took command

of the company based at Lawas in order to control the Merapok area, which was one of the most accessible routes into Kalimantan. These troops in North Borneo continued to patrol coastal areas in order to deal with the activities of Philippine pirates, while also blocking all known routes into Indonesia.\textsuperscript{84}

Early on 21 December, FEC informed London that a previous report of a sighting of 200 TNKU in the Bau area had been investigated by 40 Commando and found to be false. On the same day, there were estimated to be between 100 and 200 rebels around Niah, with six killed and around 200 already having been captured in the area. In the vicinity of Kuala Belait and Tutong, the TNKU was thought to be as many as 300 strong, with 13 killed and 225 already detained. The situation was quieter in the Brunei-Muara District, with three members of the PRB’s Central Committee and a Branch Chairman having been recently detained. By contrast, Temburong was thought to be far more dangerous, with well over 300 rebels still at large, the local population believed to be friendly to the TNKU and the terrain favourable to guerrilla activity. Even so, 29 rebels had been killed and 207 captured in the district up to this point. In Limbang, meanwhile, 26 more TNKU had surrendered or been apprehended, while the situation elsewhere in Sarawak was returning to normal, apart from the arrest the day before of one Malay identified with the PRB in Balingian, near Mukah, who had flown the Brunei flag over his house. In addition, a $1,000 reward was offered for the apprehension of several TNKU leaders from the Bekenu area, including Morni Haji Sukor and Awang Omar Matamin Zaini, who were mentioned in Chapter VIII in connection with the proposed attack on Miri.\textsuperscript{85}

The situation had really started to quieten down by 24 December, when the only incident of interest that could be reported to London was a gunshot that had been fired at a vehicle on the road between Tutong and Seria on the night of the 21\textsuperscript{st}. Contacts with small groups had


\textsuperscript{85} TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 527, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 99, 21 December, 1962, paras. 1-5; Item 546, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 305, 21 December, 1962, para. 1; \textit{The Sarawak Tribune}, “All Quiet”, 21 December, 1962, p. 3; “Reward For Capture Of These Men”, 21 December, 1962, p. 2.
also occurred at Bekenu, Lamunin, Limbang, and Bangar, though no details were provided.

Kuching had more to say:

Information of very doubtful reliability received [from Indonesia] that up to three battalions of troops to be moved from Pontianak to Sanggau for patrol of border area. Unconfirmed report that military commander called down to Pontianak for conference. Limbang all quiet. Search for hard-core rebels from Panderuan [sic] area continues. 599 guns captured or handed in. Return to normal expected to be long slow business. 86

On 26 December, FEC’s assessment was that the TNKU’s resistance in the Limbang/Temburong area was stiffening, citing the fact that many kampongs in southern Temburong were deserted. The tempo of operations had, however, decreased enough for the daily maritime air patrols to be reduced to alternate days, while the surface of the runway at Brunei Airport had deteriorated enough under the sudden pressure of heavy use and large aircraft to require major repairs. FEC also reported total casualty figures up to 25 December of 68 rebels killed and 1,588 captured, of an original estimated 2,250 in the TNKU. Three days later, a rough estimate of rebels still at large put their numbers at 30 in the Fourth Division, over 200 in the Fifth Division of Sarawak, and between 400 and 500 in Brunei. 87

A more detailed report on 27 December described the situation more thoroughly, mentioning two minor sniping incidents in the Miri/Seria area on 24 and 25 December. Information had been received that a sabotage attack on the Miri power station was planned sometime between 23 and 26 December, so special security precautions were taken at that time; in the event, nothing occurred. In Temburong on the night of the 25th, a group of 30 rebels including Yassin Affandy was fired upon but the engine of the pursuers’ vessel failed, allowing them to escape. It was believed that they were moving north in search of food, and RN vessels patrolled the mouth of the Sungei Temburong in Brunei Bay to prevent their egress that way. Tawau was described as quiet, with HMS Barrosa maintaining its patrols in

86 TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 605, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C. 311, 24 December, 1962, para. 1; DEFE 11/391, Item 172, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 109, 24 December, 1962, paras. 3-4.
87 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 176, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 112, 26 December, 1962, paras. 2, 4-5, & 7; CO 1030/1075, Item 618, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 116, 28 December, 1962, para. 1.
the area. Meanwhile, Kuching reported that patrols investigating rumours of troop movements and Indonesians in border areas had found no unusual activity.  

Operations in the 24 hours to 11am on 28 December saw two abandoned encampments located, 21 rebels surrendered, and another 13 detained, including one in Kuala Belait in possession of a considerable number of documents. In Sarawak, the first person of officer rank in Limbang had surrendered, while the Bekenu area was believed to be more or less back to normal, though the location of the hard-core rebels remained unknown. Twenty-seven rebels had been charged in court the previous day and sentenced to three years’ imprisonment, with three others claiming trial. There were reports that elements of the Indonesian Army stationed in an area near the Second Division of Sarawak had been withdrawn to Pontianak in order to undergo a refresher course. The next day, Governor of Sarawak Sir Alexander Waddell announced that the available information on the recent dispositions of the Indonesian Army had been assessed to be normal, while rumours of sizeable reinforcement to the border region had not been confirmed.

*The Borneo Bulletin*, in its weekly edition of 29 December, reported an interesting incident on the Sungei Belait in the early morning of the 26th when a houseboat and a launch were cut adrift from their moorings by people described as armed rebels. Witnesses on nearby vessels said that the perpetrators “warned them not to work for Europeans and that all ‘foreigners’ should get out of Brunei” before severing the moorings of the two boats. Some difficulty was encountered by the owners of the vessels in procuring assistance, since the telephone lines had been cut and the police and all residents were confined indoors by a curfew; by the time they were eventually able to contact the military authorities, the patrol sent to investigate could find no trace of the perpetrators. The two vessels were recovered at sea the next day by Brunei Shell boats, slightly the worse for wear due to wave damage. The

88 TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 612, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 113, 27 December, 1962, paras. 2-5; Item 615, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.316, 27 December, 1962, para. 1.
89 TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 69, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS 3, 28 December, 1962, para. 2; CO 1030/1075, Item 619, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.317, 28 December, 1962, paras. 1-4; Item 626, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.320, 29 December, 1962, para. 2.
primary outcome of the affair appears to have been a general feeling that Kuala Belait was insufficiently protected in comparison to Seria and Brunei Town.\textsuperscript{91}

*The Borneo Bulletin* also reported on a cordon and search operation in Kuala Belait on 27 December, which may have been provoked by the previous night’s disturbance and resulted in the arrest of six suspected rebels. During the course of the day-long search, an armoured car fired on some boats in the Sungei Belait to prevent their use by rebels to escape. In addition, the newspaper carried a small item on the reluctance of the local population to give information on TNKU activity to the Brunei Police and speculated that the general public might be more forthcoming to foreign police. Another article mentioned the arrest of Mohamed Mahmud, one of Azahari’s brothers, by a patrol of 1/2GR on 26 December at a house in Sungei Besar, near the mouth of the Sungei Brunei. The precise sequence of events is not quite clear, but *The Bulletin* did provide some details: “An exchange of fire was heard on Wednesday and reinforcements were rushed to the area to make a house-to-house search. According to residents, Mohamed was in [a] full suit and was wearing a dark coloured tie when he was seized”.\textsuperscript{92}

The situation early in the morning of 30 December was described by FEC as “generally quiet”, though a helicopter from the HMS *Albion* had assisted 40 Commando in the capture of nine suspected rebels travelling on two small high-speed vessels on Brunei Bay.\textsuperscript{93} An associate of a local TNKU leader had surrendered to 1GJ in the Fourth Division in the previous 24 hours, while 40 Commando had detained 21 suspected rebels. Nine people had surrendered to 42 Commando in Temburong and 1QOH had seized six rifles and two shotguns in the past two days in Belait. Police in Merapok, meanwhile, had arrested 14 rebels, six of whom were believed to be non-commissioned officers (NCOs). In Miri, twelve TNKU members pleaded guilty when charged in court, while three others claimed their right to a trial. 1/2GR captured 15 people in Lamunin on 30 December, eight of whom had been

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 631, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 121, 30 December, 1962, para. 1.
on Special Branch’s wanted list. A patrol of 1QOH detained a rebel leader and his father, while 40 Commando arrested three rebels in Kuala Lawas. Rumours floating around of an attack on Tawau early on 1 January led to a company of 1/2GR being placed at two hours’ notice to fly there from Brunei Town, but no such assault materialised.\(^\text{94}\)

A report on the state of Limbang and Miri by Radio Sarawak printed in *The Sarawak Tribune* on 31 December painted a very encouraging picture of both towns. Limbang was described as “nearly back to normal”, with traffic once again moving on the river, virtually all signs of damage removed from the town, and all government services restored to pre-revolt levels.\(^\text{95}\) A group of Home Guards from Kampong Epai had apprehended 80 suspected rebels, amongst whom was a Kedayan leader believed to have played an important role in the attack on Limbang. Miri was “all quiet”, with most Home Guards in the Division stood down, except for part of a group known as the Baram Levies, who were based at Tutoh as part of the outer circle operation.\(^\text{96}\)

New Year’s Eve once again saw the operational area characterised as quiet, with no sightings of bands of rebels of any size reported. It was thought that there were few active rebels still at large in the area between Niah and Tutong who could be dealt with solely through military action, implying that less aggressive means might be more profitable. A report that rebels were moving northwards in the Temburong District was assessed as accurate, with the cause thought to be a need to return to the kampongs for food. In Limbang, operations between the 6\(^{th}\) and 8\(^{th}\) Miles on the Pandaruan Road resulted in the arrest of 71 suspected TNKU. Also detained in connection with investigations into the *Tentera* were 14 individuals in Kuching and Sibu, some of whom were associated with the *Barisan Pemuda Sarawak*.\(^\text{97}\)

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\(^{94}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 2, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS 3, 31 December, 1962, para. Second; DEFE 11/391, Item 201, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 322, 30 December, 1962, para. 2; AIR 20/11540, Item 76, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, London, OPS/2, 1 January, 1963, para. Second.


\(^{96}\) Ibid.

\(^{97}\) TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 77, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS/5, 2 January, 1963, para. First; CO 1030/1489, Item 3, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 1, 1 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 5A, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 1, 1 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 10A, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.4, 3 January, 1963, para. 1; *The Sarawak Tribune*, “14 Arrested In Connection With Tentera [sic] Nasional Kalimantan Utara”, 1 January, 1963, p. 1.
FARELF’s general situation report at 2am on 2 January described the current state of affairs:

No acts of terrorism. Enemy contained at a number of places but revolt in the active stage is now over. Little trouble expected except possible in Limbang and Temburong districts. Estimate not more than 2-3 groups of 20-30 rebels left in these areas. Majority of remaining rebels now believed to have hidden their arms and returned to their kampongs.\(^98\)

A further 29 suspected members of the TNKU had also been detained in the previous 24 hours, with the total number of rebels captured by 1 January estimated at 2,111, and an additional 28 people apprehended injured; 53 were said to have been killed, a lower estimate than that given above, presumably because of differing counting methods.\(^99\)

Later in the morning of the 2\(^{nd}\), Kuching reported the capture of a TNKU leader at Bekenu and the wife of another at Limbang, along with some documents. Two rebels were arrested in the Beraya area, near Miri, two days later, while a group of 11 known to have participated in the seizure of Limbang were also detained. In addition, Kuching reported that investigations were underway into information that 20 rebels, some armed, had been seen in the Bekenu area. Meanwhile, 12 alleged CCO members were arrested during an operation at the 17\(^{th}\) Mile on the Simanggang road and documents seized that showed “the existence of [a] militant Communist organisation prepared to support dissident elements in the event of insurrection”.\(^100\) Of equal concern was a build-up of Indonesian forces near the border with the First and Second Divisions, which was assessed by the Sarawak Government as being evidence of the “preparation for [the] infiltration by ‘volunteers’” that would signal decisive Indonesian intervention in the Borneo territories.\(^101\)

The arrest of two rebels at Limbang and the discovery of three shotguns and 2,000 rounds of ammunition were reported by Kuching on 6 January. In the same telegram, the importance of the build-up of Indonesian forces on the border was downplayed somewhat as something

\(^98\) TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 80, Telegram to the War Office from FARELF, OPS/2, 3 January, 1963, para. First (A).
\(^99\) *Ibid.*, paras. First (B) & Second.
\(^100\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 23, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.9, 5 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 10A, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.4, 3 January, 1963, para. 3; Item 6, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 3, 2 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 20, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.6, 4 January, 1963, paras. 1-2.
\(^101\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 10A, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.4, 3 January, 1963, para. 2.
that could be “considered defensive in character”, though the possibility that it was connected to preparations for the infiltration of volunteers was still being considered.\(^{102}\) Meanwhile, in Singapore, a meeting of the Commissioner-General’s Committee, a high-level liaison body including Lord Selkirk, Admiral Luce, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East (CINCFE), and diplomatic representatives from New Zealand and Australia, heard of concerns that a route into Indonesia from the Fifth Division had not yet been blocked. On the same day, another two TNKU leaders were captured near Miri, having been recognised by local residents and subsequently turned over to the security forces.\(^{103}\)

These latter arrests are most likely those reported in both *The Sarawak Tribune* and *The Borneo Bulletin*, those of Morni Haji Sukor and Zaini Tinbang at Kampong Luak, which demonstrate the central importance of information provided by the general public during the course of these mopping up operations. Bujang Sarudin was reported by both newspapers to have stated that he had been walking on the Bakam road when he saw two men hitching a lift on a timber truck. Thinking that this was suspicious, he, too, sought passage on the vehicle and recognised the two men as important leaders from the Bekenu area. Bujang then informed the driver, Yong Foh Soon, of the identity of his passengers and requested that he stop the truck at Kampong Luak, where Bujang demanded that the two rebels dismount and handed them into the custody of a 1GJ patrol. Bujang was later given a $2,000 reward by the Sarawak government for his role in the arrest.\(^{104}\)

*The Sarawak Tribune* published data on 7 January on the number of shotguns that had come into the possession of the government since the start of the emergency, with 695 having been surrendered by the owners and 333 captured by the security forces. Three of these weapons had just been seized by a patrol at Bukit Mas, outside Limbang, acting on information received from the general public, while another two had been discovered

\(^{102}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 24, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.10, 6 January, 1963, paras. 2-3.
\(^{103}\) TNA, FO 371/79678, D 1015/1, Document F, Commissioner-General’s Committee: Meeting at Phoenix Park on January 7, 1963 at 9.30am (Extracts), 7 January, 1963, para. 7; CO 1030/1489, Item 25, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.12, 7 January, 1963, para. 1.
elsewhere buried in the ground. Rebels in the Fourth Division appeared to be short of food, with a band of 20 recently having raided a food shop between Miri and Bekenu. The newspaper also reported the apprehension of twelve more TNKU, one of whom had been wounded.  

On 8 January, HQ British Forces (Borneo) began issuing a comprehensive weekly intelligence report, the first copy of which contained the observation: “Briefly[,] it would appear that although the Revolt has been crushed, the population are unrepentant. The possibility of further disturbances, particularly with INDONESIAN complicity, can NOT be discounted”. The relative strength of the TNKU in each area was also assessed, with Sarawak’s Fourth Division and the Belait District stated to have little rebel activity with the majority probably having already been detained or returned to their kampongs. The region encompassing Tutong, Brunei-Muara, Limbang, and Temburong was described as being broadly sympathetic to the Tentera, with the TNKU being strongest there originally and now having been augmented by rebels escaping from the west. The conclusion was that “the Security Forces will be required in this area for some time to come”, though this probably applied more to Temburong and Limbang than Tutong and Brunei-Muara. Lawas, meanwhile, was comparatively peaceful: “There would appear to be no purely military targets in the area, unless rebels in the TEMBURONG district attempt to break out along the escape routes”.  

During the afternoon of 9 January, HMS Maryton departed for Singapore with an engine defect that could not be repaired in Kuching, leaving HMS Fiskerton as the only minesweeper in the area. A meeting of the BOC held in Brunei Town heard that the strength of the Special Branch in Bangar had been enhanced by two that very day, while the size of the police force in the town would be doubled by the end of the month and an experienced inspector was expected to arrive soon. General Walker, meanwhile, was becoming

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107 Ibid., Part III: Army Intelligence, para. 31.  
108 Ibid.
increasingly concerned about the external threat to northern Borneo and the strength and mobility of the reserve force available to him; he suggested that a standing company that could mobilise within four hours was needed and plans were made to implement this idea.\textsuperscript{109} 

A Reuters report on the situation in Brunei Town published in \textit{The Sarawak Tribune} on 9 January described a town that was still tense, with heavily armed troops moving through the streets and a curfew still in place from midnight until 6am. Kampong Ayer was stated to be quietest of all, with “many men missing, and one of the few signs of movement is the passage of an occasional boat from the island to the mainland for water and food”.\textsuperscript{110} Police continued to interrogate kampong people throughout the country, seeking information on rebels still at large. Nevertheless, it was evident that the security forces were much less tense than they had been before Christmas, business activity was virtually at normal levels, and, for the children at least, life was good: the schools had been occupied by British troops and would not re-open until 4 March.\textsuperscript{111} 

10 January saw work in progress on various remote airstrips to maintain, repair, and improve them sufficiently for use by military aircraft. Kuching also reported that patrols in the Limbang area continued to capture small groups of suspected rebels and modest quantities of arms and ammunition. Several major changes in deployment had been made by the security forces, including the despatch of HMS \textit{Loch Killisport} to Labuan from the Darvel Bay area in North Borneo to relieve HMS \textit{Woodbridge Haven}. In addition, HMS \textit{Albion} had returned to Singapore with 40 Commando aboard on the 8\textsuperscript{th}, while a squadron of 22 Special Air Service Regiment was scheduled to arrive from the United Kingdom by the 12\textsuperscript{th}. A tactical headquarters and one squadron of the QRIH would be sent from Singapore to Kuching on 11 January, and one company from 1GJ had replaced those troops from 1QOH

\textsuperscript{109} TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 44, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 12, 9 January, 1963, para. 4; WO 305/2519, Minutes of a meeting of the Borneo Operations Committee held at HQ COMBRITBOR at 1400 hrs 9 Jan 63, CBB1/1, 9 January, 1963, paras. 5 & 13-24. 
\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Ibid}. 
who had comprised Chisel Force, as noted above. Finally, a company of 42 Commando relieved 40 Commando at Tawau.\(^{112}\)

The JICFE’s assessment of the situation in northern Borneo on 11 January focussed on concerns about Indonesia’s intentions and movements:

No significant moves have been made by the Indonesians although they have claimed to have increased air patrolling along the Kalimantan border and threatened to shoot down any RAF aircraft crossing it. They claim that RAF aircraft have already flown over Indonesian territory. There is as yet no evidence that any Indonesian air patrolling has been carried out.\(^{113}\)

The Committee concluded that lack of radar capability made the actual interception of RAF aircraft extremely unlikely and that the claim had been made purely for propaganda purposes. Indonesia’s military movements in Kalimantan were also assessed to be defensive reactions to Britain’s own activities in northern Borneo.\(^{114}\)

On 11 January, Kuching reported the capture of two rebels near Bekenu and the death of another at Limbang. *The Sarawak Tribune* enlarged on the latter incident, stating that a patrol of 1/2GR had encountered a group of three armed TNKU in the Pandaruan road area and shot one of them, capturing a shotgun, ammunition, a uniform, and some supplies; the other two men likely escaped. The day before, a spokesman from COMBRITBOR had announced that 2,700 suspected TNKU had been arrested thus far, of whom 500 had been released after questioning. An estimated 300 were thought to be still at large and the spokesman was quoted as saying:

> The rebel remnants are scattered in small groups, and a constant psychological war is being waged to urge them to surrender. The psychological war is being conducted in close co-ordination with the civil authorities who, with the security forces, are working to restore law and order.\(^{115}\)

*The Borneo Bulletin*’s issue of 12 January recorded various events from the past week, including the transport of a Gurkha to the Shell hospital at Kuala Belait by helicopter with a compound fracture to the leg sustained in the course of his duties. Another article noted the

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\(^{112}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 49, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 14, 10 January, 1963, paras. 3-4; Item 47, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 17, 10 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 77, Ministry of Defence Situation Report No. 14 (Situation as at 1000 hours on 11\(^ {11}\) Janu

\(^{113}\) ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Joint Intelligence Committee (Far East) Report (Extract), 11 January, 1963, para. 2.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., paras. 4 & 6.

fact that troops patrolling in the deep jungle always carried with them relief supplies for isolated communities, a vital element in winning the support of kampong people who might otherwise aid the rebels. The release of the wives of Azahari and Zaini from detention was also mentioned, both having been arrested in Brunei Town shortly after the outbreak of the rebellion. In addition, there was a report on information provided by “a reliable source” asserting that Filipino traders had previously smuggled arms and ammunition into North Borneo, which agents had purchased on behalf of Azahari and the TNKU.  

Local fishermen were stated to have assisted the Filipinos by transporting the arms into Brunei waters, while the arms in question, alleged to be of the latest American manufacture, were distributed only to the top rebel leaders and later hidden. Finally, rumours circulating that Brunei Town would be attacked by the TNKU on or about 21 January were refuted by a COMBRITBOR spokesman, who said that the 300 or so rebels still at large “were in no position to organise protracted warfare”.  

A brief summary of the situation in a report sent to London early on 12 January stated: “Tutong District remains pro-rebel. Brunei/Muara Districts [sic] still contain many non-active TNKU Members. Limbang/Temburong Districts show recent increase of rebel activity in area South of Bangar”. This document also mentioned that a vehicle had been fired upon, but no one had been injured. A brief reference to the deleterious effect that heavy rain was having on operations was one of the first indications of the major flood event that was shortly to engulf northern Borneo and divert the security forces from their focus on the TNKU. Another situation report, emanating from the Australian Commission in Singapore, had already mentioned that floods were causing movement difficulties in some areas.  

The heavy rain that caused the floods had begun to fall in early January, though the precise date is difficult to pinpoint. SJI Adair, of the Sarawak Lands and Survey Department,
provided an evocative description of the weather in Miri up to 16 January: “Rain has been nearly continuous for ten days, and in that time we have seen the sun once. In the first half of this month the rainfall has been 42 [inches], the previous all time record for any whole month being 33 [inches]”. On 21 January, *The Sarawak Tribune* reported that a further 8.44 inches of rain had fallen at Miri the previous day, bringing the monthly total to that point to 55.94 inches. Adair later put the monthly total for January at Miri at 68 inches, while Marudi had received 76 inches.

The effect of all this rain was summed up in FEC’s official report: “the worst floods in living memory in BRUNEI and throughout the Fourth and Fifth Divisions of SARAWAK”; the remainder of Sarawak and parts of North Borneo were also badly affected. White, in a message to Waddell, summarised conclusions reached after an aerial reconnaissance of the interior: “[Tom] Harrisson has flown over Limbang[,] Tutoh and [the] Baram and reports devastating floods everywhere. Civil population camped on hills as many longhouses uninhabitable and paddy fields inundated”. More details were provided by Ignatius Stephen of *The Borneo Bulletin*:

As the fleet made its way upriver, the fast-flowing, dark-brown river water carried the evidence of the scene of desolation at Kuala Balai—debris in the form of parts of houses, cooking utensils, [and] dead livestock.

Nearing the stricken village, the small fleet made its way past floating wooden houses, wrenched completely away from their foundations, flimsy thatched huts, boardwalks, planks, fences—all being borne seaward by the angry river waters.

Stewart Ngau Ding has recorded what may have been a common belief: “Superstitious people believed that the flood was heaven sent to wash away the blood of those killed in the recent Brunei Rebellion”.

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123 TNA, CO 1030/1680, Item 1, Telegram to the Governor of Sarawak from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. B.32, 18 January, 1963, para. 1.
The floods caused a landslide that buried a house at Tanah Merah, near Sandakan, killing seven people, including five children. Two villages on the Sungei Temburong, Kampongs Amo and Biang, had to be evacuated when the river burst its banks, washing buildings away and causing one longhouse to collapse, though no one was injured. Much of the population of Bangar, including the occupants of the hospital, also had to be evacuated, with many people camping on a nearby ridge. In the Limbang District, it was estimated that one in every five houses had been destroyed, leaving 5,000 people homeless. Eight buildings at Niah and ten at Sibuti and Bekenu were swept away and the mosque and several government quarters in the latter town were damaged. Marudi sheltered 1,500 people who had no food supplies, while the town had to import generators and water pumps to purify contaminated water supplies. Finally, in total, an estimated 21 people lost their lives in the floods, including a soldier of 1GJ who drowned while crossing a river during a patrol.126

Relief efforts began immediately it became clear that they were required on 17 January, with the Sarawak and Brunei governments and the security forces doing what they could, the latter having given priority to these activities over their military operations. In Brunei, the DECs established to deal with the aftermath of the rebellion were used to good effect, creating relief teams to assist wherever needed. The BOSC, too, was quick to involve itself, acting to release food stocks to the general population from both Army stores and those of the Brunei government at its meeting on 18 January. The CINCFE reported to London on the 19th that an Emergency Committee had been set up to co-ordinate evacuation and relief efforts, presumably at COMBRITBOR in order to facilitate cross-border activity.127


One of the main concerns in the wake of the flooding was the question of how much
damage had been caused to crops and food stocks in the affected areas. Harrisson, during his
flight over the interior mentioned by White, had opined that “[a] high proportion of the rice
crop was almost certainly lost”, while the Resident of the Fifth Division estimated that one-
third of the padi there had been washed away.\textsuperscript{128} Virtually all livestock and many food stores
between Ukong and Gadong had been destroyed, and half of the Iban population of the Oya,
Mukah, and Balingian river areas in the Third Division was thought to have lost all its padi,
2,000 chickens, 500 pigs, and many goats. In North Borneo, the entire west coast padi crop
had been ruined, a situation that was only exacerbated by the fact that the previous year’s
yield had been poor as well. Brunei, too, lost nearly all its ripe padi, which had been on the
verge of being harvested; livestock and vegetables were also destroyed by the floodwaters.
As a result of these losses, much of the flood relief effort, once evacuations were complete,
was focussed on supplying food to those in need, largely by means of helicopters and
aeroplanes. The Air Ministry in London estimated that 225,000 pounds of food and other
urgent supplies had been airlifted by 1 February.\textsuperscript{129}

\textit{The Borneo Bulletin} praised the assistance offered by the security forces in the wake of
the floods:

\begin{quote}
The worst flood disaster to strike the three Borneo territories in living memory – an
estimated 20,000 are homeless in Sarawak – has been promptly alleviated by round-
the-clock operations by the RN, the Royal Marines, the British Army and the Royal
Air Force.\textsuperscript{130}
\end{quote}

This assistance generated goodwill that had an almost immediate effect on the regard in
which the security forces were held by the people: in Temburong, for example, the
population had previously been “almost completely hostile”, which transformed after the
floods into a noticeably warmer reception that included the provision of valuable

\textsuperscript{128} TNA, WO 305/2519, Minutes of the Borneo Security Council held at the Office of the High Commissioner for Brunei at
1400 hours 18 January 1963, CBB1/42, 18 January, 1963, para. 8d; \textit{The Sarawak Tribune}, “Relief Work Continues At High

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{The Sarawak Tribune}, “Relief Work Continues At High Pitch: Hope Worst Over Now, Heavy Damage Estimated”, 21
January, 1963, p. 3; TNA, WO 305/2519, Part VII: Economic and Topographical Intelligence, Joint Periodic Intelligence
Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359 hours on Saturday 26 January 1963, 28 January, 1963, paras. 2-3; Reuter’s News
9 February, 1963, p. 3.

The appreciation of opinion amongst different stratas of society responding to the rebellion and the presence of British troops in Brunei reproduced in Appendix VI, though not directly addressing the subject of the effect of flood relief efforts, has indicated that the security forces were generally welcomed and accepted as something of a necessary evil. Pocock has summarised the primary effect of this humanitarian assistance, in relation to the mopping up operation: “Now, where there had been indifference[, there was friendliness and where there had been friendliness[,] there were now allies”.

In the midst of this flood disaster, some anti-rebel operations did occur, especially in the period before relief efforts became the primary focus of the security forces. On 13 January, Kuching reported that 448 people had been detained in the Limbang area, who were described as “sullen and unco-operative”, while there was estimated to be over 100 TNKU still on the run in the area. The next day, several more shotguns and some ammunition were stated to have been recovered in the same area, while a Chinese youth was arrested near the border in the First Division in possession of a map of Sarawak, a compass, and both Sarawakian and Indonesian currency, suggesting that the youth had intended to flee to Kalimantan. There was little to report in the next two days, with only further Indonesian police and military activity in Kalimantan across from the First Division mentioned on 16 January, the significance of which was, again, unknown. The recent seizure of an up-to-date CCO directive on long-term policy was also reported, which stated that the focus was to remain on the constitutional struggle using front organisations, whilst preparing for armed revolution through the indoctrination and training in the use of weapons of “the farming masses”.

A summary of operations in the week to 12 January by HQ COMBRITBOR mentioned the surrender of Murni Haji Sutor, leaving only seven TNKU leaders still at large in the

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133 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 69, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.23, 13 January, 1963, para. 1.
134 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 87, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.26, 16 January, 1963, paras. 1-2; Item 70, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.24, 14 January, 1963, paras. 1-2.
Fourth Division. It was concluded that no purely military targets remained there, with security forces now acting on police information. Belait was in a similar position, though active patrolling and cordon and search operations continued. 1/2GR, responsible for the Tutong and Brunei-Muara Districts, reported that the population in the northern part of its area was now more forthcoming with information than it had previously been, while some fuse wire and detonators had been located in the course of search operations. In Limbang, a 1/2GR patrol had located a small foraging party on 9 January, killing one of the three rebels; it was thought that they were collecting food for a larger group, perhaps located in Temburong. Both Limbang and the latter district were still heavily patrolled in order to flush out the remaining rebel bands. As a result, ten TNKU were captured in the area south of Bangar, though the remainder of the group were still at large. Lawas, meanwhile, was declared to be “effectively cleared” of the TNKU and the population to be “friendly and cooperative”. Finally, in North Borneo, only the surrender of Hashim Lamit at Pantai on 9 January was thought to be worthy of note, because he had been a member of the group that had travelled through the colony en route to Malinau prior to the outbreak of the revolt.

On 16 January, *The Sarawak Tribune* published an account of a terrifying experience for 17 Iban families who had fled Kampongs Sumbiling and Duri in Temburong due to the harassment of rebels seeking food, after most of the kampongs’ men had either willingly joined the TNKU or been forced to do so. The refugees then endured eight days lost in the jungle without food, despite being only six miles from Kampong Madak, where a patrol of 42 Commando was based. Travelling in circles through thick vegetation for fear of meeting rebels on the jungle tracks, they lived on roots and shoots once their food supply was exhausted on the third day. When they eventually reached Kampong Madak, the Marines escorted the refugees to Bangar, where they were given government aid and temporarily housed in two buildings near the District Office.

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136 *Ibid.*, para. 9a(1).
The RN conducted an operation from around 11 January until 7 March, called Parson’s Nose, in the Brunei Bay area, searching for Yassin Affandy and Mesir Keruddin, who were thought to be attempting to escape inland using the waterways. The other aims of the operation were to capture any other rebels in the region, enforce the night curfew, and control the movement of all small vessels on the rivers during curfew hours. Three base camps were established at Kampong Melipat, Awat Awat, and Tanjong Sebakang and each manned by about 20 naval and SBS personnel, who patrolled the rivers using longboats and launches, set ambushes, and searched houses as was deemed necessary. Bases were closed and personnel shifted when needed over the course of the seven-week operation, and patrols in Brunei Bay by HMS Woodbridge Haven and two minesweepers added to stop any vessels found on the open water. Operation Parson’s Nose, however, met with little success; the only positive that could be taken from it being the deterrent effect all the military activity had on rebel movement through the area.138

The apparent failure of Operation Parson’s Nose was most likely a result of the success that had previously been a hallmark of the mopping up operations, as FEC’s official report observed:

The back of the rebellion had already been broken by January, and the remaining operations were concerned with mopping up. Successes became fewer because there were less enemy against whom to operate, and because those that were still at large were in hiding.139

As a result, the failure to capture any rebels at all during Operation Parson’s Nose was actually an excellent indication that most of the TNKU in the Brunei Bay area of Temburong either had moved on or had already been detained.

The rumour briefly mentioned above that Brunei Town would be attacked by the TNKU on 21 January, coupled with the absence of troops from the towns on operations, had, in the opinion of Derry of the psychological operations team, made the general population uneasy and apprehensive. Consequently, the BOC decided that a show of force was needed “to

reassure, and remind, the local population that we [British forces] were still here in force”. On 18 January, flag marches including armoured cars and aircraft took place in Seria, Kuala Belait, Tutong, and Brunei Town to boost civilian morale and to soothe these fears, though they were completely overshadowed by the floods and received no attention in the media.

In Kuching, concerns regarding Indonesia’s intentions continued to be fed by information on activity in Kalimantan, with the formation of a Home Guard-style organisation in the Kapuas Hulu area reported to Kuching by a “fairly reliable” source and passed on to London on 17 January. Four days later, a limited troop build-up was noted across the border from Lundu, Tebate, Undop, and Lubok Antu. It was thought that these activities represented a stiffening of border posts possibly preparatory to the commencement of cross-border covert operations. Meanwhile, pro-TNKU and pro-rebellion support continued to be encouraged in Pontianak and throughout Indonesia.

The Borneo Bulletin recounted the arrest of one suspected rebel, who had reported for work at the Belait District Office for the first time since the rebellion on 14 January but, when he was unable to give a satisfactory explanation for his long absence, District Officer Pengiran Momin Pengiran Haji Ismail escorted him to the Kuala Belait Police Station. Three miles outside Limbang, meanwhile, on 19 January, a 1/2GR patrol encountered two rebels who escaped into the darkness after being fired upon. Follow-up operations the next day located three rebels not far from the original site, one of whom, Ludin Sidek, was killed in the course of the contact. An FEC situation report from 23 January announced the capture or surrender of 26 TNKU and the recovery of further arms and ammunition, presumably since the last such communication had been despatched on the 19th.

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140 TNA, WO 305/2519, Minutes of a Meeting of the Borneo Operations Committee held at HQ COMBIBOR at 1400 hours 16 January 63, CBB 14/1, 16 January, 1963, paras. 61-2.
141 Ibid., para. 63; CO 1030/1489, Item 107, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 27, 20 January, 1963, para. 1.
142 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 90, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.27, 17 January, 1963, para. 1.
143 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 111, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.34, 21 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 112, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.36, 22 January, 1963, para. 1.
HQ COMBRITBOR’s weekly summary of recent operations up to 19 January estimated the number of rank and file TNKU in Sarawak’s Fourth Division yet to be detained to be less than 15, while only five leaders remained at large, two of whom were suspected to have returned to Brunei. Belait was equally quiet, and it was speculated that the awful weather had driven those rebels remaining on the run back to their kampongs. In Tutong, 17 suspects had been arrested thanks to an improved flow of information from the public, leaving the impression that those few still at large were now located in the more remote kampongs. The TNKU was thought to be between 85 and 90 strong in Limbang, with reports still current of groups of around 30 operating close to the eastern border. The Temburong district was estimated to have around 50 rebels on the loose, the largest group of which numbered 12. In Lawas, usually so quiet, a man had been beaten to death after having supplied someone with food; the murderer was alleged to be a TNKU member on the run. Patrolling continued in the Merapok area of North Borneo, on the border with Sarawak, though no rebel activity had been reported. A sighting of a perahu carrying around 20 men at Sipitang was assessed to be of little import, since it was impossible to confirm the identity of the vessel’s occupants.\(^\text{145}\)

The same report recounted an incident in Limbang that is worth quoting in full:

From an ambush position on 16 January on [sic] the PANDARUAN road area two rebels, wearing TNKU uniform, and carrying shotguns[,] were fired upon. The two rebels made off in great haste, throwing aside their arms and packs. The next day they surrendered in LIMBANG having evidently decided they had had enough. Comment. Although the rebels[‘] behaviour and subsequent surrender can scarcely allow them the title of ‘hard core’, it is nonetheless interesting to note that there are rebels who have at least the courage to wear their uniforms and carry arms in an area which they must know to be heavily patrolled by Security Forces. It is probable that these two rebels were part of the band under command of SALLEH bin SAMBAS and HAJI PILOK, who are almost certainly in the area.\(^\text{146}\)

Ludin Sidek, too, had been wearing his uniform when he died, which may have been an indication more of stubbornness and pride than of being especially hard-core TNKU.

Early on 26 January, the surrender of 17 rebels the previous day was reported, one of whom was likely Haji Pilok Panglima, described by Governor Waddell as Commandant of Limbang but elsewhere referred to as the second-in-command of the TNKU in the District.

\(^\text{146}\) Ibid., para. 6a.
On 28 January, FEC informed London that more weapons had been recovered and more rebels captured and surrendered without specifying numbers. The leader of the PRB in Temburong and his son were two of those detained, the fact that they were starving leading one to assume that they surrendered. Also mentioned that day was the transition back to mopping up operations from a focus on flood relief, the waters having begun to recede in Brunei and northern Sarawak.  

By 28 January, the Fourth Division had quietened sufficiently to allow all but one platoon to be removed from Miri. Belait, too, had seen little activity in the previous week, though patrolling of the coastal areas and inland at Labi by the security forces in partnership with the police continued. Kampong Kilanas, close to Brunei Town, belied the quiet in the remainder of the Brunei-Muara District to yield intelligence that greatly concerned COMBRITBOR: that the TNKU was again recruiting in the area, possibly with assistance from the outside. The sound of the gunfire that killed Ludin Sidek was reported to have induced six rebels to surrender in Limbang on 20 January, which led troops to fire mortars and 105mm guns into the night in the area south of Bangar in the hope of replicating the result; 11 people surrendered on 25 January and another on the 27th. Also in Limbang, a joint police and military operation led to the capture of 54 suspected TNKU in the Manis area, while four training camps had been located in the previous three weeks. On 22 January, in the Temburong District, a patrol encountered and fired upon four rebels, one of whom was believed to have been wounded in the contact; all four escaped capture, though follow-up operations were ongoing at the time the report was written. In the Merapok area of Lawas, patrolling continued and several arrests had been made, including that of Bujang Tali, who spoke of a comrade who was “tired of the whole affair” and utterly miserable on the run, though too frightened to surrender for fear of being shot. Voice aircraft were then sent to the area in an effort to reassure the fugitive on this latter point. Rumours in North Borneo

147 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 134, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 38, 26 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 132, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. 42, 26 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 140, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 39, 28 January, 1963, paras. 2-3.

that rebels had retreated to a headquarters at Ranau, near Mount Kinabalu, where they intended to offer a stiff resistance, were received and, the intelligence report stated, would be investigated, though the practicality of this location as a base for such an action was questioned.\footnote{Ibid., paras. 8-9.}

Greater detail was provided by 99 Gurkha Infantry Brigade Group in a report on its area of responsibility tendered to a meeting of the BOC on 30 January. An estimate of TNKU casualties at midnight on 26 January stated that 55 had been killed, six in the Fourth Division, 23 in the Fifth Division, 13 in Belait, and 13 in the remainder of Brunei. A further 38 rebels had been captured when wounded of 2,802 apprehended; 473 had already been released from detention. Most of those released came from Sarawak, with only 106 people in Brunei having returned home. The report also listed weapons known to be missing, including one light machine gun (LMG), eight sub-machine guns (SMGs), 60 rifles, ten revolvers, and eleven Greener guns.\footnote{TNA, WO 305/2519, “Assessment of the Military Situation in 99 Gurkha Infantry Brigade Group Area on 30 Jan 63”, Annex A to Minutes of a Meeting of the Borneo Operations Committee held at HQ COMBRITBOR at 1400 hours 30 January 63, CBB 14/1, 30 January, 1963, paras. 1-2.} The number of shotguns yet to be recovered could never be estimated, since most of those that came into the possession of the TNKU had been taken from the general population rather than the police.

The same report summarised recent developments in the Belait District thus:

> Operations have to date concentrated on flushing rebels out of Kampongs and Longhouses. Main effort now concentrated in [sic] attempt to locate police weapons and ammunition which were captured by the rebels during the early days of the rebellion. Task now made harder by the fact that most of the BELAIT District has been flooded. Some [weapons] at least are thought to have been dumped. Providing the reward scheme is really well publicised[,] there should be little difficulty; only the other day an informant led a patrol to a cache at S[ungei] MAU where three .303 rifles, 1 SMG, one .38 revolver and a quantity of ammunition were recovered.\footnote{Ibid., para. 3b.}

Tutong, meanwhile, was growing tense, with Kedayans in the area of Kampong Penahjong and Kuala Abang said to be ready to rise against the government when ordered to do so, or when similar trouble began in the Limbang \textit{ulu}. This was believed to be connected to the report mentioned above of re-recruitment around Kampong Kilanas. Lawas remained quiet, though a patrol of Sarawak Rangers was travelling down one of the Trusan routes into
Kalimantan in order to investigate which of these had been taken by those who went to
Indonesia for training before the revolt. As for the outer ring, no rebels were known to have
used any of the routes into Kalimantan and recent strengthening of the stopping points at
various locations was intended to ensure that this remained the case.\\(^{152}\)

A tally of rebels known to be at large in areas that came under the responsibility of 99
Gurkha Infantry Brigade Group was stated to be impossible to produce because Special
Branch had yet to interrogate the detainees who would have identified the fugitives. It was
estimated, however, that 65 TNKU leaders, that is, of the rank of sergeant or above,
remained on the run, mostly from the Brunei-Muara District. Rank and file members were
believed to number 290, of whom 130 originated from Brunei-Muara and 60 from
Limbang.\\(^{153}\)

A re-deployment of forces had taken place throughout January, with units being relieved
by others based in Singapore, a process that had been complicated by the floods. As a result,
force dispositions on 27 February included the location of Force HQ and HQ 99 Gurkha
Infantry Brigade in Brunei Town, while 1GJ remained in North Borneo with its HQ in
Jesselton and companies based in Tawau, Sandakan, and Kota Belud. 42 Commando, RM
had companies at Tutong and in forest areas and along rivers in the Labu area, as well as
isolated detachments in the Lawas ulu. The 1st Battalion, 7th Duke of Edinburgh’s Own
Gurkha Rifles (1/7GR) had charge of Limbang, with small detachments deployed in the deep
jungle. The 1st Battalion, the King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (1KOYLI) had one
company based at Kuala Belait and another, minus certain detachments, at Miri, while QRIH
was still at Kuching. Finally, the Gurkha Independent Parachute Company was nominally
based at Long Semado in the Lawas District with small detachments covering the escape
routes into Kalimantan in partnership with Harrisson’s Force.\\(^{154}\)

The Borneo Bulletin announced the capture of two TNKU leaders, Pengiran Hitam Haji
Burut and Haji Arshad, in Temburong on 2 February. The former had been a Legislative

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\\(^{152}\) Ibid., paras. 3c-h.
\\(^{153}\) Ibid., paras. 3b-h.
\\(^{154}\) ANA, File 248/57, Telegram to the Department of Defence from the Australian Defence Representative, Australian
Councillor and was said to be the leader of the *Tentera* in Tutong. The most interesting point about their arrest was the fact that they were located in a jungle camp that had clearly been prepared some months beforehand, with tapioca having been planted in a clearing and several simple buildings erected. The recovery of a large quantity of arms, including shotguns and some automatic weapons, by the police in caches in Muara and near Brunei Town over the previous week was also reported, with a strong implication that these seizures were a direct result of the rewards scheme. The same article addressed the question of why some rebels were surrendering:

Bad weather in the jungle is playing havoc with the health of rebels on the run from the security forces and many of them have come out to surrender rather than face the extreme privation if they remain at large. The security forces are also stepping up their propaganda drive against scattered rebel groups and this had had the effect of producing several surrenders.\(^\text{155}\)

Another TNKU leader surrendered in early February, Harry Chia from the Limbang District, as did Daud Daim, the second-in-command of Lawas District. On 5 February, a mixed patrol of 1/2GR and Sarawak Field Force encountered a group of five rebels in the area of the 4th Mile of the Pandaruan road, who discharged a shotgun as though to warn other TNKU in the area and then fled. The patrol fired at them and it was believed that one rebel had been wounded. Follow-up operations saw the capture of two men, Adi Kassim and Tambah Pasa, a shotgun, and some ammunition; neither man had been present at the initial contact. The next day, two of those who had been present, Wahid Kassim and Jaffar Kilari, surrendered, leaving three rebels still at large. Also discovered at this time was a well-established camp in swampland only one mile from the Limbang Secondary School.\(^\text{156}\)

On 9 February, *The Borneo Bulletin* published a list of nine top PRB and TNKU leaders who remained at large: Yassin Affandy, Balan Sagan, Mesir Keruddin, Salleh Mahmud, Osman Mahmud, Haji Garip Haji Manggol, Abdullah Ja’afar, HB Hidup, and Sha’iff Bakti Daud. Included in the article were biographical details and their last known whereabouts, all but three stated to have last been seen in Temburong in December. Most of the men were

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described as high-ranking leaders of the TNKU, except for HB Hidup, PRB Assistant Secretary-General, Azahari’s two brothers Salleh and Osman, and Balan Sagan. The latter was a special case, a lieutenant in the TNKU “who was believed to have been responsible for the murder of the [Temburong] District Officer”.157

Reports that a small kampong, Telok Melanau near Lundu in the First Division of Sarawak, had been seized by a group of 40 armed men reached Kuching on 10 February, causing air patrols and ground forces to be despatched to investigate. The aircrews saw only people going about their business, while troops at both Telok Melanau and nearby Tanjong Serabang reported that there was no trace of any armed men and the only unusual event had been the evacuation of the latter kampong by people who had been frightened by the rumours. A man was soon arrested for spreading false rumours. Simultaneously, Reuters reported that a band of 30 Indonesians had been detained in Limbang, according to a British Army source, who also said that small groups had entered Sarawak from Kalimantan recently. DW Guillan, the Divisional Superintendent of Police at Limbang, denied this report, and a company of 1KOYLI was despatched to Limbang to reinforce the security forces in the district.158

On 12 February, a civilian reported to the Temburong District Officer a sighting of four armed rebels in some scrub about six miles west of Bangar and offered to guide a patrol to the old padi hut that he suspected to be their hideout. Sergeant Lalbahadur Rana of 1/7GR led a patrol to the area and located a resting area on the edge of some swampland with tracks leading away from it; the onset of darkness prevented further exploration. The next day, the tracks were followed to their conclusion, at which point Sergeant Lalbahadur decided to climb to higher ground to search for the camp along likely streams. In following one such watercourse, the patrol came upon a white cloth drying on a rock next to the river, which was thought to indicate the proximity of the camp. Sergeant Lalbahadur split his patrol in two, sending one half to the left flank to act as a cut-off party and leading the other half forward

to the camp. He and another Gurkha crawled forward to reconnoitre the camp but were fired on by someone with a shotgun behind a tree immediately in front of them when they were 15 yards away from the camp. Sergeant Lalbahadur returned fire as his companion fired on another man farther away, and then called the rest of his group forward, whilst instructing the cut-off party to engage the rebels from the flank and the rear. The ensuing firefight saw two rebels, Abbas Tusin and Jalil Abdullah, killed and the third have his shotgun knocked out of his hand by a burst of fire from an SMG; the latter escaped, but was believed to have been wounded. Follow-up operations failed to locate the man, but three shotguns, 100 cartridges, two parangs, and two knives were recovered from the camp.\footnote{159}{TNA, T 301/34, Item 6, Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals: Brunei: Recommendation for the award of the Military Medal for service in Brunei in February, 1963, HD 6446, 21 May, 1963, para. 1; The Sarawak Tribune, “Two Rebels Shot Dead”, 14 February, 1963, p. 1.}

Haji Ibrahim Ismail was reported to have been captured by Tua Kampong Bakar Adam at Sundar on 11 February, while seven TNKU were stated to have surrendered in the previous two days on the 13th.\footnote{160}{The Sarawak Tribune, “Captured”, 12 February, 1963, p. 10; “$5,000 Reward For Each Of These Nine Arrested”, 14 February, 1963, p. 2; TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 212, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 69, 13 February, 1963, para. 1; The Borneo Bulletin, “Jassin’s Price Now $15,000”, 16 February, 1963, p. 1.} The Brunei Government announced on 13 February that they were offering a $5,000 reward for the capture or arrest of the nine TNKU leaders on the list published only four days earlier, with similar rewards also being offered for the apprehension of any other rebels. On the heels of this came the announcement on Radio Brunei that a reward of $15,000 was being offered for Yassin Affandy and one of $10,000 for Mesir Keruddin.

The catalyst for this increased reward was probably Affandy’s intention, revealed in recent interrogations of captured and surrendered rebels, to lead his band of followers from Temburong to the Brunei Town area in order to whip up support amongst the general populace and, in particular, amongst 200 rebel suspects who had been released from detention when no incriminating evidence against them was found. Reuters had also reported that several witnesses had recently seen Affandy’s band, carrying automatic weapons and plenty of cash, but short of food. The move away from Temburong was equally motivated by an increasingly hostile population, thanks partly to the “many atrocities” that had been
committed by the rebels during the revolt, the difficulty of obtaining supplies, and the effects of the floods on the District.\textsuperscript{161} The Brunei Town/Muara area, by contrast, possessed more easily available supplies and many sympathisers, but, at the same time, it was thought that the absence of dense jungle in which to shelter and the strength of security forces there would increase the risk of capture.\textsuperscript{162}

Probably not coincidentally, information was then received that Affandy had been seen with eight others near Bangar and an intensive search was conducted in the area between 17 and 19 February. A 24-hour curfew was instituted in the search area that was only lifted for two hours on the 18\textsuperscript{th} and certain areas shelled in an effort to flush the rebels out; however, no arrests were made. Reports had also been published in the international press stating that unidentified aircraft had been seen crossing into northern Borneo, while security forces were said to have stepped up their border patrols and been placed on high alert. These stories were swiftly denied and rumour mongering denounced by the authorities, with measures taken to curb the incidence of such false rumours.\textsuperscript{163}

On 24 February, a 1/7GR patrol observed four suspected rebels approaching a padi barn from the hills near the Pandaruan ferry in Limbang and, after a cautious four-hour-long advance on the building, opened fire on the party, killing two and wounding and capturing the others, one of whom later died. Later on that night, another patrol came upon three men erecting a shelter in swampland three miles east of Bangar; upon noting the patrol’s approach, the men attempted to flee but all were killed when the Gurkhas opened fire. One of the three was Bukong Udan, elected District Councillor and assistant secretary and treasurer of the PRB’s Temburong branch, as well as a captain in the TNKU and the last Tentera commander from the District known to be at large. A lieutenant and sergeant major


\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.

of the TNKU were also arrested in Brunei, and seven shotguns and a sporting rifle recovered on 25 February.\footnote{164}{The Sarawak Tribune, “Mopping-Up Operations In Limbang-Temburong Area An Outstanding Success”, 28 February, 1963, p. 10.}

The Sarawak Monthly Intelligence Report for February summarised the security forces’ achievements in the colony that month:

Small groups of rebels led by Salleh bin Sambas and Khairal Salleh bin Kerudin are still at large in the Pandaruan Road area of Limbang District. Successful operations by security forces have resulted in further eliminations of the few remaining rebels and the surrender of some important personalities, including Harry Chia, Lieutenant in TNKU Limbang District HQ, Bujang bin Haji Mahmood, TNKU Lieutenant and Platoon Commander, Rusli bin Sambas, brother of Salleh Sambas, TNKU Corporal, and Haji Ibrahim bin Mail, TNKU Lieutenant and 2 i/c [second in charge of] Sundar Company. It is assessed that 5 leaders and 13 rank and file of the Limbang TNKU orbat [order of battle] are still unaccounted for. The Lawas District remains quiet with the security force effort directed at sealing off escape routes to Indonesia. In this district there are believed to be 4 TNKU leaders and 12 rank and file at large. TNKU activity in the Miri/Bekenu/Niah area is spent and the area is quiet. Five leaders and 10 rank and file are still unaccounted for and some of them at least are thought to have left the area.\footnote{165}{TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 269, Extract from the Sarawak Monthly Intelligence Report (February 1963), c. March, 1963, paras. 5-7.}

General Walker held a press conference in Brunei Town on 27 February at which he estimated rebels still on the run in Brunei and Sarawak to number between 175 and 200. He also stated that 1,494 of the 3,694 suspected rebels apprehended had already been released, while 106 remained in detention in North Borneo, 454 in Sarawak, and the remaining 1,640 in Brunei. Interestingly, Sam Gilstrap, the United States (US) Consul-General to Singapore, informed Washington shortly afterwards that a confidential source had told him that several of those released had been hard-core TNKU who, it was hoped, would lead the security forces to other rebels still at large or as yet unknown to the authorities.\footnote{166}{NARA, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Box 3840, Telegram to the Secretary of State from the Consul-General to Singapore, No. 523, 1 March, 1963, para. 1; Tan Tock Saik, “Rebellion: Still 200 in jungle”, The Straits Times, 28 February, 1963, p. 9.}

Those collecting the rewards offered in the scheme mentioned above were less risky sources of information, many of them being schoolchildren searching for arms and ammunition in order to earn pocket-money, according to The Borneo Bulletin. Approximately 90% of the weapons acquired by the TNKU from the police had been recovered by the beginning of March, much of it in the preceding three weeks, located in the
area around Seria and Kuala Belait. The more conventional method of finding these arms was also employed, with an hours-long search conducted of the Kuala Belait PWD stores and workshops that week. In addition, the newspaper reported the next week that a weapon and some ammunition had been handed into the Seria and Panaga Police Stations.\(^\text{167}\)

Evidence of Indonesian infiltration into Sarawak, albeit on a miniscule scale, was uncovered sometime in February. Gilstrap received the following information:

Three Indonesians operating ostensibly as traditional itinerant Indo[nesian] talisman peddlers and “judo teachers” moved into Muslim kampongs, shortly thereafter began giving “military” training to local men and apparently giving specific instructions for future operations. [The] Indo[nesian]s disappeared just before British forces, informed by [a] villager, arrived to round them up.\(^\text{168}\)

The kampongs in question were located in a coastal region of the First Division east of Kuching and the Indonesians fled in mid-February. No information is available on whether similar endeavours in other parts of Sarawak occurred, but the assessment of the JICFE was that it was an isolated incident.\(^\text{169}\)

Towards the end of February, an unknown party in Brunei Town distributed pamphlets urging people to stay at home during the Hari Raya celebrations, clearly intending to revive fears in the aftermath of the revolt that had not yet been fully allayed. Suggestions that these pamphlets had been distributed by an underground organisation linked to the TNKU were dismissed by “a government source”, who said that “a crank” somewhere in town was the more likely author.\(^\text{170}\) An official military spokesman stated that there was no evidence of any underground movement supporting the rebels; when questioned as to how the remaining TNKU had managed to evade capture as long as they had, he said that the rebels were most likely stealing food or forcing kampong people to give them supplies.\(^\text{171}\) One suspects that the soothing effect of the government source’s statement was of greater import than its truth,

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\(^{168}\) NARA, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Box 3840, Telegram to the Secretary of State from the Consul-General to Singapore, No. 523, 1 March, 1963, para. 2.

\(^{169}\) Ibid.; TNA, CO 1035/159, Item 7, Telegram to the Secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee, Cabinet Office from the CINCFE, JICFE 52, 6 March, 1963, para. 5.


especially when the extent of the rebels’ support network, an idea of which is given in Appendix VI in the account of the capture of Yassin Affandy, is considered.

This statement was also contained in the original article about the disruptive pamphlets:

Indications are that the rebels, among them Jassin Affandy, his chief supporter H.B. Hidup and a brother of Azahari, Salleh Mahmud, are beginning to feel the pinch of the food denial measures. These measures are believed to be the main reason for the increasing surrenders of rebels in the area.\(^{172}\)

As though to prove the truth of this assertion, another article on the same page of the newspaper recounted the capture of seven rebels in the previous week, six of them from Kampong Ayer. The seventh was arrested at his house at the 7th Mile on the Pandaruan Road in Limbang. The Joint Intelligence Committee in London also reported the arrest of 31 TNKU in the first week of March and the deaths of six others.\(^{173}\)

More arrests followed, with 17 reported on 16 March, six of them in the Belait District, nine in Brunei-Muara, comprising three officers and six NCOs, and two in the Lawas District. A further two were detained on the 17th, being Osman Mahmud, a TNKU platoon commander, and his father, Mahmud Tahir. The Borneo Bulletin also reported that all but two of those rebels still at large originating from the Limbang District had been captured, with only Salleh Sambas and his father, Sambas Murah, remaining at liberty. An encounter with a group of five rebels led by Khairul Salleh Kerudin was the cause of this milestone, which resulted in the capture of three rebels and the deaths of Khairul Salleh and one other. Further afield, six suspected TNKU were detained at Trusan on 18 March and another at Limau Manis in the Brunei-Muara District, while a rebel from Awat Awat had surrendered to a Customs officer. Finally, a military spokesman announced on 20 March that 12 TNKU had surrendered during the previous week, including a group of nine who gave themselves and their families up to the Penghulu of Batu Marang, near Muara.\(^{174}\)

Two TNKU leaders on the most wanted list, Haji Garip Haji Manggol and Sha’iff Bakti Daud, were captured on 22 March. The former had been district commander in Tutong and


the latter a company commander in Brunei-Muara; a reward of $5,000 had been offered for
the arrest of each. Information gathered from two food couriers detained by the authorities
led a combined patrol of Royal Marines and Special Branch to the two in swampland south
of Sengkurong, near Brunei Town. Four days later, another important arrest occurred south
of Bangar, with the detention of Balan Sagan, who was suspected of the murder of Pengiran
Besar Pengiran Kulla, the District Officer of Temburong, along with TNKU company
sergeant Royong Lawai. These successes left the rebel band led by Yassin Affandy as the
only sizeable group still at large.175

By 25 March, the JICFE was able to make this report to London:

The number of TNKU rebels still unaccounted for is now less than 100. Several of
the leaders still at large including Jassin Affendi are reported to be sick and Sheikh
Osman (Azahari’s brother) is reported to be in command of the group which is still
on the move in the Pandaruan road area.176

The majority of those still at large, including 15 significant leaders, remained in the Limbang
and Temburong areas, while 3,788 rebels had been detained up to this point. Of the arms
captured by the TNKU in the first days of the revolt, all but one LMG, four SMGs, seven
rifles, and nine other firearms had been recovered. In addition, 2,405 shotguns had been
seized by the security forces or surrendered to authorities by the general public.177

Arrests continued to occur regularly, with three rebels apprehended at Trusan by a Field
Force patrol on 1 April, as well as a further three at Sundar. Five suspected illegal
immigrants from Indonesia were also arrested at Lubok Antu on the 1st. Arms continued to
be recovered as well, with a series of operations on 3 April gleaning seven shotguns and a
large quantity of ammunition. A night curfew was then imposed over much of the Brunei
Bay area and Hawker Hunter jets employed, all in an effort to locate Yassin Affandy and his
companions. One kampong, Berakas, three miles from Brunei Town, was even searched one

by the Commander-in-Chief, Far East on Operations in Borneo 16th January–16th September, 1963, CINCFE.49/64, 6 May,
1964, Annex B: Report on the Operations of the Land Forces in the Borneo Territories from 16th January to 16th September,
1963, para. 12.
176 TNA, CO 1035/159, Item 12, Current Assessment of the Situation in the Borneo Territories for Combined Intelligence Staff
177 TNA, CO 1035/159, Item 11, Extract from the Joint Intelligence Committee Review of Current Intelligence 26-3-63, 26
building at a time in a vain attempt to locate a food courier or someone else who could point the security forces towards Affandy.178

At this point, the rumblings of discontent from Indonesia, such as the increasingly hostile press comment about the embryonic Federation of Malaysia and the vitriolic broadcasts of the Voice of Kalimantan Utara radio station, discussed in detail later in this chapter, escalated, with an attack on 12 April on the police post at Tebedu, three miles from the border in the First Division.179 This is usually cited as the opening salvo of Konfrontasi, but its significance in this context is simply that it turned the full attention of the security forces away from their mopping up operations: mayhap Affandy and his comrades would have been captured sooner had the authorities not been distracted by this and other Indonesian-originated incidents. It may also signify the recognition on the Indonesians’ part that the Brunei Rebellion was well and truly over and could offer no further benefit to it in its campaign against Malaysia.

On 17 April, two major arrests were made, firstly of Osman Mahmud in one of his brother Nikman’s houses on Jalan Tutong, five miles outside of Brunei Town. Osman and another of his brothers, Salleh, had moved closer to Brunei Town in the first week of April and taken shelter in different relatives’ houses, presumably seeking a more comfortable existence and the company of family. Someone, however, informed the Special Branch of Osman’s location and the house was raided by the police and a party from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Duke of Edinburgh’s Own Gurkha Rifles (2/7GR) shortly before midnight on 17 April. The search went on for two hours before Captain Keith Burnett of the Royal Artillery climbed a chair to look into the roof space, whereupon Osman shot him in the chest; Burnett died soon after he reached the hospital. Four of the Gurkhas then fired into the ceiling and

Osman surrendered, having been wounded in the shoulder. Osman, too, died as a result of his wounds in Brunei Town Hospital on 23 April.  

The second significant arrest to take place that night was that of Salleh Mahmud, the third of Azahari’s brothers, who had taken refuge at the residence of his brother-in-law, Pengiran Salleh, when he and Osman returned to town. Few details of his capture were released to the press, only that he had been detained at a house in Muara and offered no resistance though he had a rifle; he was described as “sick and anaemic”.  

Zariani’s account is very different:  

At 1700 hours, after asr (afternoon) prayers on 18 April 1963, Pengiran Salleh, looking pale and tense, came to persuade Sheikh Salleh to give himself up to the authorities. He had discussed Sheikh Salleh’s plight with the whole family and the latter thought it best for Sheikh Salleh to surrender to the authorities. Just the night before, Sheikh Osman was shot in an exchange of fire with British soldier, Captain Bennett [sic] and was fatally wounded . . . His mother was weeping at home and urging Sheikh Salleh to give up. If Sheikh Salleh did not give up Pengiran Salleh would be in trouble and his brother, CPO Pengiran Jaya would be put in a very difficult position. After half-an-hour Sheikh Salleh decided to give up. With a sense of tired and empty resignation he packed his .303 rifle and bullets as well as the Sterling automatic sub-machine gun belonging to Sheikh Osman which he did not know how to handle. They went into Pengiran Salleh’s car and reached Brunei Town by 1800 hours. Before they reached Brunei Town, on the way they met CPO Pengiran Jaya and one or two British Army officers in plain clothes, including Captain Gregory from Intelligence. Behind them were two landrovers [sic] of Gurkha soldiers. They were on their way to arrest Sheikh Salleh. Perhaps, Pengiran Salleh had already talked to his brother, Pengiran Jaya about persuading Sheikh Salleh. They talked with Pengiran Salleh and then transferred Sheikh Salleh to the police car driven by Capt. Gregory without any escort.  

Nikman Mahmud, too, had been arrested at some stage, at another of his houses in Kampong Tasek Meradun on Jalan Tutong.  

On 24 April, Biden Srtal, also known as Biden Matasan, a member of the Lawas branch of the TNKU, surrendered to a customs officer at Kuala Lawas. On the same day, in Kampong Ayer, the Special Branch arrested Beliang Dana on information received from the public. Loudspeaker vehicles had also been used that day to advise Kampong Ayer residents against harbouring rebels in their houses or assisting them in any way. In the first days of  

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183 Ibid., p. 187.
May, two rebels were captured by the security forces in the Brunei area, Lieutenant Salleh Mahal and Mohd. Yassin Badar, while a third, Tuah Chupak, had surrendered in Tutong. A military spokesman was then quoted in *The Borneo Bulletin* as having stated that only four of the nine most wanted TNKU leaders remained at large: Yassin Affandy, HB Hidup, Abdullah Ja’afar, and Mesir Keruddin. He also said that over $100,000 had been paid out to members of the public under the rewards scheme since 9 January and encouraged people to continue to provide such information in an effort to eliminate the last remaining vestiges of the TNKU.184

By this time, the security forces were certain that the hard-core rebels had fled the jungle and returned to the kampongs and towns, as MacKintosh informed the CO: “So long as they are free they remain [a] grave menace, spreading subversion and keeping [the] flame of [the] revolt alight. Their capture or surrender would probably lead to [the] early surrender of the 80 to 90 lesser rebel fry also still at large”.185 The information required to bring about this desirable result was not being volunteered, so the Sultan was persuaded to make a radio broadcast, which would also be filmed and shown throughout Brunei, to encourage rebels to surrender and the public to persuade them to do so or provide information leading to their arrest. The Sultan, however, refused to include what MacKintosh thought to be the key assurance: that no rebel who surrendered by 14 June would be executed. His grounds for this position included a concern that such an assurance would be both constitutionally and legally improper, the possibility that the people who had suffered the most during the revolt would baulk at such a promise, and a religious objection that only the families of those murdered could pardon the murderer. General Walker, Mentri Besar Marsal Maun, Deputy Mentri Besar Pengiran Ali Pengiran Mohd. Daud, and Attorney General Idris Talog Davies all joined with MacKintosh in attempts to persuade the Sultan otherwise, with the latter of the belief that his religious concern was the real reason behind his position. A press release


185 TNA, CO 1030/1468, Item 277, Telegram to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 137, 15 May, 1963, para. 1.
summarising the Sultan’s broadcast did not mention any reference to clemency for the rebels, so, assuming the release did not miss such a vital element, one can conclude that the Sultan had, in the end, won the argument. 186

The safe conduct passes mentioned briefly above during the discussion on psychological operations were credited in mid-May with the capture of three rebels, Captain Besar Osman, Lieutenant Abdul Hamid Munak, and Haji Kaffin Haji Damit. The three had surrendered to the ketua kampong of Kampong Saba near Brunei Town, having decided that they could no longer live in the jungle. These passes assured rebels that they could give themselves up without risk of being shot, while a military spokesman made the additional promise that anyone who surrendered would be given the fairest treatment possible. 187

The full story of the capture of Yassin Affandy and his comrades on 18 May is told in Appendix VI, including the series of arrests leading the security forces to the location of their camp in the swamps near Kampong Serdang, on the banks of the Sungei Brunei. B Company, 2/7GR mounted the operation, under the command of Major DJ Cutfield and with Military Intelligence Officer Captain JFH Gregory and Sergeant Mohammad Abdul Momin of the Brunei Special Branch in attendance, as well as a guide, who had been a food courier for the rebel party. Major Cutfield deployed two of his platoons at cut-off points to prevent the rebels from escaping to the south and approached the camp from the opposite direction with ten Gurkhas, Captain Gregory, and Sergeant Mohammad. Before the camp was properly in sight, Captain Gregory thought they had been seen and the assault party opened fire, while Sergeant Mohammad called upon the rebels to surrender. Only one, later identified as Abdullah Ja’afar, did so, with the remaining nine men escaping. One party of four headed north and another four went west; the ninth, a youth employed as the camp cook, managed to evade capture that day, but later surrendered. 188

The rebels who had headed north encountered Rifleman Nainabahadur Rai from one of the cut-off parties, who had taken cover behind a tree in an area of overgrown rubber. He saw the four approaching him at about 75 yards’ distance but did not fire for fear of hitting his comrades, who had been deployed in a circular formation. The first rebel saw him when he was about 30 yards away from Nainabahadur and charged towards the Rifleman, who opened fire, killing the leading two, HB Hidup and Muntol Aji, and wounding Yassin Affandy and Lalim Haji Sapar. The other party of four were chased by Riflemen Balaman Rai and Indrajit Rai and located in some undergrowth short of the cut-off line. These four were Mesi Keruddin, Salleh Sambas, Sambas Murah, and Abdul Rahman Karim. This elimination of the command group of the TNKU effectively marked the end of the mopping up operation, with only rank and file rebels remaining at large.\textsuperscript{189}

Few details are available about the capture of these lower-ranking rebels, but \textit{The Borneo Bulletin} stated that the last rebel known to be at large, Omar Tamin, formerly a member of the PRB Central Executive Committee, surrendered to a policeman at the Panaga Police Station on 21 October, having arrived in a taxi. Despite this achievement, the police and military held a combined exercise from 6 to 11 December in order to forestall any incidents that might coincide with the first anniversary of the revolt. All police leave was cancelled and troops were placed on 24-hour standby, while patrols were stepped up, roadblocks established, and upriver police warned to watch for suspicious vessels. In the event, no incidents were reported anywhere in Brunei during the course of the exercise.\textsuperscript{190}

Previously, in August, it was reported that armed men had been seen in a kampong in Temburong, one amongst them being recognised as someone who had disappeared before the rebellion, presumably for training in Kalimantan. Shortly afterwards, six men were captured at Long Lopeng, near the border with North Borneo in the Lawas District, who revealed under interrogation that they were part of a group of 26 TNKU sent back from


Kalimantan to stir trouble in Temburong. A mixed patrol of the 2nd Battalion, 6th Queen Elizabeth’s Own Gurkha Rifles and Border Scouts attacked the camp of the main body of the party, but all escaped; by the end of August, it was thought that casualties and desertions had depleted the numbers of this group to about ten. As late as 9 November, the Brunei government was dropping leaflets in Temburong calling on two of those remaining to surrender. 191

The TNKU and PRB in Detention

A natural sequel to the tale of the rebellion and its aftermath is a description of what happened to those rebels who had been detained by the governments of Brunei, Sarawak, and North Borneo. While the rebellion was ongoing, the accommodation of prisoners was, naturally, fairly rudimentary, with the first rebels captured in Brunei Town housed in the tennis courts opposite the police station, since the gaol at Jerudong was under TNKU control. Leslie Hoffman of The Straits Times criticised this heavily, describing it as degrading and humiliating treatment, which White countered in a telegram to the CO by explaining that it was “a temporary military necessity: while in the tennis court they could be guarded by troops and police who were at the same time guarding force H.Q.” in the police station. 192 The prisoners were moved to the Boon Pang Cinema several days later, when troops were available to guard them and where conditions were better. Further afield, 400 rebels were held on Pulau Papan, a small island southeast of Labuan, though the locations at which these particular detainees were captured are unknown. 193


The Brunei Town prisoners were moved to a more permanent detention centre at the **Maktab Perguruan Melayu Brunei** (Brunei Malay Teachers’ College) at Berakas, with the college’s students transferred to the Berakas Malay School. Though the details are unclear, it is logical to assume that modifications, such as the erection of perimeter fencing and additional facilities, were made to the college to prepare it for its new residents before their arrival. By the end of January, around 1,100 detainees were housed at Berakas, under the supervision of a detachment from the RFMP Field Force, as well as the Gurkha Guard Dog Unit. The floods forced a temporary relocation when the camp flooded up to waist deep in some places on 17 January. All detainees were moved to the Chung Hua School on the outskirts of Brunei Town on the 18th, after a perimeter fence had been erected and electricity and water services provided at the new location. The detainees returned to Berakas on 26 January, once the waters had subsided and the resulting damage had been repaired.194

A second centre was located at Seria, which held about 600 people by the end of January and was staffed by a general duties detachment of the RFMP. This facility was closed by the end of February, with the occupants transferred to Berakas. Another, much smaller camp, known as Muara Lodge, was established for the most hard-core of rebels and PRB leaders, with a capacity of only 11 and staffed by 1/2GR. Zariani has given a more detailed, if lurid, description of conditions there:

> While the rank-n-file [sic] rebels were carted off to Berakas Detention Camp straightaway, the VIP detainees were clamped into Muara Lodge, former residence of the British High Commissioner to Brunei, for the first six months. The former garage of Muara Lodge which used to shelter Rolls Royces and Bentleys was converted into eight tiny cells. One prisoner to one rectangular cell, providing a space of 10 x 8 feet. One could not even slip one’s hand through the only narrow slit of barred ventilation on the upper reaches of the wall. The tropical sun outside would not dare enter the dark cells of the forsaken prisoners, like the proverbial places where Angels fear to tread. Huddled on the hard cement floor only covered with thin pandanus mats, the prisoners rolled up the rough, itchy blankets to serve as pillows . . . The stifling heat in the stuffy cells forced them to be invariably in shorts, and sleeping on the cold cement floor could cause rheumatism.195

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195 Zariani, *op. cit.*, p. 227; TNA, WO 305/2519, “Detainees”, Annex B to Minutes of a Meeting of the Borneo Operations Committee held at HQ COMBRITBOR at 1400 hours 16 January 63, CBB 14/1, 16 January, 1963, paras. 1-2; Ignatius Stephen,
Early on, the conditions at Berakas were also sub-standard, with cerebro-spinal meningitis claiming the life of at least one detainee; over-crowding was suspected to be the cause.\textsuperscript{196}

Conditions in Berakas appear to have been more comfortable, especially as time passed and the facility became more permanent. The medical attention all detainees received when necessary was a definite improvement on what they had had in their previous lives, especially for the poorer rebels, as was their diet. Families and friends of detainees were also allowed to send comfort packages to them, containing things like extra clothing and prayer mats, as well as special parcels during festive holidays like Chinese New Year and Ramadan.\textsuperscript{197}

The question of which detainees could be released and when to do so received attention from both the Brunei government and military authorities early in the process, with Lord Selkirk urging “as clement a policy as practicable” on the Sultan in a meeting with the monarch and his advisors on 18 December, bearing in mind the belief of many rebels that they had only been supporting their Sultan when they participated in the revolt.\textsuperscript{198} The BOSC, in a meeting on 11 January, concluded that a Committee of Review would be the most appropriate method of clearing most of the rebels from detention, especially those who had been coerced into joining the TNKU and those assessed as least culpable. At the same meeting, White had emphasised the difficulties inherent in attempting to prosecute any rebels with offences such as treason or waging war against the Sultan, and stated that many detainees must eventually be released without charge.\textsuperscript{199}

The BOC recommended the segregation of the leaders of the rebellion from the main body of detainees and the organisation of a rehabilitation programme, which must include an oath of loyalty to the Sultan to be taken before four religious officials, as well as parole and reporting conditions, the content of which would be settled later. Two days later, it was

\textsuperscript{196}TNA, WO 305/2519, Part III: Army Intelligence to Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 3: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 19 January 1963, 21 January, 1963, para. 14e.


\textsuperscript{198}ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 332, 22 December, 1962, para. 1.

\textsuperscript{199}TNA, WO 305/2519, Minutes of the Borneo Security Council held at the Office of the High Commissioner for Brunei at 1100 hours 11th January 1963, 13 January, 1963, paras. 9b & 9g-h.
decided to release all detainees assessed to fall into the category designated white, those who had participated least in the revolt and those who had been intimidated into participation. A location for a rehabilitation centre, at the Malay School at Bunut, and a nucleus of staff to undertake the work there had also been found, though Wing Commander Derry was experiencing difficulty in attracting any local staff. Another problem encountered in the staffing of the centre was the shortage of people with the necessary skills who also spoke Bahasa Melayu to the required high standard, which was exacerbated by the reluctance of the Malayan government to increase its involvement in matters directly pertaining to the rebellion in order to minimise the validity of grounds for its opponents, both domestically and internationally, to criticise it for its support for the Brunei government against the rebels. 200

The Attorney General, Davies, made various formal proposals on 23 January in order to execute the Sultan’s declared intention of exercising the greatest degree of clemency that was compatible with maintaining the security of the state. Firstly, he suggested that the Mentri Besar should delegate his powers under the Emergency Orders concerning the cancellation and variation of detention orders to the Commissioner of Police, enabling those least involved with the TNKU to be released, with or without parole conditions. A Committee of Review would then examine the cases of the remainder, while attendance at a rehabilitation centre would be made a pre-condition of all detainees’ release. Davies then addressed the question of prosecutions, emphasising the need for full briefs of evidence in each case and the fact that information that was used as intelligence would usually be inadmissible in court. The probable lack of enthusiasm of some detainees for giving evidence in open court was also raised. The key passages in the paper were these:

Again, however, careful consideration would have to be given to any prosecution under any of the sections under Chapter VI of the Penal Code, namely those relating to offences against the State, as it must be borne in mind that a genuine, though mistaken, belief by a rebel that his actions were approved by His Highness [the Sultan] would constitute a defence to charges based on these sections. It would also

200 TNA, WO 305/2519, Minutes of a Meeting of the Borneo Operations Committee held at HQ COMBRITBOR at 1400 hours 16 January 63, CBB 14/1, 16 January, 1963, paras. 4-5; Minutes of the Borneo Security Council held at the Office of the High Commissioner for Brunei at 1400 hours 18 January 1963, CBB14/2, 18 January, 1963, paras. 20-23; ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the Second Secretary, Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 159, 19 January, 1963, para. 3.
be undesirable to launch prosecutions which could be described as “political trials”, and would therefore attract the maximum publicity. Probably the easiest charge to sustain would be membership of an unlawful society, where the evidence would seem to be more easily obtainable than in other cases. If, however, the Investigation Papers clearly show prima facie evidence of such crimes as murder, housebreaking, etc. etc., it would be proper for a prosecution to be launched on the specific offence alleged if the evidence is available.\footnote{201}

These measures were likely implemented, with a steady stream of releases, as will be discussed below, and a marked absence of prosecutions during the first few months of 1963. By April, however, MacKintosh was urging the Sultan to authorise the speedier release of those detainees classified grey, rank and file TNKU members who participated willingly but did not commit really serious offences. He also suggested a re-examination of the cases of those black detainees who would not be charged with serious offences in court, once all the greys had been released, in the hope of releasing them sooner as well. MacKintosh’s proposals were not dealt with until early May, when a course of action to clear as many detainees as possible was agreed: at least two Advisory Committees would be established to replace the Committee of Review and policies regarding the transfer of detainees to the rehabilitation centre would be clarified so that the benefit of the doubt would always be applied in the detainees’ favour. The overall aim was to release all 1,200 greys as speedily as possible, leaving the 300 detainees classed as black to be dealt with at a later time.\footnote{202}

Early in March, an effort had been made to make use of any PRB leaders in detention who might be willing to advocate Brunei’s participation in Malaysia publicly and to condemn Azahari’s entanglement with Indonesia. The Sultan asked White, who was close to retirement, to see the detainees and assess their sincerity and suitability for the role, and the latter enhanced the plan by suggesting that the leaders might be used to launch a new political party under the leadership of Pengiran Yusuf Pengiran Abdul Rahim that would be “pledged to constitutional reform and Malaysia”.\footnote{203} The three leaders selected for White to interview were Hapidz Laksamana, Pengiran Metussin Pengiran Lampoh, and Tengah Hasip.

\footnote{201 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 147, “Policy on Detainees”, Paper by the Attorney General, 23 January, 1963, paras. 1-6.}
\footnote{202 TNA, CO 1030/1468, Item 250, Draft Letter to His Highness the Sultan of Brunei from the High Commissioner for Brunei, 9 April, 1963, para. (b); Item 276, Letter to WU Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/304/63(111), 5 May, 1963, paras. 2-4.}
\footnote{203 TNA, CO 1030/1467, Item 146, Letter to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/63, 2 March, 1963, paras. 1-3 & 5.}
all PRB leaders who had denied fore-knowledge of the existence of the TNKU, though White doubted their veracity on this point. Briefly, White’s assessment was that Hapidz was reliable and very willing to co-operate, while Tengah was not a natural leader, but he would provide some assistance in advocating for Malaysia amongst the people. Pengiran Metussin impressed White the most, though he remained keen for Brunei to become independent before Malaysia, if only for a day. White’s recommendation was that all three could be paroled, as well as three unnamed others, to speak to people in the kampongs and perhaps join with Pengiran Yusuf in the proposed new party.  

The actual release of the three men was delayed by security concerns, with the Mentri Besar demanding more comprehensive reports on their activities both prior to and during the revolt before he would contemplate paroling them. MacKintosh believed that both Marsal and the Sultan would prefer to detain all of the occupants of Muara Lodge indefinitely and that neither had any wish to revive political activity on the lines that White had proposed. The Sultan was, however, described by JD Higham of the CO as “receptive” to the idea that the trio could tour the kampongs in support of his government and the Malaysia proposal. In the event, Pengiran Metussin was not released because of the extent of his involvement in the planning of the revolt, while Hapidz and Tengah were transferred for rehabilitation to Bunut on 19 May. Once they were freed, they would first be used to deliver suitably pro-government and pro-Malaysia addresses to all detainees and then be employed on the lecturing staff at Bunut, while making public broadcasts and assisting in psychological operations. The proposal for a new political party was entirely shelved. 

The rehabilitation offered at Bunut was, as Reuters characterised it, “designed to impress on the detainees the folly of armed resurrection”, while also providing lectures on the benefits of Malaysia for Brunei and the dangers of Communism.  

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204 TNA, CO 1030/1467, Item 174, Letter to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCOS/S/510/1/63, 5 March, 1963, paras. 1-4 & 6-7.
205 ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Cablegram to the DEA from Australia House, London, No. 1597, 8 April, 1963, para. 2; TNA, CO 1030/1468, Item 276, Letter to WIJ Wallace (CO) from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCOS/S/504/63(111), 5 May, 1963, para. 5.
206 TNA, CO 1030/1468, Item 289, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. 139A, 17 May, 1963, paras. 1-3.
course would depend on the classification of the detainees attending it, with those classed light grey staying for only three days while it was anticipated that the blacks would be there for two weeks. The first course, scheduled to last one week, began on 18 April and saw 49 light greys transferred to Bunut from Berakas, while the second group was 63-strong; the maximum capacity of the centre was 80. The release programme was held up when the Committee of Review rejected all but one of 60 detainees they had assessed for the course starting 2 May, leaving the centre empty for that week; this was the catalyst for the change from the Committee of Review to Advisory Committees described above. Generally speaking, courses at Bunut ran weekly until those designed for dark greys started in September, which lasted for ten days; mid-greys stayed for six days and light greys for five.208

Detainees had been released from the centres at Berakas and Seria before Bunut was established, primarily those classed as white, including a 15-year-old schoolboy. This proved to be an error in one case, when one man was re-arrested after being recognised upon his attempt to re-apply for his old job at Brunei Shell as one of those who had been involved in the human shield incident. Another was charged and cautioned in court for failing to report to the police under his parole conditions in October. A total of 544 detainees had been released by 3 May, with a further 207 discharged in June. A year later, only 605 of the 2,231 rebels captured up to the beginning of May 1963 remained in detention, of whom 233 were classified as black.209

Little data is available on prosecutions in Brunei arising from the rebellion, with only one such case occurring in 1963. Seventeen detainees were charged in the High Court on 24 July

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209 The Sarawak Tribune, “107 Detainees Released”, 31 January, 1963, p. 9; Reuter’s News Service, “Rebel Suspect Re-Detained”, The Sarawak Tribune, 5 February, 1963, p. 11; TNA, CO 1030/1491, Item 274, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 114, 3 May, 1963, paras. 1(a)-(b); Item 287, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 154, 3 June, 1963, para. 1(b); ANA, File 3032/2/9, Part 2, Borneo Territories Intelligence Digest No. 4, 3 June, 1964, para. 24(c).
with various robbery offences in the Temburong District: one pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 17 months’ imprisonment, while the remainder, including Balan Sagan, claimed trial. All 16 were discharged when Ram Kishan, the Director of Public Prosecutions, offered no evidence in support of the charges in the Magistrates’ Court on 24 December; the 16 were transferred from custody at Jerudong Gaol to the Berakas Detention Centre. Interestingly, it was reported at the time of the original hearing that more cases were being considered for prosecution, but the lack of further information leads to the suspicion that no other prosecutions were attempted, especially in light of the failure to proffer any evidence at the second trial.210

North Borneo employed a similar approach to dealing with its rebels, with 337 people detained under Emergency Regulations and 182 released by the end of the year. The detainees were held in the Central Prisons at Jesselton, though segregated from the regular prisoners. As was mentioned above, Sarawak chose to prosecute its rebels with a variety of charges, including consorting with persons about to act in a manner prejudicial to public security, conspiracy to deprive Her Majesty of the sovereignty of Sarawak, and overawe by criminal force the Government of Sarawak. By 20 February, 94 rebels had been sentenced in court for their involvement in events in the Limbang District, with a further 183 awaiting trial; 51 of the 94 had been sentenced to three years’ imprisonment, 17 to two years, and 26 to terms ranging between six months and two years.211

Azahari on the International Stage

What of Azahari, all this time? As already noted elsewhere, he had returned to his home in Johore Bahru from the Philippines early in December, where he was warned by Osman Mahmud that the decision had been taken to begin the revolt. He then made arrangements with Zaini Ahmad to meet in Singapore, from whence they would travel to Manila to await


the arrival of the Sarawak United People’s Party (SUPP) representatives before they would all depart for New York to appear before the UN’s Committee of Twenty-Four. The SUPP delegation’s decision to remain in Sarawak meant that Azahari and Zaini were still in Manila when the rebellion broke out.

At 6.10am on 8 December, the Mentri Besar telegraphed the following order to Lord Selkirk: “Arrest of Azahari and Zaini, charge of instigating armed insurrection in the State of Brunei. Warrant of arrest to follow. When arrested to be detained outside (repeat outside) Brunei.”212 Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, too, had ordered Azahari’s arrest that morning, before the British High Commission at Kuala Lumpur received a copy of this telegram, but, of course, Azahari and Zaini had left the previous day.213 British authorities in the area then expended much effort and many telegrams in an endeavour, firstly, to discover if the pair could be arrested and, secondly, what to do with them were this to occur, which will be briefly summarised below.

The US Embassy in London suggested that Azahari and Zaini might be deported upon their arrival in New York if the Brunei government was to withdraw their passports. High Commissioner Sir Geofroy Tory in Kuala Lumpur passed on a request from the Tunku that either the British or American governments “take action” against them, keeping in mind the warrant out for their arrest.214 The British Embassy in Manila, meanwhile, reported a conversation between Philippine Vice-President Emmanuel Pelaez and the American Ambassador in the course of which the former had said that Manila’s representatives at the UN would assist Azahari and his party, while Pelaez’s department had already requested a visa for a Filipino secretary whom Azahari intended to take to New York. Ambassador John Pilcher also noted that Azahari and Zaini planned to leave for New York on 11 December.215

212 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 20, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 42, 8 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
213 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 48, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 920, 8 December, 1962, para. 3.
214 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 69, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 922, 8 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 53, Telegram to the Acting High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State to the Colonies, Personal No. 183, 8 December, 1962, para. 1.
215 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 108, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Personal No. 190, 9 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
On 9 December, the British Embassy in Washington confirmed the US State Department’s instructions to its mission in Manila not to give Azahari or Zaini a visa without reference to Washington. The US Embassy in Manila had reported that the pair had yet to apply, while Pilcher requested a copy of the arrest warrants from Brunei by both telegram and airmail, in the hope that this would encourage the Philippine government to apprehend them. The next day, the Foreign Office (FO) informed Pilcher that Azahari’s passport had been revoked and that both the US Embassy and, if possible, Azahari himself should be told. The regular procedure in this scenario would be to offer Azahari an emergency certificate valid only for travel to Brunei, but London stated that it would be preferable if this were withheld for the time being, presumably because of the Mentri Besar’s request that the two PRB leaders be detained outside of the Sultanate.\(^{216}\)

Pilcher passed on the US Ambassador’s warning that Azahari could still be granted a visa if he possessed an invitation from the UN Secretary-General to appear before the Committee of Twenty-Four. He also advised that Zaini’s passport be withdrawn as well, in case he went to New York in Azahari’s place. Finally, Pilcher sought instruction on the issue of the passports of Azahari’s family, comprising one of his wives, an infant, and his father-in-law. Washington reported on 11 December that both Azahari and Zaini had applied for visas and expanded on the obligations of the US towards the UN:

The State Department, however, warn us that despite our request and that of the Malaysians the agreement between the United States Government and the United Nations places them under an obligation to admit either or both of these men if a request should be made by an appropriate organ of the United Nations. They suspect that Azahari will become aware of this. The fact that his passport facilities have been withdrawn can only delay his entry in the event of a request being made.\(^{217}\)

On 14 December, Lord Selkirk asked the UK’s mission to the UN what the prospects were of the Committee of Twenty-Four extending such an invitation to Azahari or Zaini. The response of Sir Patrick Dean, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the

\(^{216}\) TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 131, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the United States, No. 3097, 9 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 112, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 14, 9 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 158, Telegram to the Ambassador to the Philippines from the FO, No. 472, 10 December, 1962, para. 1. At the time, all Bruneians travelled on British passports classified as British Protected Persons, so it was the British government’s responsibility to revoke the documents of Azahari and Zaini.

\(^{217}\) TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 270, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the United States, No. 3112, 11 December, 1962, paras. 2-3; Item 225, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 318, 11 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.
United Nations, was that the General Assembly would almost certainly adjourn on 21 December and the likelihood of the question of Brunei being raised before then was low unless either Azahari or Zaini managed to reach New York. The next opportunity for the issue to be raised would be the next meeting of the Committee of Twenty-Four, which was not likely to occur before the end of January.\footnote{218 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 417, Telegram to the UK Mission to the UN from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 16, 14 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 435, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, No. 2412, 15 December, paras. 1 & 3.}

Meanwhile, the FO had advised Pilcher in Manila of its views concerning the presence of the two PRB leaders:

> For your own information, we and the Colonial Office would also prefer that Azahari remains in the Philippines. He could arouse a good deal of support from the Afro-Asians if he were to go to New York, while in Djakarta there would be every danger of his becoming the spearhead of serious Indonesian efforts. He is very unlikely to set foot on British territory as he would be liable to arrest. While therefore we do not want to appear in any way to approve his being in Manila and his contacts with the Filipinos, we should not want you to do anything to get him moved on. Lord Selkirk and the High Commissioner in Brunei will doubtless comment if they disagree.\footnote{219 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 430, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Personal No. 202, 15 December, 1962, para. 1.}

Pilcher agreed with this assessment, though, he said, he was “apprehensive of [the] mischief [Philippine Ambassador to the UN] Salvador Lapez [sic, Lopez] could do on his return here on December 21”.\footnote{220 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 447, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 339, 17 December, 1962, para. 1.} Pilcher also reported rumours that Azahari intended to take the next flight to Jakarta on the 20th.\footnote{221 Ibid., para. 3.}

The next day, 18 December, The Manila Press quoted a diplomatic source as having said that the Indonesian Ambassador had asked Pelaez if the Philippine government would be willing to co-sponsor an Afro-Asian motion in the UN General Assembly advocating international intervention in Brunei. The FO instructed its Embassy in Jakarta to give this message to the Indonesian government:

> You should tell Indonesian Government that we have heard that Azahari might come to Indonesia and warn them that this would create a bad impression here. We realize Indonesia has the right to grant political asylum to whom she pleases, but Azahari is in no danger in Manila and could not be regarded as a refugee if he came to Indonesia.
> If Indonesian Government nevertheless felt obliged to let him come, we hope they will bear in mind the clear distinction between granting asylum and allowing Azahari to engage on Indonesian soil in political activity hostile to Her Majesty’s
Government, a Government with whom Indonesia is in friendly relations. If Azahari were allowed to do this, it would create a deplorable impression here and provide confirmation for rumours of Indonesian involvement in Brunei disturbances.  

By 21 December, the Philippine media was reporting that Azahari intended to return to Borneo in the next week “to lead his men personally in [the] fight against the British”.  The CO observed that his method of travel was unlikely to be anything other than clandestine, though, if he asked, British authorities would find it difficult to refuse to issue an emergency travel certificate. If Azahari was to return to northern Borneo or Malaya, it was expected that he would be detained under Britain’s Fugitive Offenders Act, 1881 until he could be sent to Brunei. Selkirk commented that Azahari was most likely bluffing and sought clarification as to who was to detain him if Brunei did not.

The CO’s response to Selkirk’s query was that the Fugitive Offenders Act required that the state that issued the warrant be the one to detain the individual in question. The trial and imprisonment of Azahari, in particular, in Brunei could prove to be an embarrassment and London sought White’s views on this point. Other territories where the PRB leader landed might be able to find other laws under which to prosecute him, with the last resort being his declaration as a prohibited immigrant and subsequent deportation. The FO, meanwhile, had encouraged the Embassy in Manila to make every effort to keep Azahari and Zaini there as long as possible, primarily via administrative means such as approaching other friendly missions to see if transit visas might be denied them where possible.

White was quick to respond:

In my view, trial and imprisonment of Azahari in Brunei would present grave risk to security. There is some indication that his prestige is diminished by his absence during the revolt and he is blamed for the trouble by some less militant followers, but this is not by any means a widely held view and his return would probably result in an upsurge of popular feeling.

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222 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 479, Telegram to the Ambassador to Indonesia from the FO, No. 1064, 18 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; Item 469, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 345, 18 December, 1962, para. 1.
223 TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 594, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Personal No. 206, 21 December, 1962, para. 1.
224 Ibid., paras. 2-4; Item 609, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 93, 26 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.
225 TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 627, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, No. 190, 29 December, 1962, paras. 1-3; Item 624, Telegram to the Ambassador to the Philippines from the FO, No. 617, 28 December, 1962, para. 2.
I meantime hold warrants for his arrest, and that of Zaini, but would definitely prefer not to have to seek extradition for them.\(^{226}\)

Governor Waddell stated that Sarawak could arrest both men under the Fugitive Offenders Act and advised that they could be tried before the joint High Court of northern Borneo in any of the three territories. His assessment, though, was that a trial elsewhere than Brunei would be politically undesirable. There was, in any case, insufficient evidence in the possession of the government of Sarawak to proceed with any criminal charges; as a result, Waddell proposed that Azahari, if he arrived in Sarawak, could be detained under the Preservation of Public Security (Detention) Regulation, 1962.\(^{227}\)

Governor Sir William Goode of North Borneo made similar statements, but expanded on the possible courses of action and the legal background:

There is a case against him to justify arrest and detention under the Preservation of Public Security Ordinance. But clearly the main case against him arises in Brunei and by comparison the case here is weak. Continued detention here would become increasingly open to criticism and might well cease to be justifiable. . . .

It is evident, however, from recent discussions with High Commissioner, Brunei, and Commissioner General that Brunei is not yet in a position to carry out a criminal prosecution of Azahari. Nor indeed is it yet safe to assume that such a criminal prosecution would be politically sound. The more prudent course, therefore, is to hold Azahari in detention until a firm decision can be made, in the light of the circumstances at the time, of his future disposal.

Should he arrive in North Borneo, I shall, therefore, not have him arrested under the Fugitive Offenders procedure, since this would automatically set in train the court process leading to trial in Brunei. He will be arrested and detained under our Preservation of Public Security Order. It will be necessary, however, to reach a quick decision on his future since I doubt whether I shall be able to justify holding him here for more than a few weeks. I can, however, hold him in detention here on a detention order issued by the Brunei Government if they so request. But legislation authorising this will lapse in June unless extended by the Legislative Council.\(^{228}\)

RL Joseph, an official in Selkirk’s office in Singapore, then wrote to JD Higham at the CO to ask for legal advice on the question of whether Azahari could be charged with treason in Brunei, “in the sense that he took up arms against the Sultan”.\(^{229}\) Higham responded by saying that this was really a matter for Brunei’s Attorney General and listed the various laws under which Azahari could be arrested in Sarawak, North Borneo, Singapore, and Malaya.

\(^{226}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 59, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, No. G1 Saving, 29 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.

\(^{227}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 11, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.5, 4 January, 1963, paras. 1-3.

\(^{228}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 22, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 5, 5 January, 1963, paras. 2 & 4-5.

\(^{229}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 60, Letter from JD Higham (CO) to RL Joseph, Office of the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, R 1012/23/63, 8 January, 1963, para. 1.
He went on to say, in response to White’s preference not to have Azahari back in Brunei, that “[i]t would be most awkward if we had to let him slip through our fingers, though I realise the Brunei difficulty”. 230

Azahari’s professed intention of travelling to Tanganyika for the Afro-Asian Peoples’ Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) Conference, discussed in detail below, caused the High Commissioner in Dar es Salaam to advise London that Tanganyika was unlikely to exclude Azahari from the conference, simply because they would not deny access to any international personage whose presence would not be prejudicial to Tanganyikan interests. DGR Bentliff of the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO), in a letter on the question of whether Azahari could be arrested in Commonwealth countries en route to Tanganyika, mused about the wider issue:

We are agreed that it would be best for him to stay in Manila but what are our views about the order of preference for the alternatives? Is he likely to be less trouble in other countries such as the U.A.R. [United Arab Republic], Tanganyika etc. than in Indonesia or the Borneo Territories: is he likely to be more embarrassing on the loose in foreign parts than under arrest in [a] British or other Commonwealth territory: is it essential to prevent him pleading his cause at the A.A.P.S.O. Conference or even the U.N., or could we drum up opposition from the Borneo Territories in any such fora and try to demolish his case in the limelight of world opinion? 231

The Tunku was reported in late January to have heard that Egypt, still known as the United Arab Republic (UAR) though Syria had seceded in 1961, had granted Azahari a travel document with which he intended to travel to the UAR. London then sought to clarify the views of the governments of Malaya and Singapore on what to do if Azahari were to be detained in their countries, since nothing had yet been heard on this point and it was believed that the Fugitive Offenders Act was the primary weapon in their arsenal. Kuala Lumpur responded to this appeal on 31 January with the news that the Federation government was of the view that it could arrest Azahari under its own laws without a commitment to returning him to Brunei, but a firm decision would not be made until the situation actually arose. Tory observed that political circumstances would make it impossible for the Federation to allow

231 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 82, Letter to IH Harris (CO) from DGR Bentliff (CRO), FE.131/36/1, 17 January, 1963, para. 8; Item 43, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to Tanganyika, No. 14, 9 January, 1963, para. 1.
him to remain at large, but that detaining him indefinitely was equally impossible; the High Commissioner commented that Malaya’s most likely course was to declare him a prohibited immigrant and deport him, though his destination in such a case was uncertain.\textsuperscript{232} These speculations and contingency plans, in the end, all came to naught when Azahari went to Jakarta and Zaini to Hong Kong, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Media coverage of the activities of Azahari and Zaini in Manila was, naturally, quite extensive, starting with a press conference on 8 December held by the former:

Inche M. Azahari, President of Brunei’s Ra’ayat Party, said here today that if the insurgent army was attacked by British troops, its orders were “to destroy the Shell Company installations and other British installations.”

“What the British should do now is to think twice and negotiate immediately,” he declared at a press conference.

Mr. Azahari claimed the Sultan of Brunei, Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin, had established a “United States of Borneo” and raised the United Borneo flag in Brunei this morning. The party president said the new government would safeguard the lives and property of all Europeans in Borneo “unless they take up arms against us.”

Mr. Azahari, who claimed he had been designated Prime Minister in the new government, said the “North Borneo National Army” had 20,000 men and intended to take over the three territories of Brunei, North Borneo and Sarawak. He said the army struck simultaneously at 20 towns and “should now be laying siege in Jesselton,” capital of North Borneo.\textsuperscript{233}

Pilcher reported that Azahari had also stated that the reason for the rebellion was the “British refusal to give Borneo people [the] right to self-determination and attempt to force them into Malaysia. [The] British should think twice and get out immediately.”\textsuperscript{234}

Azahari announced the policies of his new ‘government’ at the same press conference: politically, to install the Sultan as the constitutional and parliamentary head of state; economically, to protect foreign interests as long as they are not in conflict with the national interest; and globally, Brunei would remain a member of the Commonwealth while seeking membership in the UN. In addition, closer ties to the Philippines would be fostered, largely through support for President Diosdado Macapagal’s concept of a confederation of Malaysia. Most importantly, Azahari’s statement announced that “the Revolutionary Government [of

\textsuperscript{232} TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 123, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 17, 24 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 130, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, No. 42, 25 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 164, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 150, 31 January, 1963, paras. 2-3.


\textsuperscript{234} TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 121A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 305, 8 December, 1962, para. 1.
Kalimantan Utara] is formed by and for the people of Sarawak, Brunei and Sabah and is neither foreign inspired nor influenced”.

The next day, 9 December, Azahari and Zaini held a second press conference, with the former threatening to confiscate British property in Brunei unless official recognition of his government was granted within a week. He also denied that the Sultan had denounced the rebellion: “How could the Sultan have asked for British troops when he has previously agreed with us that he would be the constitutional ruler of the unitary state we were struggling for?”.

Pilcher also reported that

[Azahari] made the following comments on his Governments [sic] proposed policy:
(A) It would be neutralist but anti-Communist. (B) It wished to conclude military and economic pacts with the Philippine Government and forge close ties of friendship [sic] with the Filipino people. (C) Any offer of help from the Philippine Government would be accepted whole heartedly but such an offer from Indonesia would require careful consideration. (D) He denied that he was a Communist and said he was a good Moslem, “a firm believer in God and a supporter of our beloved Sultan”.

The comment made by Zaini about the Sultan being shot if he opposed the rebellion, quoted in Chapter VIII, was made at this press conference.

By 10 December, Azahari claimed that the British were censoring news coming out of Borneo, pointing to conflicting reports as proof and stating that “[t]he British will have a taste of our strength when our forces attack Kuching”. He also appealed to the UN Secretary-General, U Thant, and other world leaders including President John Kennedy of the USA, President Sukarno of Indonesia, and Premier Ben Bella of Algeria to intervene in Brunei “to prevent further bloodshed”. He was quoted as saying:

In a few days I will return to Brunei to lead the forces personally in the field. Britain can pour all her armed might into Borneo to suppress the revolt but the fight will continue and we shall not lay down our arms until the last British coloniser is driven out and an independent Kalimantan firmly established.

Pilcher did not leave the field entirely to Azahari, releasing a statement on 10 December that detailed Britain’s treaty obligations to Brunei and emphasised the lack of support in

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235 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 90, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 306, 9 December, 1962, para. 6.
236 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 141, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 313, 10 December, 1962, paras. 3-4.
237 Ibid., para. 6.
238 The Straits Times, “Azahari’s plea to UN to end the fighting: From Manila a cable goes to U Thant to intervene”, 11 December, 1962, p. 1.
239 Ibid., pp. 1 & 20.
240 Ibid., p. 20.
Sarawak and North Borneo for the rebellion. Responding to questions, Pilcher denied any knowledge of Indonesian arms being provided to the TNKU and stated that he had no intention of contacting Azahari. Meanwhile, the Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines, Nazir Pamontjak, informed Pelaez that “it was the logical step for Indonesia to throw its support behind the Brunei revolutionaries’ ‘struggle for independence’”, while the Deputy Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives, Salipada Pendatun, praised the Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara’s (NKKU) proclamation of independence and urged the UN to intervene immediately.241

At his press conference on 11 December, Azahari contradicted himself on financial issues:

Inche Azahari told a press conference here today: “Britain can be assured we will not take a single cent of British investments, which will be safe throughout the territories, if we were given governmental authority.”

He added: “This, we had earlier assured the manager of the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company. We are still willing to sit down with the British. We are not anti-British, we are anti-colonialism.”

Manila’s afternoon newspapers of the same day reported that the PRB leader had sent a communiqué to all foreign diplomatic missions in the city requesting recognition of the NKKU.243

On 12 December, with the rebellion all but over, Azahari continued to insist that the Sultan was in rebel hands:

But he could not say definitely where he was until the arrival of a courier, due here shortly.

He challenged the British to produce proof of their claim that the Sultan still controlled Brunei and opposes the revolt.

Sheikh Azahari said that if the Sultan is still with the rebels, as he claimed, Britain had committed an act of aggression by sending troops to Borneo . . .

Sheikh Azahari said a fourth cable had been sent to U Thant, U.N. Secretary-General, asking for an immediate invitation to visit the United Nations . . .

Sheikh Azahari told reporters today he intends to ask the Philippine Government for protection for them both [he and Zaini].244


On 14 December, the Manila newspapers reported that Azahari had despatched cables to
the Partindo and to President Gamal Abdel Nasser of the UAR requesting military volunteers
to go to northern Borneo, apparently in response to news of the collapsing revolt and U
Thant’s failure to acknowledge his appeals. Azahari was stated to have decided to appeal for
volunteers from “all freedom-loving peoples” except India and the People’s Republic of
China, who had been the protagonists in a recent major border conflict.\textsuperscript{245} The Manila Times
cited “unimpeachable sources” in the Philippine Defence Department that claimed that
Azahari and Zaini had visited the Indonesian Embassy “at least seven times”, while also
reporting that Hardojo, a senior diplomat at the Embassy, had returned to Jakarta the
previous day, “presumably to get instructions and report on Azahari and the possible position
of the Philippine Government on the Borneo rebellion”.\textsuperscript{246} Pilcher suggested that Hardojo
may have actually been acting as a courier for Azahari. Finally, there were reports that the
Philippine government had discovered the theft of thousands of rounds of small arms
ammunition that it believed were being shipped by a Zamboanga-based syndicate to
Borneo.\textsuperscript{247}

That day, Reuters reported that Azahari intended to open a special information office in
Manila separate from the room at the Filipinas Hotel from which Nicasio Osmeña had been
issuing his statements previously, perhaps signalling an attempt to formalise the PRB
leaders’ presence in the Philippines. Osmeña denied a report in The Evening News that
Azahari planned to go to Indonesia to lead volunteers into northern Borneo, saying that he
would remain in Manila until he could travel to New York. The Manila press had afforded
wide coverage to the Sultan’s press conference in Brunei Town, mentioned above, and the
author of the British Embassy’s press analysis was quick to note that Azahari had had little
to say about this incontrovertible evidence that the Sultan did not support the revolt. The
Sultan of Sulu, meanwhile, was stated to have appointed Azahari “Datu Temmangang and

\textsuperscript{245} TNA, CO 1030/1072, Item 381, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 334, 14 December, 1962, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid., paras. 3 & 6.
\textsuperscript{247} TNA, CO 1030/1072, Item 382, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 335, 14 December, 1962, para. 1; ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Manila, No. 410, 14 December, 1962, para. 2.
Rajah of Sandakan”, as well as granting to him the “governmental powers previously
delegated to the Baron de Overbeck in 1878” 248

Singapore’s *Sunday Times* carried an article datelined 15 December that revealed the
claims of the inevitable ‘source close to’ Azahari that he had started to speak of a retreat of
his forces, planning to carry on his revolt from a rebel headquarters most likely on Mount
Kinabalu. Azahari himself, however, would remain in Manila, which was “the best centre to
voice his revolutionary cause to the world”.249 Osmeña, in his role as Azahari’s spokesman,
announced that Indonesian volunteers were “in the staging area”, ready to depart for northern
Borneo, though Jakarta denied that any request for arms or assistance had been made by the
TNKU.250 Azahari also released a situation report dated 11 December that had just arrived by
courier, which claimed that the rebels held nine areas while the British controlled only
four.251

Manila’s Sunday newspapers reported that Azahari had spoken at a meeting of a local
veterans’ organisation, where he appealed for support, presumably of the practical kind.
Azahari, in his statements that weekend, claimed to have despatched formal notes to the
missions of Indonesia, the UAR, Pakistan, and Iraq in Manila, appealing for the “help and
guidance” of the Muslim world.252 He also addressed the matter of the Sultan’s press
conference, saying that he must have been speaking under duress when he condemned the
rebellion, especially as recent photographs of him had not appeared. Reuters stated on 17
December that “informed sources close to Azahari” had said that “the revolt was far from
over” and that the TNKU intended to “strike again” soon.253

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250 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
252 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 466, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 341, 18 December, 1962, para. 4(a); CO 1030/1489, Item 1, Press Analysis – Philippine North Borneo Claim and the Revolt in the North Borneo Territories, Dec. 13 to Dec. 19, 1962, Enclosure to Letter to FA Warner (FO) from the Ambassador to the Philippines, 1057/845, 19 December, 1962, para. 21.
The next day, the same agency reported Azahari’s statement that he “would have no choice but to organise armed volunteers and send them to Borneo if the United Nations continued to side-step the Borneo issue”. He was now “considering arrangements for the immediate shipment to the fighting fronts in Borneo” of both Filipino and Indonesian volunteers and he would shortly confer with those union leaders in the Philippines whose organisations had offered assistance. Pelaez, responding to a question about the possibility of Filipino volunteers becoming involved in the revolt, said that this “would not be in accordance with the Philippine philosophy of solving such problems by peaceful means”, which was taken by The Manila Times to be a declaration that volunteers would not be permitted to leave the country.

On 18 December, Pilcher sent a telegram to London, Singapore, Brunei Town, and Bangkok requesting a wider range of information, articles, and photographs about and concerning Brunei in the hope of countering the pro-Azahari bent of the Manila press and the widespread belief in the Philippines that the rebellion was an “uprising of oppressed people seeking self determination [sic]”. A columnist in The Manila Daily Bulletin published a rumour on the 20th that Azahari intended to establish a newspaper in Manila for distribution in northern Borneo, presumably to disseminate his own propaganda and views. The Manila Times, meanwhile, was the only newspaper to report Azahari’s statement the next day that he intended to return to Borneo in the next week to personally lead the TNKU in its revolt, mentioned above, meaning that any intention to visit the UN had to be “put aside for the time being.” Azahari also said that he was considering the appointment of a NKKU


255 Ibid.

256 CO 1030/1073, Item 465A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 340, 18 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; CO 1030/1074, Item 545, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 351, 21 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1073, Item 73, Press Analysis – Philippine North Borneo Claim and the Revolt in the North Borneo Territories, Dec. 20 to Dec. 26, 1962, Enclosure to Letter to FA Warner (FO) from the Ambassador to the Philippines, 1057/905, 26 December, 1962, para. 4.
‘ambassador to Indonesia’, Achmad Fadillah, and thanked Sukarno for the support for the rebels emanating from the Republic.  

The newspapers of 22 December published Azahari’s reaction to the dissolution of the Legislative Council and the creation of the Emergency Council in Brunei:

Reacting to this news, Azahari claimed that the Sultan must have been acting under duress, said that such an action was unconstitutional by virtue of Part VII, Section 85 (3) of the Brunei constitution and again stressed that his revolution was not against the Sultan but against the ‘British imperialists who want to hold the people of Kalimantan Utara in perpetual bondage’.  

On 24 December, Osmeña denied an allegation made by the Tunku that Azahari had promised North Borneo to the Philippines in exchange for support during the revolt.

By 26 December, “usually reliable sources” were again claiming that Azahari intended to leave Manila to visit “another friendly country sympathetic with his cause”, most likely that week. Nanyang Siang Pau of Singapore, meanwhile, published an interview with Azahari during the week preceding the 29th in which he was quoted as saying, “I am going back there [to Brunei] and, when I return, I will finish them [the British] off”. He also said, “If I go back there, I will kill all Europeans—men and women”, apparently in response to the detention of the wife whom he had left behind in Brunei Town. When asked about the collapse of the revolt, Azahari refused to believe that it had, in fact, failed, expressing his faith in the TNKU and stating that it would gain the final victory. Addressing the emotive issue of “how he could remain in Manila in comfort when his soldiers were suffering untold hardships in the jungle”, Azahari’s response was that, “although he was in Manila, he was not living under happy circumstances and he was considering ways to return to Borneo to lead his troops there”.  

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259 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 73, Press Analysis – Philippine North Borneo Claim and the Revolt in the North Borneo Territories, Dec. 20 to Dec. 26, 1962, Enclosure to Letter to FA Warner (FO) from the Ambassador to the Philippines, 1057/905, 26 December, 1962, para. 5.
260 Ibid., para. 9.
261 Ibid., para. 18.
264 Ibid.
265 Ibid., p. 2.
The Manila Times and other Filipino newspapers of 1 January suggested that Azahari’s travel plans were actually far more extensive, with the AAPSO Conference in Tanganyika being his destination and the UAR being his patron in the matter of documentation. It was claimed that “unexpected reversals at the diplomatic level” had delayed his scheduled departure the previous week.\textsuperscript{266} Azahari confirmed this two days later, with an agency report stating that his journey may include stops in India and Pakistan to raise international support; he would then return to Brunei to begin a new “guerrilla offensive” once the conference was over.\textsuperscript{267} Meanwhile, Azahari claimed that more than ten nations had already moved towards recognition of the NKKU in their parliaments, though, as The Manila Times noted, “he did not specify which governments had done so”.\textsuperscript{268}

The PRB had had links with the AAPSO, an international group that had grown out of the 1955 Bandung conference with the aim of promoting co-operation amongst the non-aligned nations of Asia and Africa, since it had sent a delegation to the 1961 conference at Bandung. Yassin Affandy had read a message from Azahari there: “We appeal to you all to give your support so that our strength will be doubled. Then we will be able to shake the colonialism in our country in our fight to attain freedom”.\textsuperscript{269} The PRB’s participation at another AAPSO conference in February 1962 in Cairo had focused on its anti-Malaysia campaign, with the 57 member nations of the organisation fully endorsing the “struggle for independence in the Borneo territories”.\textsuperscript{270}

The organisers of the 1963 conference confirmed to the British Embassy in Cairo that Azahari had been personally invited and that they had offered to finance his journey. Rashid Lucman, a Congressman from Mindanao and confidant of Azahari’s during his sojourn in the Philippines, stated that the latter had decided not to travel to Africa when he discovered

\textsuperscript{266} TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 43B, Telegram to the High Commissioner to Tanganyika from the CRO, No. 23, 7 January, 1963, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{267} TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 19, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to Pakistan, No. 10, 3 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 43B, Telegram to the High Commissioner to Tanganyika from the CRO, No. 23, 7 January, 1963, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{268} TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 43B, Telegram to the High Commissioner to Tanganyika from the CRO, No. 23, 7 January, 1963, para. 1.
that the AAPSO was “a Communist Front organisation”.271 British officials had, in any case, investigated whether Azahari might be arrested on his journey to Tanganyika for his role in instigating the rebellion, with Tanganyika and two of his other possible stopovers, Uganda and Kenya, being former British possessions that had laws under which he might be extradited to Brunei. The possibility of sending a pro-Malaysia delegation to the conference was also explored, with Donald Stephens, Datu Mustapha, and GS Sundang of North Borneo all willing to go; pressures of time and other commitments, as well as the feeling that such an endeavour would merely sidetrack the political leaders from more valuable efforts at home, kept them in Jesselton.272

The PRB’s delegation to the conference was led, in the end, by Mohamed Abdullah Salim, the NKKU’s so-called Minister of the Interior; The Borneo Bulletin stated that this delegation was entirely Indonesian by nationality. The leader addressed the conference on the second day:

Chief object of vehement attack was a form of neo-colonialism called Malaysia. He stated Brunei P.P. [People’s Party] demands unity of whole region of North Kalimantan and Sarawak. [sic, comma] Brunei and Sabah should be united into one State under Sultan [of] Brunei with possibility of becoming members of British Commonwealth. He called for open and concrete support from AAPSO countries to halt British Military suppression and to achieve world recognition of Kalimantan [Utara] independence.273

A spokesperson for Indonesia’s delegation “declared that ‘Utara Kalimantan’ (North Borneo) issue would be supported by all freedom loving people and opposed only by friends of capitalists”.274 The conference later passed a resolution that appealed to

Afro-Asian governments and peoples in general to render their full support to the struggle of the people of North Kalimantan against any federation which is now being intensively imposed by the imperialists in cooperation with their agents and to recognise the newly proclaimed full[y] independent Unitary State of North Kalimantan.

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271 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 156, Telegram to the FO from Theo Peters, British Embassy, Manila, No. 151, 31 January, 1963, para. 2; CO 1030/1489, Item 7, Telegram to the FO from the British Ambassador to the United Arab Republic, No. 2, 1 January, 1963, para. 1; CO 1030/1490, Item 133, Telegram to the FO from the British Ambassador to the United Arab Republic, No. 61, 26 January, 1963, para. 1.
272 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 38, Letter to DGR Bentliff (CRO) from IH Harris (CO) and enclosure, 10 January, 1963; Item 189, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 64, 5 February, 1963, para. 1; CO 1030/1490, Item 174, Telegram to the Governor of North Borneo from WJ Wallace (CO), No. 95, 1 February, 1963, para. 1; Item 187, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to Tanganyika, No. 91 Confidential, 4 February, 1963, para. 2.
273 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 208, Telegram to the High Commissioner for Brunei from the Secretary of State to the Colonies, No. 36, 9 February, 1963, para. 2; Item 204, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 104, 8 February, 1963, para. 1; The Borneo Bulletin, “Afro-Asian motion protest”, 16 February, 1963, p. 18.
274 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 195, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to Tanganyika, No. 98, 6 February, 1963, para. 12.
It also appealed to all freedom-loving peoples of the world to take “definite measures to oppose the reactionary actions” of Britain in sending troops to Brunei.  

On 6 January, Reuters reported that Azahari had denied that he had said he would kill all Europeans once he returned to Borneo:

What I told Tengku Zainal Abidin, the Malayan journalist sent by the Kuala Lumpur newspaper, Utusan Melayu to interview me in Manila[,] was that I have many European friends in Kalimantan Utara (North Borneo) whom I do not want to be caught in the crossfire. So I was warning them to leave the territories temporarily. I said I was going back to the jungles of Kalimantan Utara to lead personally our fight to drive away the British Colonizers, and when the shooting gets hot bullets do not differentiate men from women.

The next day, on Manila radio station Call of the Orient, it was stated that Azahari had claimed that thousands of volunteers trained in West Papua were standing by to aid the TNKU, awaiting his command, which he was not yet ready to give as he was, in turn, waiting for Great Britain to recognise the NKKU or for the UN’s intervention. Azahari remained confident of ultimate victory for his cause, in the face of all indications to the contrary.

On 8 January, The Manila Chronicle published rumours that Azahari had departed for northern Borneo, while Zaini was believed to have gone to Cairo to “establish a centre from which to direct a drive to win Muslim support for the Borneo Freedom struggle”. The ubiquitous source close to Azahari denied that this was so, saying that they had merely moved to a different residence in Manila. Zaini spoke to Reuters the next day, responding to the Tunku’s comment that Azahari was “a tool of [a] foreign power” by saying that “instead of expressing his sentiments about Azahari I think the Tengku should resolve the basic argument whether the Brunei people should be permitted to decide whether they accept Azahari as their leader”.

Zaini announced the NKKU’s ‘War Cabinet’ on 11 January, in which Azahari was, naturally, named Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Defence. Zaini

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became Minister of Economics, Commerce, and Industry, while Yassin Affandy was First Deputy Prime Minister. The Second Deputy was an unnamed political leader from Sarawak, who may have been Stephen Yong. HM Salleh, then State Welfare Officer in the Sultan’s government, was named Minister of Social Welfare and Health for the NKKU, which he was quick to repudiate in a statement to *The Borneo Bulletin*: “he absolutely refused to accept the Azahari appointment or to have anything to do with the ‘War Cabinet’”. It was speculated in *The North Borneo News and Sabah Times* that the intent behind this move was “to make trouble for Salleh whom Azahari hated because Salleh was known to have accused Azahari of making money by using the Party”.

Alex Josey, a Singapore-based journalist close to Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, published extensive interviews with both Osmeña and Azahari in *The Straits Times* on 18 and 19 January. The first clearly demonstrated that Osmeña was extremely disillusioned with Azahari and ready for him to leave Manila: “Azahari’s a bum. He’s a liar. He’s nuts. He has no money. Not a cent. I pay all his bills. I have been financing him. I have to. He has no money. I invited him here and now we are trying to get rid of him”. Many of Osmeña’s remarks were, naturally, concerned with his primary role as public representative of the heirs of the Sultan of Sulu, but he also addressed the topic of Azahari’s Indonesian contacts: “Indonesians have met Azahari here in my bedroom in this hotel. They made him lots of promises. Now they are backing out. They are fed up with him. They know what sort of man he is”.

Azahari’s interview with Josey showed him to be still confident of success, at least in public:

Crushed? I ask you: is Azahari dead? Are the people of Kalimantan Utara dead? No! Azahari is alive! The people are alive! So long as I am alive, so long as the people are alive, the revolution against the British, not the Sultan, will continue. My Government exists. My army is in the jungle, according to plan. Everything is under control. Revolution over? The British have always been famous for their lies.

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283 Ibid.
My army is in the jungle, but if tomorrow I ordered them into the streets to fight they will obey. If I ordered them to lay down their arms, they would obey. They were not defeated: my army withdrew just as they had planned. Azahari claimed that most of those detained in Brunei were civilians, rather than members of the TNKU, and that he still intended to lead his troops in the jungle once he had returned from the AAPSO Conference. When Josey asked if the rebels intended to assassinate or kidnap the Sultan, the response was:

Azahari strenuously denied he had any such intentions. For several days, he claimed, his troops controlled the state. His army occupied police stations. They could have walked into the palace if they wished. At no time did they plan to harm or intimidate the Sultan.

Addressing Josey’s query about why he would plan an armed revolt when he could have kept Brunei out of Malaysia using constitutional means, Azahari first pointed to the rejection of the PRB’s anti-Malaysia motion at the Legislative Council meeting and then stated that he had planned a revolt for seven years and had only awaited “a suitable time to arouse the people”.

The Manila Times announced on 21 January that Azahari had decided to accept an Indonesian offer of volunteers to join the TNKU, linking this story to an Antara report that 30,000 ex-servicemen were poised to depart South Sulawesi for Borneo. A United Press correspondent interviewed Azahari later that day, in the course of which he denied being the source of this report; he did not, however, refute the substance of the story. A news report dated 29 January found Azahari averring that he was ready to endorse the Philippines’ proprietary claim to North Borneo once the Philippine government extended recognition to the NKKU. A referendum for the people of North Borneo on the future of the colony would then follow, as President Macapagal had recently suggested. Azahari also responded to Britain’s decision to place a brigade of their Strategic Reserve on standby in the UK by

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285 Ibid.
286 Ibid.
saying that “the British military authorities seemed now to realise that the revolt in BRUNEI was far from crushed”. 287

While all of this media activity was occurring, the relationship between the Philippines and Great Britain, already strained by the former’s claim to North Borneo, was further damaged by the presence of Azahari and Zaini in Manila. The FO issued these instructions to Ambassador Pilcher on 8 December:

Unless you see strong objection you should take the earliest possible opportunity to remind [the] Philippine Government of their expressed intention of employing only peaceful means for the furtherance of their claim to North Borneo. You should explain that any statement appearing to associate [the] Philippine Government with support given by Azahari to [the] insurrection in Brunei would create a deplorable impression here. If you see fit, you may add that we should deplore [the] use of Philippine territory by Azahari for [the] encouragement of disorder in British territory or territory under British protection. 288

Pilcher met President Macapagal and Vice-President Pelaez that evening, probably before he received this message, and gently pressed upon the Filipinos the necessity of supporting the formation of the Federation of Malaysia. Macapagal said that Malaysia did not present the right solution, because linking the island chain to mainland Asia, as the new federation would, brought the danger from Communist China closer to the Philippines. He also revealed, to Pelaez’s dismay, that Sukarno had told him that Indonesia “would not tolerate” Malaysia for similar reasons. 289 The necessity for talks on the North Borneo claim was also discussed, with Macapagal agreeing that the talks would focus on the stability of the region, rather than the claim itself. 290

Pilcher concluded that Macapagal saw Malaysia as a means of stopping the Philippines from ever claiming North Borneo and was, consequently, seeking a reason to oppose the federation. At the same time, however, both Macapagal and Pelaez knew that the people of North Borneo would never consent to Philippines’ claim, so their attitude towards both Malaya and Britain was, fundamentally, “[i]f, because you wont [sic] sit down and talk with

287 ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, News Report, BLTN 33, 31/REUTER/UPI/iDCaRS, 29 January, 1963; The Straits Times, “Azahari ‘to accept volunteers’”, 22 January, 1963, p. 1; TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 155, Telegram to the FO from the Chargé d’Affaires, British Embassy, Manila, No. 145, 31 January, 1963, para. 1. The origin of the first source is not clear, so all the available data is provided to assist with its identification within the ANA file.
288 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 52, Telegram to the Ambassador to the Philippines from the FO, No. 458, 8 December, 1962, para. 1.
289 TNA, FO 371/16603, DP 108/318, Document B, Record of H.M. Ambassador’s Conversation with President Macapagal on December 8, in the Presence of the Vice-President, 8 December, 1962, paras. 2-3.
290 Ibid., para. 6.
us, I can’t have that piece of cake, you shan’t have it either”.\textsuperscript{291} Addressing the question of the future of North Borneo and its neighbours in this eventuality, he opined:

Clearly, they have long been looking quite seriously at the idea of an independent state composed of the three Borneo territories, with the Sultan of Brunei at the head, which as you know has been advocated by Nic Osmeña for a very long time and Azahari’s activities have made only too hideously actual. They will sit on the fence (more or less) until they see the outcome of the insurrection. They are led to hope by Osmeña that Azahari would pay off the heirs to the Sultan and possibly give them some land on the east coast of North Borneo, while permitting Filipinos to emigrate there on easy terms. This obviously would get them out of their difficulties and must be a great attraction to them.\textsuperscript{292}

Pilcher concluded that talks on the lines Macapagal proposed were necessary:

The time, I realise, may not seem propitious to urge you to let me grasp the offer; and yet the longer we delay the more the Filipinos may go off the rails and the worse damage they could cause. To agree now, on the other hand, would of course have the advantage of stopping their current misdemeanours, while the lack of stability in the area affords an obvious excuse for the talks.\textsuperscript{293}

Pilcher conveyed the FO’s message, as per instructions, on 9 December, to Pelaez, whose response was that the Philippines’ policy was “one of caution and waiting and seeing and [he] asked for the fullest information I could give him”.\textsuperscript{294} The Vice-President also took the opportunity to say that the revolt made the talks between Great Britain and the Philippines all the more necessary.\textsuperscript{295} Pilcher himself conveyed British displeasure at the association of Osmeña and Hermenegildo Atienza, very recently Macapagal’s legal adviser, with Azahari. Pelaez released a statement later that night denying that the Philippine government had any official dealings with Azahari, since Atienza was no longer employed in his previous capacity.\textsuperscript{296}

Pilcher saw Pelaez again the next day, when the latter reiterated the need for talks between the Philippines and Great Britain and added that Manila’s delegation to the UN would not assist Azahari should he make it to New York. The New Zealand Embassy in Washington, in an assessment of the US government’s position on events in Brunei and associated issues, commented that the State Department appeared not to have settled on a

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., para. 5.
\textsuperscript{293} Ibid., para. 14.
\textsuperscript{294} Ibid., para. 14.
\textsuperscript{295} TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 101, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 310, 9 December, 1962, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid., para. 2.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid., para. 3; Item 140, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 312, 10 December, 1962, paras. 3-4.
response if the issue was raised at the UN. In fact, they opined, “for reasons connected with their relations with the Philippines and Indonesia they are searching for [a] means of avoiding commitment to support [the] United Kingdom and Malaya over the issue”.297 In Malaya, meanwhile, the Philippines’ hostile attitude towards Malaysia was finally accepted and the decision made to boycott the next meeting of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), which was scheduled to be held in Manila. In addition, the Philippine Ambassador to the UN was quoted in *The Evening News* as having said that the revolt strengthened his country’s position in regard to its North Borneo claim.298

By 12 December, Pilcher commented that Osmeña had begun to find his involvement in the Brunei affair “burdensome” and that Azahari was becoming discouraged because he had received no word from Brunei since the revolt had started.299 In Saigon, the Philippine Ambassador to South Vietnam was said by Australian intelligence sources to have informed his Indonesian colleague that his government supported the rebels and suggested that their two governments should co-ordinate their aid to the TNKU. At his weekly press conference on the 13th, Macapagal announced that he was unable to make a statement on the situation in northern Borneo because the evidence was too inconclusive; by contrast, sources in the Department of Foreign Affairs were quoted as having said that the Philippines must support any non-communist revolutionaries once it had been established that their efforts represented a “genuine effort” to achieve self-determination.300

At noon that day, Pilcher sent this report to London:

> Source close to the President assures me that he is now likely to adopt a very cautious attitude and does not share Pelaez’s enthusiasm [for an independent northern Borneo, reported the previous day] (my telegram No. 327). He appears to have listened to the apprehensions of his military about Indonesia and to be worried lest Azahari should attempt to go there. He [Macapagal] thinks it safer for him [Azahari] to remain as an exile here. He has now no intention of even considering

297 ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Telegram to the Ministry of External Affairs, Wellington from the New Zealand Embassy to the United States, No. 111, 10 December, 1962, para. 1; TNA, CO 1030/1069, Item 204, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 317, 10 December, 1962, paras. 2-3.


299 TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 315, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 327, 12 December, 1962, para. 4.

any form of recognition unless and until Azahari and his Government were [*sic*] in
complete control of Brunei.\(^{301}\)

The Australian Embassy in Manila reported that Atienza had told them that the Philippines
had refused to provide material aid to Azahari and that the latter now threatened to seek the
same from Indonesia, from whom he expected “full support”.\(^{302}\)

Tory in Kuala Lumpur sought the Tunku’s opinion on the proposed talks with the
Philippines, and was told that Great Britain should proceed with these discussions without
waiting for the revolt in Brunei to end and without further consultations with Malaya. The
Tunku also said that he was happy for Azahari to remain in Manila, where “his presence and
his extravagant behaviour can serve only to discredit him and to embarrass the Filipinos”,
whereas he might do much more damage in Jakarta.\(^{303}\) The Australian Embassy in
Washington reported that the USA had attempted to persuade the Philippines to disengage
from Azahari and Zaini and to avert the demise of the ASA. The arguments being used were
that the obstruction of Malaysia and trouble in Brunei could benefit only Indonesia, while
any Indonesian influence in the Borneo territories would necessarily preclude any Philippine
influence. As for the Filipino concern that Malaysia would provide a foothold for the
communists in insular Southeast Asia, Washington argued that Philippine objectives would
not be furthered by the extension of Indonesian influence into northern Borneo and that the
prevention of the merger of Singapore with Malaya would only enhance the threat posed by
the communist elements in the former territory.\(^{304}\)

*The Manila Press* reported on 15 December that Azahari had submitted a formal request
for recognition of the NKKU to the Philippine government the previous day and that Pelaez
had stated that it was being considered; official sources were said, however, to have
intimated that the application would be shelved. Fred Warner of the FO noted that Pilcher
and Pelaez had already agreed a formula for the talks between the Philippines and Britain in

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\(^{301}\) TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 359, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 332, 13 December, 1962,
para. 1.

\(^{302}\) ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Manila, No. 404, 13 December, 1962, para. 4.

\(^{303}\) TNA, CO 1030/1072, Item 391, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 945,
14 December, 1962, paras. 1 & 3.

\(^{304}\) ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Washington, No. 3377, 14 December, 1962, paras.
2-4.
early December, before the revolt had even begun. Pilcher called on Pelaez on 18 December to discuss Indonesia’s rumoured move to co-sponsor a PRB delegation to the UN, and the latter said that the Philippines would not support this move; Pilcher got the impression that Pelaez “would try and sit on the fence with the Afro-Asians” altogether.\textsuperscript{305}

Governor Goode of North Borneo offered his view on the idea of talks with the Philippines: “I agree that we must have talks with the Filipinos. In my view the sooner the better. Delay is only making more difficult the task of getting them to see sense”.\textsuperscript{306} Azahari’s request for the formal recognition of the NKKU was publicly turned down by Macapagal on 18 December because “up to the present time the revolutionary group has not fulfilled the requirements for recognition”.\textsuperscript{307} In London, it was suggested that events in Manila might be advantageously influenced if certain Filipino journalists were invited to tour the Borneo territories in order to convey a more accurate idea of the situation there than had hitherto been disseminated in the Philippines.\textsuperscript{308}

On 20 December, the Australian Embassy in Washington reported that Albert Moscotti, responsible for Malayan and Singaporean affairs at the US State Department, had informed them that the USA had been receiving encouraging indications that Pelaez was drawing away from his involvement in the Brunei affair. The Department also understood that the Philippine government was considering what kind of attitude to adopt in the event Indonesia raised the matter of Brunei in the Committee of Twenty-Four at the UN. In addition, Moscotti opined that the Philippines would shy away from any Indonesian initiative at the UN as the Republic became more vocal in support of the Brunei rebellion. Finally, the USA

\textsuperscript{305} TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 471, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 346, 18 December, 1962, paras. 1 & 3; Item 440, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 337, 15 December, 1962, para. 1; FO 371/166603, DP 1081/319/G, Document A, Foreign Office Minute to the Prime Minister, 14 December, 1962, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{306} TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 500, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 344, 19 December, 1962, para. 3.
\textsuperscript{307} TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 551, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 347, 19 December, 1962, para. 1.
\textsuperscript{308} TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 533, Telegram to the Ambassador to the Philippines from the FO, No. 556, 20 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 528, Telegram to the Governor of North Borneo from the Secretary of the State to the Colonies, No. 570, 20 December, 1962, para. 1.
continued to endeavour to persuade the Filipinos that Malaysia would actually be a positive development rather than the threat they thought it to be.309

The next day, the Australian External Affairs Minister, Sir Garfield Barwick, issued instructions to his High Commission in London, beginning with this sentence: “I am convinced as a result of my visit to Manila that the Philippines[,] partly through their own fault and partly through British obduracy[,] have got themselves into a position from which we must help to extricate them”.310 Barwick directed Australia House to encourage the FO to expedite the talks with the Philippine government, emphasise again that there was no intention to rush Brunei into Malaysia, and make clear to Manila that British forces would not be withdrawn from the Sultanate prematurely. Addressing the Philippines’ apparent concern with self-determination in Brunei, Barwick also suggested that the British should urge the Sultan towards immediate constitutional reform and intimate to the Filipinos that they had done so.311

Australia House responded that night with the news that, while Allan Eastman, the Senior External Affairs Representative at the High Commission, had been talking to Assistant Under-Secretary EH Peck of the FO, clearance had arrived from the Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Home, for the formal proposal of talks with the Philippines in London. Peck commented that, in his view, Brunei was of no more than very marginal interest to the Philippines except as it affected the prospect of Indonesian intervention in northern Borneo. Meanwhile, Pelaez had conducted a meeting with senior officials of the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs and members of the Foreign Relations Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives on the afternoon of 21 December to discuss the Brunei affair. It was agreed at this meeting that the Philippine government would have no official

310 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the Senior External Affairs Representative, Australia House, London from the Minister for External Affairs, No. 4584, 21 December, 1962, para. 1.
311 Ibid.
contact with Azahari and Zaini and that it would exercise the “utmost caution” in this matter in order to “avoid doing anything that might play into the hands of the Indonesians”.  

On 22 December, Pilcher saw both Macapagal and Pelaez and reiterated that the revolt was not an anti-colonial event, but rather an internal affair primarily aimed against the government of Brunei; the President and the Vice-President both stated that they accepted this assertion. Pilcher noted that both had said that the PRB’s comprehensive victory in the elections implied that its anti-Malaysia stand was supported by the population and that the will of the people must be respected. The next day, the Tunku was quoted in Malayan newspapers as having requested a postponement of the ASA meeting in Manila scheduled for January: “How can I go there at this time? It is impossible for me to go while Azahari is there”.  

Pilcher wrote to Peck on 2 January about the Philippine Government’s increasing desire for Azahari and Zaini to move on:

The Filipinos are very perplexed about what to do with Azahari and Zaini. As I have suggested elsewhere, they are not above having a flutter on their chances, but the Administration is beginning to be embarrassed by the support they are receiving from labour and veterans’ organisations and from the Muslim [sic] politicians, led by Acting Speaker pro tempore Pendatun (who, by the way, is about to visit the U.K.). Therefore, they would much like to have them both out of the country and favour their going to the United Nations, because they came in allegedly en route for that body. I think they are chary of letting them go to Djakarta, although they would probably do so, if the Indonesians gave them passports.  

The Australian Embassy in Manila commented that “[t]here remains some residual feeling here that Azahari is likely to have some voice in any ultimate solution of the Brunei problem and that the Philippines has nothing to gain by opposing him now”.  

An intelligence source had revealed that Azahari intended to leave Manila by clandestine means in order to join the TNKU in northern Borneo by 6 January. He was described as hoping that Indonesian volunteers then in areas near the border with British Borneo would

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312 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Manila, No. 419, 22 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; Cablegram to the Minister for External Affairs from the Senior External Affairs Representative, Australia House, London, No. 6286, 21 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.  
313 TNA, CO 1030/1036, Item 218, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 988, 24 December, 1962, para. 1; FO 371/16603, Item DP 1081/325, Document B, Record of H.M. Ambassador’s Conversation with President Macapagal on December 22, 1962, in the presence of the Vice-President, Enclosure to Letter to EH Peck (FO) from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 1057/703, 24 December, 1962, paras. 7-8.  
314 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 37, Letter to EH Peck (FO) from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 1057/5, 2 January, 1963, para. 1.  
315 ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Savingram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Manila, No. 1/63, 3 January, 1963, para. 4.
reinforce the Tentera and that he expected the Indonesian government to recognise the NKKU within the next few days. Admiral Luce observed that he was probably “exaggerating his potentialities” but all precautions were nevertheless taken.\(^{316}\) The JICFE reported that a volunteer force had assembled at Bataan and its leader had rejected a presidential order to desist; the Filipino Navy stationed gunboats off the city to prevent the force’s departure for Borneo in fishing boats.\(^{317}\)

The idea, briefly mentioned above, that certain Philippine journalists should visit the Borneo territories to see for themselves the situation there resulted in four correspondents being despatched; their first reports, detailing interviews with Goode in Jesselton, were published on 5 January. He focussed on promoting the benefits of Malaysia for North Borneo, especially in light of recent developments connected with Indonesia, which led to an increased need for good friends in the region. *The Philippines Herald* of the \(^{7}\)th highlighted this point: Donald Stephens was quoted as having said, “We are afraid of Indonesia as an emerging military Power and the growing Communist influence there”.\(^{318}\) The author of the article, Nestor Mata, went on to write: “This new threat from neighbouring Indonesia is something not to be ignored for . . . where there’s smoke there’s certainly fire”, referring to the Republic’s recent military build-up in connection with the West Papua campaign.\(^{319}\) Wing Commander Derry, commenting on the four journalists’ visit to Brunei, made the following general observations:

a. They were surprised at the calm and quiet conditions prevailing.
b. Their copy appeared to be very fair giving a bias towards pro British [sic] comment.
c. They had evinced special interest in whether the rebellion had been connected in any way with INDONESIA but there was no evidence of this.\(^{320}\)

\(^{316}\) ANA, File 248/5/7, Telegram to the Department of Defence from the Australian Defence Representative, Australian Commission, Singapore, SAC 1/63, 4 January, 1963, para. 4.


\(^{318}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 31A, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 25, 7 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 28, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 18, 5 January, 1963, para. 1.

\(^{319}\) TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 31A, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 25, 7 January, 1963, para. 1.

\(^{320}\) TNA, WO 305/2519, Minutes of a Meeting of the Borneo Operations Committee held at HQ COMBRITBOR at 1400 hrs 9 Jan 63, CBB 1/1, 9 January, 1963, para. 8.
Oscar Villadolid of *The Manila Daily Bulletin* wrote upon his return home that it was a common view amongst ordinary people in Brunei that Azahari was “crazy” to have sparked the revolt because “with his immense popularity with the masses (he) could have won more power through constitutional means”.  

On 10 January, Pilcher reported that, in conversation with the American Ambassador the previous day, Macapagal had said that he considered himself to have given a categorical assurance that Azahari would not be allowed to leave the Philippines by clandestine means, which was mentioned above, and it was known that the Defence Forces had received orders to this effect. Pilcher concluded that this increased the chance of his leaving for Egypt or Tanganyika, if not Indonesia; these countries were the only ones likely to grant travel documents, for various reasons; Burma was another possible destination due to press reports that that country might co-sponsor Indonesia’s UN resolution. Pilcher wondered if Nasser of the UAR, Ayub Khan of Pakistan, and Jawaharlal Nehru of India might be dissuaded from becoming involved in Indonesia’s machinations, especially as all three had recently been convinced by the Tunku and Lee Kuan Yew to support the concept of Malaysia.

On a visit to Singapore on 18 January, Philippine Secretary of National Defence Macario Peralta, Jr called to see Lord Selkirk and stated that he was “not concerned with that ‘scoundrel’ Osmena [sic] but with the vulnerability of the Philippines if Communists took over in North Borneo”. Peralta asked Selkirk if the British would fight, should Indonesia march into the Borneo territories, as he believed would occur; the Commissioner-General replied, “we [Great Britain] agreed this was a bigger one than just the Borneo territories and would affect Malaya as well as the Philippines and we had not found that appeasing dictators had served any useful purpose”. Later in the conversation, Peralta volunteered this information:

He was sure that [the] Indonesians were involved with Azahari from the way their Embassy treated him well before the Brunei revolt broke out. He had apparently

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322 TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 97, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 40, 10 January, 1963, paras. 1-2.
323 TNA, FO 371/169897, DH 1061/20/G, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 42, 21 January, 1963, para. 1.
324 Ibid.
heard when Azahari visited Manila in October or November that [a] revolt was due to take place in February.325

On 28 January, President Macapagal made his annual State of the Nation address to a joint sitting of the Philippine Houses of Parliament, in the course of which he attacked the Federation of Malaya:

The proposed Federation of Malaysia is not in accordance with the principle of self-determination which is the accepted way out of colonialism, with Malaya as the new colonial power without historical or other rational basis and based on an expedient of false security.326

He went on to propose that a referendum should be conducted in North Borneo under UN supervision to decide its future; Azahari later supported this proposal.327

The rebellion and the activities of Azahari and Zaini in Manila attracted some attention in the international arena as well, though rather less than had been hoped for, one suspects. Much of the backing for the revolt consisted of little more than verbal support for the self-determination of the people of the Borneo territories. The official newspaper of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) of Algeria has provided a sample of this kind of encouragement:

Apart from the stock accusations of Colonialist oppression and support for Azhari’s [sic] efforts to present his case at the United Nations, the following allegations have been made:

(i) the Malaysian Federation is intended as a means of maintaining a British economic and possibly military base in South East Asia.
(ii) The cleaning up operation will mean brutal treatment of innocent civilians.
(iii) The soldiers committing these abject and useless murders are led by mercenaries who have gained experience in Kenya, British Guiana, etc.
(iv) British imperialism (in preventing Azhari from going to the United Nations) has successfully appealed to its acolyte, the United States.328

Others to support the PRB verbally included the People’s Republic of China, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Czechoslovakia.329

The UK’s mission to the UN in New York telegraphed the FO during the evening of 8 December, when it was late morning the next day in Brunei, announcing that news of events in Borneo had already been published in New York and commenting that the issue might be

325 Ibid., para. 3.
328 ANA, File 30302/1, Part 3, Telegram to the FO from the British Embassy to Algeria, No. 588, 14 December, 1962, para. 1.
raised in the UN Fourth Committee as early as 10 December. It was suggested that a brief statement on the issue might “damp down speculation and rumours” and further information was sought.330 When the FO responded, the phrases that would appear in every British defence of its involvement in the revolt were used: “not a dispute between a colonial power and a liberation movement”; “Brunei is not a British Colony”; “[t]he question now at issue – whether or not Brunei should join Malaysia – is not a matter which HMG [Her Majesty’s Government] can or will decide”; and the “Brunei Government have asked HMG for help in re-establishing law and order”.331

The CRO instructed Kuala Lumpur and other Commonwealth capitals to encourage their Malayan counterparts to coordinate their lobbying with the British in those cities and in New York. The FO cabled the Embassy in Bangkok on which points to cover at a meeting of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) Council scheduled for 12 December, giving a situation report and highlighting the lack of firm evidence for Indonesian complicity in the revolt; the involvement of the Philippines, as a member of SEATO, was to be downplayed. Reuters reported that Azahari had telegraphed the UN Secretary-General, U Thant, “ur[ging a] U.N. presence in our country to prevent the outbreak of serious hostilities between our national army and imperialistic forces” and stating that a delegation headed by himself would proceed directly to New York “to formally submit our case and petition for application of the United Nations Charter and adopted resolutions upholding the fundamental right of self-determination for all peoples”.332

Azahari sent many such missives in December, with recipients including the governments of Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of China, the UAR, Algeria, Ghana, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iraq. President John F Kennedy of the USA, too, received a telegram:

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330 TNA, CO 1030/1068, Item 81, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 2315, 8 December, 1962, para. 1. The Fourth Committee is a committee of the General Assembly of the UN that, at the time, dealt with matters relating to decolonisation and trusteeship. The Committee of Seventeen/Twenty-Four, mentioned more frequently in this thesis, is a separate body that has a more select membership and focuses more on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as noted in Chapter IV.


We are now appealing to the freedom loving people of the USA through you, at this crucial hour, in the fervent hope that a protracted war of attrition may yet be prevented.... [We are] appealing for immediate assistance towards [a] peaceful settlement of our dispute with the government of the United Kingdom....

U Thant had received five cables by 13 December, all requesting recognition for the NKKU and UN intervention. On the 16th, Azahari was said to have also sent a three-page letter to all member states of the UN seeking official recognition for the NKKU.

Malaya’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations submitted a paper on the Brunei affair to the Secretary-General on 10 December, refuting many of the claims made by Azahari in Manila and emphasising that the revolt was in no way connected to the Malaysia proposal. The Malayan delegation was also reported to have been very active in lobbying the Afro-Asian nations on similar lines, and to have seen Under Secretary-General Chakravarthi Narasimhan, who told them that U Thant had decided not to take cognisance of Azahari’s telegrams for the time being. Sir Patrick Dean, the UK’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, met with the Secretary-General and made all the points that were mentioned above. He went on to say that

No reference was made to the disturbances in Brunei in the Fourth Committee today (Monday). The absence of New York newspapers since Saturday as a result of a strike may have contributed to this. The Malaysians have been seeing a number of delegations with whom they are on good terms (such as India, Ethiopia, and Tunisia), and report that there is not much interest in this question at the moment. This is also our impression. However, interest will undoubtedly be stimulated if Azahari succeeds in getting to New York, in which case it will be extremely helpful if the Sultan could send one or more representatives to put his side of the case.

The FO despatched suggested talking points on Brunei to the UK Delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation for the meeting of Defence Ministers to be held on 15 December, covering the usual ground, as well as this addition: “Political implications are more serious, particularly because of covert Indonesian assistance to [the] rebels before [the] revolt began”.

In New York, a meeting of the Commonwealth representatives to the UN on 13 December discussed the situation in Brunei and the Ghanaian was reported to have

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333 Zariani, op. cit., p. 172.
335 TNA, CO 1030/1069, Item 237, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 2340, 11 December, 1962, paras. 2 & 4; ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Mission to the UN, New York, No. UN1917, 10 December, 1962; Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Mission to the UN, New York, No. UN1916, 10 December, 1962, paras. 2 & 4.
expressed the hope that the trouble would end quickly so that it would not come before the UN. The background to this remark was that David Marshall, formerly Chief Minister of Singapore, had requested support for the anti-Malaysia campaign from Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, which had been rejected up to this point; the sudden escalation that the Brunei Revolt represented might reverse this situation. Dean’s report of the same meeting noted that the only representative to express any disquiet about events in Brunei was that of Ceylon, though certain others, especially Nigeria, were concerned about the use of British troops and remained unconvinced, despite British and Malayan assurances, that it was not a nationalist uprising.337

The Australian Embassy in Tokyo reported that the Japanese government was rumoured to have evidence that the PKI was “actively behind” the revolt, while the Indonesian administration “had not allowed itself to become involved in any way[,] although a successful outcome to the rebellion would, of course, have pleased it.”338 The Tunku had gone further, as Australian High Commissioner Tom Critchley relayed to Canberra:

He speculated that [the] Indonesians had hoped [the] revolt would be successful so that when Azahari could not find [the] resources to run [the] State they would be ready with personnel to assist and eventually take over[,] but they had been frustrated by [the] failure of [the] revolt.339

The US Ambassador to Malaya was said to have told the Tunku and Critchley that Washington’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, had been instructed to do his best to prevent any action in the Committee of Seventeen on Brunei.340

The CRO informed all its posts of the view of Britain’s delegation to the UN that the General Assembly would adjourn on 21 December without having discussed the situation in Brunei, unless Azahari or Zaini managed to make it to New York. The next opportunity for the matter to be raised was the Committee of Seventeen’s next meeting, which was unlikely to occur until the end of January. On 18 December, the Australian Embassy in Washington

337 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Mission to the UN, New York, No. UN.1958, 13 December, 1962, para. 4; TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 419, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 2397, 14 December, 1962, para. 2.
338 ANA, File 248/5/6, Savingram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Tokyo, No. SAV.47, 14 December, 1962, para. 1.
339 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 451, 17 December, 1962, para. 2.
340 Ibid., para. 4.
reported that the State Department had “good reason to believe” that Indonesia definitely
intended to put the Brunei question before the Committee of Seventeen, though Stevenson
and his colleagues were of the view that the committee might not take any interest in the
issue.\footnote{ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Washington, No. 3406, 18 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 474, Telegram to All Posts from the CRO, W. No. 710, 18 December, 1962, para. 3.}

On the same day, Australia’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sir James
Plimsoll, informed Canberra that the Indonesian delegate had raised the Brunei affair in the
Trusteeship Council, though the Malayan delegation had been told that Indonesia would not
attempt to take the matter any further during this session of the General Assembly; it would
instead be brought before the Committee of Twenty-Four in early January. Plimsoll reported
a conversation between the Indonesian and American delegates the next day in which the
latter expressed the view that the Committee of Twenty-Four would not meet in January and
might not actually get down to work until March, at the earliest. The Indonesian did not
press his point further and the Americans formed the view that the Indonesians “might let
things ride for a while”, though Plimsoll opined that much would depend on circumstances:
“if unrest [in Brunei] continues, the Indonesians are unlikely to refrain from exploiting the
possibilities here”.\footnote{ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN, New York, No. UN2036, 19 December, 1962, paras. 1-5; Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN, New York, No. UN2022, 18 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.} Plimsoll also remarked that the New York newspaper strike had been
of great assistance, since most delegations were, as a result, “not fully conscious of what is
going on in Brunei”.\footnote{ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN, New York, No. UN2036, 19 December, 1962, para. 6.}

On 20 December, Plimsoll reported that the Indonesians were distributing an *aide-memoire* to certain delegations to drum up support for an early January meeting of the
Committee of Twenty-Four to consider events in Brunei; neither the US, UK, nor Australia
received a copy of the document. Plimsoll commented:

> Hitherto the feeling among members of the old Committee of Seventeen has been to
have a short meeting late in December to elect office bearers and to fix the date of
the first substantive meeting.
There is a widespread view including many Afro-Asians that the Committee should not meet in January.\textsuperscript{344}

Dean informed London that the Malayan delegation had been very active in promoting a non-colonial interpretation of the Brunei revolt to the African and Asian representatives, with some success, though Ong Yoke Lin, Malaya’s Ambassador to the UN, commented that he was “troubled at the widespread ignorance about the practical and constitutional position in Brunei, the relationship between Her Majesty’s Government and the Brunei authorities[,] and the implications on Malaysia”.\textsuperscript{345} Ong was of the opinion that Malaya and Great Britain both needed to be more active in New York and elsewhere in promoting their positions.\textsuperscript{346}

Philip Moore, Deputy Commissioner in Singapore, in a conversation with Lee Kuan Yew in mid-January, raised the possibility that the latter could use his extensive Afro-Asian contacts to promote Malaysia and dissuade these nations from supporting the revolt, with a special focus on Nasser of the UAR. Lee said that he could easily do this and suggested that he might make a quick tour of certain nations in pursuit of this object, but stated that the Tunku had not appreciated his previous efforts on the international stage and so he would not do anything without the latter’s permission. The CO was quick to veto the idea, preferring Lee to concentrate on the negotiations with Malaya on the terms for Singapore’s entry into Malaysia. Lord Selkirk also downplayed the idea of a tour and suggested that Lee could simply speak to the UAR’s Consul-General in Singapore on the desired lines instead.\textsuperscript{347}

Mohamed Said, Mentri Besar of Negri Sembilan, returned in mid-January from his stint with the Malayan delegation to the UN, where he had served on the Trusteeship Committee, and made the observation to the press that none of the other committee members had been worried about the matter of Brunei or the Philippines’ claim to North Borneo. U Thant directly contradicted this assertion only ten days later at a press conference when asked if he

\textsuperscript{344} ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN, New York, No. UN2058, 20 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{345} TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 540, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 2489, 20 December, 1962, para. 1.

\textsuperscript{346} Ibid., para. 2.

\textsuperscript{347} TNA, CO 1030/1489, Item 80, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 32, 16 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 99, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, No. 36, 17 January, 1963, para. 1; Item 95, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 37, 18 January, 1963, para. 1.
could foresee trouble elsewhere in the world now that Cuba and the Congo had settled somewhat:

It is very difficult to anticipate future events. However, the situation in Southeast Asia, particularly in the area surrounding Brunei, has potentialities of becoming very serious. Of course, the United Nations is not in possession of the full facts, but I have been very closely watching the developments with a view to devising some formulas which might help to ease the tensions in that particular area.  

Plimsooll reported a conversation between Thant and the UK’s Deputy Permanent Representative, Colin Crowe, the next day in which the former stated that he was more or less thinking aloud about what he had read in the newspapers and that his words had gone further than he had intended.

The Malay Mail published a story on 1 February that asserted that the Sultan planned to meet with Narasimhan and some Malayan Ministers including the Tunku on the 4th in Kuala Lumpur to discuss U Thant’s comments. On 2 February, President Kennedy received a letter from Lieutenant General AM Zulkifli, Deputy Defence Minister of the NKKU, seeking American support for the revolt and the new state; the US government chose not to reply. The Borneo Bulletin published the US State Department’s press statement in support of the Malaysia proposal the very same day, with a spokesman describing the new federation as “the best way to promote economic and political progress in the area.” Meanwhile, Dean in New York observed that the Committee of Twenty-Four was showing signs of granting attention to the issue of Malaysia, but not before mid-March at the very earliest.

An official at the British Embassy in Bonn passed a copy of a letter from Azahari to the West German Foreign Minister, Gerhard Schröder, to the FO on 9 February, dated 16 December and sent through the ordinary post; this was presumably an example of the letters despatched to all UN member states, which was mentioned above. The West German government, like its American counterpart, did not reply to this missive, which requested

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349 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN, New York, No. UN156, 30 January, 1963, paras. 2-3.
350 The Borneo Bulletin, “U.S. Backs Malaysia: As tension mounts Washington makes stand clear: To Philippines: Settle Your Differences With Britain”, 2 February, 1963, p. 1; ANA, File 248/5/6, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 158, 2 February, 1963, para. 1; NARA, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Box 3840, Letter to the President of the USA from the NKKU Deputy Defence Minister, 1 February, 1963.
351 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 177, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 142, 1 February, 1963, para. 2.
Bonn’s assistance to bring events in Brunei to the attention of the UN and sought official recognition of the NKKU. Mohamed Amin al-Huseini, the President of the World Muslim Congress, by contrast, wrote a letter of support for the Brunei government in late January, addressed, curiously, to the Tunku, wherein he expressed his thanks to Allah that the state and its Muslims were safe and that conditions had returned to normal. 352

On 6 March, the Committee of Twenty-Four approved the requests of the SUPP and the Sabah Alliance Party for hearings, with parties to be notified in due course when their matters would be discussed. Dean reported on the 14th that U Thant had heard that the Indonesian delegation had been instructed by Sukarno not to press the Malaysia issue with the Committee of Twenty-Four, for the time being at least. He went on to say that there was still little interest in the subject in New York and that the Indonesians had been “noticeably inactive”. 353 By the end of March, White was able to inform London that the lessening tension with Indonesia and the progress of negotiations for Brunei’s entry into Malaysia had led the Sultan to conclude that the need to send a delegation of his own to New York was not imminent and that the situation would be re-assessed as necessary. 354

Achmad Fadillah, in his capacity as a Minister without Portfolio in the NKKU government, submitted a petition to the UN Secretariat in early April requesting that the General Assembly “condemn the idea of Malaysia, which will be ‘imposed upon the people of Kalimantan Utara by the British imperialist [sic] and its Malayan lackey’”. 355 The advice of the UK’s delegation to the UN was to do as little as possible to attract attention to this petition, so no counter-petitions were despatched in response by the governments concerned. On 17 April, the Petitions Sub-Committee recommended that his request to be heard in place of Azahari, with regard to the petition sent in September 1962 in conjunction with the SUPP

353 TNA, FO 371/169709, D1073/3, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 343, 14 March, 1963, para. 1; CO 1030/1467, Item 157, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 69 Saving, 6 March, 1963, paras. 1-2.
354 TNA, DO 169/261, Item 261, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the High Commissioner for Brunei, Personal No. 62, 25 March, 1963, para. 1.
355 TNA, FO 371/169709, Item D1073/11, Document A, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 470, 6 April, 1963, para. 1.
and the Pasok Momogun, be granted, and the Committee of Twenty-Four approved this recommendation the next day. No date was set for the hearing of this matter, however, with other business also requiring attention.\textsuperscript{356}

On 26 April, the CRO stated that Fadillah’s petition would not be heard until 10 May at the earliest. Should Fadillah arrive unannounced, the lack of time for discussion afterwards would diminish the impact of his speech, while the CRO thought that his appearance in his capacity as a so-called minister of the government of Kalimantan Utara would lessen his effectiveness as an opponent of Malaysia. It was therefore concluded that the impact of any speech he might make should be gauged before any counter-petitioners were lined up. By 8 May, New York reported that the weight of other business would delay the Malaysia issue until the Committee of Twenty-Four’s next session in the second week of June, and even then, any unfinished matters and the subject of British Guiana would be heard before Malaysia. In any case, it had already been decided that any developments in the situation in the meantime could further postpone the hearing of the matter, such as talks between President Sukarno and the Tunku. As a result, New York emphasised that nothing must be done publicly to draw attention to the subject, so no further communications should be sent to the UN and all preparations for any counter-petitioners should be kept quiet.\textsuperscript{357}

Narasimhan visited the region in late April as part of UN efforts to soothe the trouble between Indonesia and Malaya and, in conversation with an official from Selkirk’s office, stated that the Secretary-General would interest himself in the Malaysia issue if Great Britain and Malaya requested he do so. On 10 June, the USA’s mission to the UN reported that Azahari had recently written to the Committee of Twenty-Four requesting leave for Muhammad Haji Manggol, his Deputy Foreign Minister, to appear in place of Fadillah. Finally, three days later, the Committee decided to postpone the hearing of matters relating

\textsuperscript{356} TNA, FO 371/169709, Item D1073/15, Document B, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 497, 11 April, 1963, para. 1; Document D, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 544, 19 April, 1963, paras. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{357} TNA, FO 371/169710, Item D1073/21, Document A, Telegram to the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya from the CRO, No. 1073, 26 April, 1963, paras. 1-2; Item D1073/23, Document C, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 659, 8 May, 1963, para. 2-4.
to Malaysia to a later date, in view of recent developments with regard to the Tri-Partite Talks between Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippines.\textsuperscript{358}

The possibility of Indonesian complicity in and the extent of its support for the rebellion received a lot of attention in the aftermath, as did Azahari’s connections with the Indonesian government. For example, the Australian Department of External Affairs requested that its Embassy in Jakarta telegraph any official or press comment on the revolt on 10 December. Not long afterwards, Jakarta cabled a summary of a conversation with the American Ambassador, Howard Jones, in the course of which he had said that, though the extent of outside involvement in the revolt was unknown, there had been some movement across the Kalimantan border. He also speculated on the possibility that Sukarno and Macapagal had discussed the matter of Brunei at their recent meeting in Manila. On the subject of Malaysia, Jones stated:

He feels that unless Malaysia can be brought into being fairly quickly, he will have to review his previous judgement about the Indonesians accepting Malaysia as a fait accompli and not interesting themselves in stirring up trouble in the British Colonies.\textsuperscript{359}

The New Zealand Embassy in Washington reported that the State Department had inferred that Indonesia actively supported the TNKU, but, again, there was no proof. The CRO cabled several of its posts to address the rumours of Indonesian complicity, emphasising that London would prefer to avoid publicly linking the Republic with the rebels until all evidence on the question could be collated and examined. Australia’s Embassy in Manila informed Canberra that Pamontjak, the Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines, was said to have conferred with Vice-President Pelaez and Azahari’s associate, Hermenegildo Atienza, at the FO, while \textit{The Manila Chronicle} reported that Pamontjak had told Pelaez that Indonesia would support the NKKU’s struggle for independence in the context of the Bandung Declaration. The British Embassy had confirmed, through the

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{358} TNA, FO 371/169709, Item D1073/20, Document A, Telegram to the FO from the Office of the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 217, 27 April, 1963, para. 3; FO 371/169710, Item D1073/29, Document B, Telegram to the FO from the UK Mission to the UN, New York, No. 854, 13 June, 1963, para. 1; NARA, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Box 3840, Telegram to the Secretary of State from the US Mission to the UN, New York, No. 4439, 10 June, 1963, para. 1.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{359} ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 968, 10 December, 1962, para. 2; File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the Australian Embassy, Djakarta from the DEA, No. 945, 10 December, 1962, para. 1.
Philippines’ intelligence services, that Azahari, Osmeña, and the Indonesian Embassy were working closely together, with Hardojo, the Embassy’s Counsellor, known to have assisted Azahari in drafting at least one of his press statements.\(^{360}\)

On 11 December, the Australian Embassy in Jakarta passed Antara’s report of President Sukarno’s first comment on the rebellion to Canberra: “…the present upheaval in North Borneo cannot be separated from the progress made by the new emerging forces of the world[;] this movement is certain to end in victory”.\(^{361}\) The telegram went on to detail other shows of support for the rebels, including those of Information Minister Ruslan Abdulghani, Partindo, and the Indonesian Youth Movement. The Australian Commission in Singapore, in a political assessment of the rebellion, remarked that contacts between the TNKU and Indonesia appeared to have fallen short of a “definite politico-military understanding”; it was speculated that the *Tentera* may have been emboldened by its Indonesian links to believe that the Republic would support it if its revolt succeeded.\(^{362}\)

A media storm followed Sukarno’s public statement, fuelled by the competing claims of Malaya and Indonesia, which Michael Jones has summarised:

> On 10 December, the Tunku accused the TNKU of trying to hand over the Borneo territories to Indonesia, while the following day in the Malayan Parliament he claimed that groups in Indonesia had financed, armed and trained the TNKU, naming Malinau in Kalimantan as a training base and going on to say that Malaya’s ‘feelings were hurt’ and ‘patience exhausted’. Subandrio hit back on 15 December, declaring that if the Tunku was determined to use any opportunity to be hostile to Indonesia, Jakarta would accept the challenge; soon after Sukarno was announcing that the Indonesian people sympathized with the people of North Kalimantan and mass rallies in solidarity with their struggle became more commonplace. Concurrently, the press in both Indonesia and Malaya were busy stoking the flames of the dispute, with the Tunku pictured as a lackey of the British with his support for their suppression of the Brunei ‘freedom fighters’, a charge given added potency with the revelation that Malayan police were assisting the security forces in Brunei with translation and interrogation of TNKU suspects, and Sukarno and the PKI (increasingly seen as synonymous in Malayan eyes) attacked for their efforts to incite rebellion and frustrate Malaysia.\(^{363}\)

\(^{360}\) ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 1, Telegram to the Ministry of External Affairs, Wellington from the New Zealand Embassy to the United States, No. 111, 10 December, 1962, para. 4; File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Manila, No. 396, 11 December, 1962, paras. 2-3; TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 289, Telegram to the High Commissioners to the Federation of Malaya, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand from the CRO, Z. No. 285, 11 December, 1962, para. 4.

\(^{361}\) ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 973, 11 December, 1962, para. 1.

\(^{362}\) ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 294, 11 December, 1962, paras. 4-5; Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 973, 11 December, 1962, para. 1.

The Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, Keith Shann, however, characterised the Republic’s public response in the first days of the revolt thus: “On the whole the publically expressed official Indonesian attitude has, up to now, shown as great a degree of restraint as could reasonably be expected in view of [the] undoubted Indonesian sympathy for the rebels”.

Early on 11 December, Waddell in Kuching requested that London inform the British Ambassador to Indonesia, Sir Leslie Fry, that proposals recently made for official cooperation between the colony and the Republic on geological survey matters should be withdrawn due to recent developments. Selkirk suggested the next day that it would be best to avoid cornering Indonesia over its involvement in the rebellion, perhaps by concentrating on Azahari and his possibly avaricious motives. He also passed formal instructions to Kuching and Jesselton to downplay the matter of Indonesian and Filipino complicity in the revolt in any official statements and for any concrete evidence of such to be despatched to him forthwith.

Indonesia’s Ambassador to the UK called on Peck at the FO on 12 December, with the latter addressing the reports about the Republic’s involvement in the rebellion:

Peck went on to say that there had been rumours and reports, however, which had caused me [the Foreign Secretary] personally considerable concern. These were to the effect that some of the rebels had made use of Indonesian territory and received training there. They had also been the Press comments and remarks by President Sukarno reported in your telegram No. 728. No doubt the Indonesian Government, who had repeatedly said they had no objection to Malaysia, were not involved, but it would be helpful if the Ambassador could persuade his Government to follow the Philippine example and reassure us on this point.

Reuters reported on 11 December that Pamontjak had told Pelaez at a luncheon meeting the previous day that his country would support the TNKU because it was a logical step in line with the Bandung Declaration. The Tunku, in a speech before the Malayan House of Representatives on the 11th, referred to the foreign influences backing Azahari and remarked

364 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia No. 977, 12 December, 1962, para. 3.
365 TNA, CO 1030/1069, Item 227, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.275, 11 December, 1962, para. 1; CO 1030/1071, Item 306, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 56, 12 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 319, Telegram to the Governors of Sarawak and North Borneo from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 126, 12 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
366 TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 324, Telegram to the Ambassador to Indonesia from the FO, No. 1026, 12 December, 1962, para. 2.
that “had he gone to Indonesia (rather than Manila) he would be giving away the true position”. A Joint Intelligence Committee (Australia) report on recent developments in Brunei dated 12 December summarised the evidence and indications then available regarding Indonesian complicity:

There have been reports that, for the past two years, Indonesian army intelligence has been working on and carrying out plans to stimulate pro-Indonesian sentiments in the British Borneo territories. The long-range purpose of this activity is to encourage popular uprisings for the eventual merger of the North Borneo territories into Indonesia. These efforts are directed by the army intelligence psychological warfare chief, Lieutenant-Colonel Suparman. In the present uprising (although there has been evidence of the movement of rebels to and from Indonesia, and of their training in Indonesian Borneo, and although the PKI may also have been involved), we have as yet no evidence of official Indonesian involvement.

The passage also discussed other intelligence already mentioned above, such as the activities of the Indonesian Embassy in Manila and the statements of Sukarno and Abdulghani.

On 12 December, Indonesia’s Minister for Basic Industries and Mining, Chaerul Saleh, described any accusation that his government was involved in the revolt as both untrue and an insult to Indonesia. The previous day, Defence Minister Nasution had spoken on the topic of how colonialism still encircled and threatened Indonesia, unsubtly implying that Malaya was an instrument of neo-colonialism and declaring that the Republic had no new territorial claims but that it would oppose colonialism everywhere and support the battle for independence wherever it was fought. The West Kalimantan branch of Partindo, meanwhile, had instructed its members to shelter any “revolutionary fighters” who might seek assistance. Pilcher reported on the 13th that he had recently discovered that Azahari had opened an account at a bank in Manila in November and that an employee at that bank had told him that Sukarno had left around US$10,000 at another bank in Tokyo for Azahari sometime before 20 November.

The Chairman of the PKI, DN Aidit, issued a statement on 13 December denying claims made by Donald Stephens and others that his party was actively supporting the TNKU and

367 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, No. 439, 12 December, 1962, para. 1; Reuter’s News Service, “Indonesia will back rebels says envoy”, The Straits Times, 12 December, 1962, p. 16.
369 TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 330, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 742, 13 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.
370 TNA, CO 1030/1071, Item 360, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 333, 13 December, 1962, para. 1.
declaring that “[t]he PKI stand is that the Brunei revolution is just and must be supported by all progressive forces in the world, particularly by the Indonesian people.” Reuters reported the next day that an Indonesian Embassy spokesperson in Manila had denied that any official offers of help had been made to Azahari on any of his several visits to the Embassy. Azahari himself was said by sources to have thanked Partindo, Gerwani, and the Youth Council of Indonesia for offering volunteers to the TNKU and asked them to stand by for the time being. Reuters reported on the same day that Azahari had sought volunteers from “peace-loving nations” such as Indonesia and the UAR. The oft-quoted source close to Azahari announced that he would turn to “a foreign government like Indonesia” for military support if he was unable to plead his case to the UN.

A meeting of senior Commonwealth representatives on 13 December in Kuala Lumpur heard the Tunku’s opinion that Indonesia would intervene in Brunei in the next few days, while the revolt was still going on, and claimed that a meeting of armed forces chiefs in Jakarta that day would discuss the rebellion. He also pointed to a military build-up in Kalimantan and the construction of an airfield on Natuna Besar, in the Riau Archipelago between Borneo and Malaya, as evidence of Indonesia’s intentions. As a result, Article 6 of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement was invoked, which required consultation between the two parties in the event of any attack on Malayan or British territory in the region.

Charles Bennett, the New Zealand High Commissioner to Malaya, provided further details of this meeting:

He said [the] Tunku appeared very worried about likely Indonesian intervention in [the] next few days. Decision invoking article [sic] 6 of [the] Defence Agreement was actually taken and Tory appeared to encourage [the] Tunku in this step. Bennett expects [the] machinery for consultations to be established this week. [The] Tunku and Tory noted that Australian and New Zealand troops were not involved under Article 6. However, [the] Tunku made [a] passing reference but not a request to the effect that it could be helpful if Australian and New Zealand troops were sent to Brunei “on exercises.”

374 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, No. 441, 13 December, 1962, paras. 3-4.
375 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, No. 442, 13 December, 1962, paras. 2-3.
The Australian Commission in Singapore, meanwhile, clarified that there was no evidence proving the Tunku’s assertions about Indonesian activities in Kalimantan and Natuna Besar.\footnote{ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 301, 13 December, 1962, para. 2.}

The Australian Embassy in Jakarta reported to Canberra on a conversation with an Indonesian official on 13 December:

While emphasising that policy was still under consideration[,] the] Foreign Office (Djokojuwono[,] North East Asia and Pacific Affairs) told us today that Indonesia might be prepared to facilitate Azaharis [sic] travel to [the] United Nations and would probably be prepared to give him asylum. Djokojuwono left [the] definite impression that Indonesia would give moral and political support to [the] rebel movement, for example, by issuing [a] more positive statement of Indonesian sympathy and that [the] implications of such a policy for Indonesian/Malayan relations would weigh lightly in Indonesian calculations. While Indonesia, he said, would probably not express opposition to Malaysia, it had a legitimate interest in a proposal which had resulted in a break down of security in a bordering territory. He emphasised that Azahari did not want to get tied up with Communists. The British should “talk to him” and should realise that the “Tunku was not the only person who counted”.\footnote{ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 980, 13 December, 1962, para. 1.}

The Embassy’s next telegram gave a summary of pertinent coverage in the press, mostly concerned with the Tunku’s “colonialist” action in sending his police to assist in the suppression of the revolt and similar subjects.\footnote{ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, Unnumbered, 13 December, 1962, para. 2.}

The following passage from a letter written by a foreign observer provided some idea of the public support that the rebellion enjoyed in Indonesia:

This lead by the President was followed by an avalanche of declared support for the rebels by the press, leading figures, and political and other organisations. Among those taking this attitude I might mention the following:

The “Partindo” Party; the West Kalimantan Students Community in Djakarta (urging President Soekarno to give support); Gen. Nasution (he made no direct reference by name to the territory but stated “we have no territorial claims outside Indonesia, but will oppose colonialism wherever it may be – we shall always assert independence wherever it is being fought for”); the Governor of West Kalimantan – “I am certain of their victory”; the Indonesian Nationalist Party, PNI, which declared that it was standing behind the people who are struggling to liberate themselves from colonialism and imperialism; the leader of the Indonesian Communist Party, PKI, called on the Indonesian people to render what assistance they could to the revolutionary struggle; the Moslem Party, PERTI, fully supported the revolt; the MURBA (Proletarian Party) stated that the Indonesian people look upon the North Kalimantan revolt against neo-colonialism as a struggle of the Indonesian people also.

Similar statements were issued by the Indonesian Peasants Front, BTI, the labour federation SOBSI, the KBKI, the GMNI, the IPPI, the National Youth Front, the
Womens’] Movements Gerwani and Wanita Demokrat, and the Indonesian Christian (Protestant) Party. The Workers union of PN Djakarta Lloyd has urged the Minister of Sea Communications to stop using or chartering vessels flying the British flag or the flags of British allies and also to return immediately such vessels which are currently under charter. The Indonesian aviation workers union SERBAUD stated that it will boycott any British aircraft passing through Indonesia if the British Government does not cease its military actions against the North Borneo revolutionaries. In addition to all this, the Executive board of the 1945 Generation Group announced a plan to organise and channel the feeling of solidarity of the Indonesian people towards the people of North Borneo in their struggle for national independence.379

The British Embassy and Fry’s residence were both placed under military observation to guard against the kind of violent demonstrations that had occurred during Indonesia’s konfrontasi with the Dutch over West Papua.380

Indonesia’s support for the revolt was also expressed through offers to provide volunteers to join the rebels in North Kalimantan from various political and mass organisations, including the PKI, the National Solidarity Committee, the Indonesian Veterans Legion, the Medan branch of the Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (SOBSI, All Indonesia Centre of Labour Organisations), Partindo, Gerwani, the Youth Council of Indonesia, and the Veterans Legion of South Borneo. Of these offers, that made by the Indonesian Veterans Legion should be emphasised, because of the group’s close association with Sambas Atmadinata and its size, apparently numbering as many as 800,000 veterans of the independence struggle. Equally noteworthy was an appeal made by Achmad Fadillah on 12 January, 1963 for “his fellow countrymen now residing in Indonesia to return to North Kalimantan to join the revolutionary fighters”.381

British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, preparatory to a visit to the Bahamas to meet with President Kennedy, requested that full daily situation reports with a focus on Indonesia’s movements be sent to him in the Caribbean. Australia’s Embassy to Indonesia

380 TNA, CO 1030/1072, Item 383, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 745, 14 December, 1962, para. 2.
381 TNA, FO 371/169897, Item 1061/14, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 35, 14 January, 1963, para. 1; AIR 20/11540, Item 39, Telegram to the Cabinet Office from the CINCPE, JICFE 188, 18 December, 1962, para. 7; Item 63, Telegram to the Cabinet Office from the CINCPE, JICFE 193, 28 December, 1962, para. 5; ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 993, 17 December, 1962, para. 4; TNA, FO 371/169897, Item 1061/7, Letter to JE Cable (FO) from RW Selby, British Embassy, Djakarta, No. 1043/62, 2 January, 1963, para. 2; FO 371/166603, Item 1081/1324, Press Analysis, Philippine North Borneo Claim and the Revolt in the North Borneo Territories, Dec. 13 to Dec. 19, 1962, Enclosure to Letter to Fred Warner (FO) from the Ambassador to the Philippines, Confidential No. 1057/845, 19 December, 1962, para. 8; Reuter’s News Service, “3,300 Veterans To Fight For Rebels”, The Sarawak Tribune, 28 December, 1962, p. 2; CO 1030/1073, Item 437, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 756, 16 December, 1962, para. 1.
telegraphed Canberra with a response to the Tunku’s allegations at the Commonwealth meeting on the 13th: the only meeting of service leaders in Jakarta was a pre-arranged conference of regional Army commanders that had been announced on 6 December, while Service Attachés had denied any knowledge of a build-up in Kalimantan or activity on Natuna Besar that had not already been made known to Western colleagues. Singapore added that there was a pre-existing airstrip on Natuna Besar, but that no further development was known to have occurred there.  

Australia’s Embassy in Washington reported that the British had decided to “keep under close cover” any evidence of Indonesian involvement in the revolt, which accounted for a noticeable tendency in recent days to downplay the subject. It was also stated that the US State Department had expressed concern that the Tunku’s public criticisms of Indonesia would push Jakarta into a more extreme position if such comments continued. The Australian Defence Representative in Singapore passed on a situation report from Admiral Luce that reported on an aerial survey of Natuna Besar that had observed no activity at the airstrip and no unusual concentration of naval or merchant shipping nearby. On 15 December, the Governor of West Kalimantan, Oevaang Oeray, was quoted in the Indonesian media as having said that he fully supported the struggle of his brothers in Kalimantan Utara and that Dayaks had never recognised the imperialists’ division of Borneo into two, believing themselves to be one people regardless of borders.  

Addressing the Tunku’s assertions concerning Indonesian complicity in the revolt, Fry commented that Sukarno and his associates were certainly hostile to the Malaysia concept for various reasons and that, adding to this their instinctive sympathy for any rebellion, “it is impossible to avoid concluding that Indonesia must have extended at least encouragement to

382 TNA, CO 1030/1076, Item 1, Memorandum to WIJ Wallace (CO) from DF Milton (CO), Enclosing Letter to NBJ Huijsman (CO) from Philip de Zulueta, Admiralty House, 14 December, 1962; ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 984, 14 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Commission, Singapore, No. 308, 14 December, 1962, para. 3.
384 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Washington, No. 3377, 14 December, 1962, para. 1; Telegram to the Department of Defence from the Australian Defence Representative, Australian Commission, Singapore, SAC 36, 14 December, 1962, para. 2; TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 426A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 754, 15 December, 1962, para. 1.
the Brunei rebels”. He also observed that an Indonesian build-up on Natuna Besar seemed unlikely in light of the fact that the revolt was nearly over and any intervention at this stage would have little chance of success. In another cable sent that day, Fry reported that the 1945 Generation, an influential mass organisation with which Chaerul Saleh was associated, had announced that it would convene a meeting of leaders of political organisations on the 17th to establish a national committee for Indonesian-North Kalimantan people’s solidarity.

This latter initiative bore fruit when the National Committee for Solidarity with the North Kalimantan Revolution was established as the primary vehicle of Indonesia’s support for the rebels. Within a few days of its creation, this committee represented as many as 117 political and mass organisations and had conducted a rally that both supported the struggle of the people of North Kalimantan and urged the Indonesian government to recognise the NKKU. A second rally, held on 23 December, attracted a crowd estimated by the local media to number 400,000, though the British Ambassador provided the more conservative appraisal of 3,000 attendees. This meeting continued the theme of focussing on the war of words with Malaya: “The speeches for the most part consisted of vehement denunciations of imperialism and colonialism in general, but appeared to be directed in particular at the Tunku for his alleged betrayal of the spirit of Bandung”.

Achmad Fadillah was involved in the activities of this committee and was, as a result, appointed the Permanent Representative of the NKKU government to Indonesia on 28 December. Biographical data on Fadillah is scarce, but it appears that he originated from Kalimantan and conducted business in Jakarta for approximately eight years before the revolt; the precise nature of his connection to Brunei, if any, is unknown. Upon his appointment, he opened what he called a legation in Jakarta that doubled as the headquarters for the National Solidarity Committee. Despite this tolerance for his activities, the

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385 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 427, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 751, 15 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
386 Ibid., para. 3; CO 1030/1013, Item 61A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 753, 15 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
387 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 150A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 802, 24 December, 1962, para. 1; FO 371/169897, Item 1061/2, Letter to JF Sinclair from GW Holliday, 21 December, 1962, p. 2; CO 1030/1013, Item 86, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 773, 19 December, 1962, para. 3.
Indonesian government did not accord him recognition as a representative of a *de facto* government and he did not fly the NKKU flag at the legation.\(^{388}\)

Fry passed intelligence he had gleaned from a source known to be friendly with Nasution to London on 16 December, essentially that a group of Russians working on road construction in Kalimantan had been encouraging Communist indoctrinated subversive elements to enter the Borneo territories and obtain employment there; some had also been recently trained in jungle warfare at Tarakan. Fry commented that it was likely that the Indonesians knew that the source was pro-British and so it was possible that this information had been planted, but the source certainly believed it to be accurate.\(^{389}\)

Selkirk expressed his views on Indonesia to the Foreign Secretary on 17 December:

> It is, in my view, desirable to leave the Indonesians in no doubt about our attitude before they commit themselves to a position from which, for “face” reasons, they will be unable to withdraw, the consequences of which could endanger the peace of this whole area. We might, moreover, be entitled, I submit, to hint that in the event of Indonesia taking aggressive or subversive steps in Borneo it would be open to us to invoke the assistance of our SEATO allies.\(^{390}\)

Fry proffered his own suggestion as to how to deal with the Indonesians:

> One possibility might be to take Dr. Subandrio up on his call for restraint; to point out that we had such and such evidence of Indonesian involvement and that, so far, we had exercised very considerable restraint about making public use of it. We could stress that we were anxious not to allow this to develop into a major row between us and propose to continue to exercise restraint, but that we felt entitled in the circumstances to ask the Indonesian Government to exercise similar restraint themselves. We could point out that the rebellion was virtually over and could not be sustained without intervention from abroad, which would be tantamount to aggression; and that in consequence the agitation now being developed in Indonesia for giving aid to the rebels caused us the gravest concern. We could note with regret the Indonesian Government’s support for this campaign and express astonishment at General Sambas’ subsequent statement in effect calling for volunteers . . . We could say that it was quite evident from deputations of protests which we had received in this Embassy that there was little spontaneous feeling on this subject and even less knowledge of the facts, and express our conviction that the whole affair would die down if the Indonesian Government chose to give their people a lead in that direction.\(^{391}\)

\(^{388}\) TNA, FO 371/169897, Item 1061/4, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 12, 5 January, 1963, paras. 1-2; CO 1030/1490, Item 270, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 11 Saving, 26 April, 1963, paras. 1-2; ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from IG Simington, Third Secretary, Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 109, 16 January, 1963, paras. 1-2.

\(^{389}\) TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 438, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 757, 16 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.

\(^{390}\) TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 442, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 364, 17 December, 1962, paras. 3-4.

\(^{391}\) TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 449, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 762, 17 December, 1962, para. 4.
The FO agreed with Selkirk that Great Britain should express its views to Indonesia as soon as possible in order to dissuade it from becoming more definitely involved in the Brunei Revolt, but suggested that any appeal to SEATO would be unwise, especially with the Philippines having its own reasons not to co-operate. Several courses of action were proposed, such as promoting Malaysia as the solution to British colonialism in Southeast Asia, speaking “firmly but tactfully” without making any “over official accusations of complicity”, emphasising that Britain would not change course over Malaysia or its willingness to suppress the revolt, and, most importantly, the premise that “[m]ilitary success combined with a friendly attitude is likely to be the best deterrent to Indonesian action”.  

Critchley described the Tunku as showing no trace of his concern of the previous week that Indonesian intervention into northern Borneo was imminent, when he met with the Prime Minister and US Ambassador Charles Baldwin on 17 December. Lord Lansdowne, Chairman of the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Malaysia and Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, suggested to the Commonwealth and Foreign Secretaries that a visit from himself or Lord Selkirk to Jakarta was urgently necessary to prevent the Republic from officially announcing its support for the TNKU and its opposition to Malaysia. Fry had been taken ill and Lansdowne considered direct contact critical if Britain was to restrain Indonesia. He also asserted that “an obvious show of vigilance and determination to defend Malaysia” was vital and that the forces presently deployed to northern Borneo must remain \textit{in situ} for the time being.  

The Indonesian Aviation Workers’ Trade Union announced on 17 December that it would boycott all British aircraft and any nation assisting the British travelling to or through the Republic unless all operations against the rebels in Borneo were halted forthwith. Ali Sastroamidjojo, former Prime Minister of Indonesia and Chairman of Partindo, declared on the same day that his party would aid the revolution in North Kalimantan whether such

392 TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 451, Telegram to the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia from the FO, No. 2238, 17 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.

393 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 68A, Telegram to the Secretaries of State for Commonwealth Relations and Foreign Affairs from the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, CROSOS No. 148, 17 December, 1962, paras. 1-4 & 7; ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 451, 17 December, 1962, para. 2.
assistance was sought or not and regardless of consequence. He said that Partindo supported the revolution because it was “aimed at self-liberation from the shackles of colonialism and the setting-up of a sovereign and independent State”.\(^{394}\) In addition, the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs passed a resolution proclaiming the Brunei Rebellion to be “a movement of the people there to free themselves from enslavement from colonialism and imperialism, [and] an ‘appropriate growth of the new-emerging forces deserving the fullest support of all sections of the Indonesian people”’.\(^{395}\)

Fry, addressing the question of Malaya’s relations with Indonesia through the prism of the formation of Malaysia, had this to say:

We have proclaimed to the world that no pressure has been and, by implication, will be put on the people of Brunei to join Malaysia. For us to go back on that now could hardly fail to undermine all confidence in British good faith; and nowhere would the effects be more apparent than in Indonesia. This conclusive evidence, for as such it would be undoubtedly (\(^{396}\)) seen here, of the correctness of the Indonesian view that the Tunku was a British stooge determined to bring about Malaysia behind British bayonets, would evoke the most violent reaction, extending perhaps to overt (and certainly to covert) assistance to the Brunei rebels. The result might well be that we should, at best, have a long guerrilla campaign on our hands or, at worst, something like an outright breach of relations between this country and Malaya, if not with the United Kingdom also.\(^{396}\)

The FO responded to the pleas of Fry and others for any evidence of Indonesia’s complicity in the revolt on 18 December with an assurance that such information was being compiled “as a matter of the highest priority” and that this exercise would be completed in the next ten or twelve days.\(^{397}\) Meanwhile, more Indonesian organisations declared their support for the TNKU, including Sarbupri (\textit{Sarekut Burah Perkebunan Republik Indonesia}, the Estate Workers Union) and the Railway Workers Trade Union. The JICFE noted in a report dated 18 December that the USA had learnt from a secret source that the PKI had issued a call for volunteers to join the struggle in northern Borneo on the 12\(^{th}\):

According to a member of [the] PKI Central Committee it was hoped to present Soekarno with a fait accompli in the hope that this would accelerate open Indonesian

\(^{394}\) TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 468, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 763, 18 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.

\(^{395}\) \textit{Ibid.}, para. 3.

\(^{396}\) TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 472, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 767, 18 December, 1962, para. 3.

\(^{397}\) TNA, CO 1030/1073, Item 480, Telegram to the Ambassador to Indonesia from the FO, No. 1065, 18 December, 1962, para. 1.
participation. The PKI wants to present the volunteers as a national front rather than a PKI movement.\textsuperscript{398}

This would neutralise opposition from the *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (ABRI) to any solely communist force. Another passage from this report is also of interest:

> The outbreak of the rebellion caught most Indonesian Government departments unawares. Indonesia was prepared to try to win international support for Azahari if the rebellion succeeded, but their reaction appears to have been slow and suggests [a] lack of preparation. We have so far received no evidence of any abnormal movement of regular Indonesian forces.\textsuperscript{399}

Harold Caccia, the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, replied to Lord Lansdowne’s suggestion about a possible visit to Jakarta on behalf of the Earl of Home, the Foreign Secretary. Lord Home did not wish to highlight Indonesia’s role in the entire affair by despatching Lansdowne on what would inevitably be depicted in the press as a dramatic mission, but a visit from Selkirk might be helpful; the line that the latter might take in Jakarta was under consideration. Caccia also cabled Home to request that he ask the Americans to make a quiet approach to Sukarno to warn him away from firm public support for the rebels.\textsuperscript{400}

Sukarno gave a speech at Surabaya on 19 December, in the course of which he said:

> We, the people of Indonesia[,] feel great sympathy for the struggle of the people of North Borneo who are fighting for their independence. Whoever does not sympathize with the just struggle of the people of North Borneo, has betrayed himself. Let us march forward, supporting those who oppose colonialism, imperialism and oppression till the world has become clean.\textsuperscript{401}

Fry judged Sukarno’s public comments about Brunei up to this point to have been “positively restrained” in comparison to his usual performances.\textsuperscript{402}

Responding to Selkirk’s suggestions of 17 December, quoted above, Fry emphasised that any appeal to SEATO “would merely help to strengthen the Indonesian contention that it [Malaysia] is essentially imperialist in concept”; he doubted, in any case, whether any

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\item TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 122, Telegram to the Cabinet Office, the British Defence Liaison Staff, Canberra, and the British Defence Liaison Staff, Wellington from the CINCFE, JICFE 188, 18 December, 1962, para. 7; ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 1002, 18 December, 1962, para. 3.
\item TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 122, Telegram to the Cabinet Office, the British Defence Liaison Staff, Canberra, and the British Defence Liaison Staff, Wellington from the CINCFE, JICFE 188, 18 December, 1962, para. 8.
\item TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 75A, Telegram to the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs from the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, CROSOS No. 160, 18 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; DEFE 11/391, Item 128, Telegram to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, No. Codel 39, 19 December, 1962, para. 1.
\item TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 118A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 788, 21 December, 1962, para. 3.
\end{enumerate}
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member nation would support Britain and Malaya as he suspected that “most of them would shy as far away from the Brunei affair as possible”. Instead, Fry’s proposed line, quoted above directly after Selkirk’s views, should be utilised, even if no evidence of Indonesian complicity in the rebellion was found, with the following addition:

A further argument might be that, as he [Subandrio] would realize from our record elsewhere, we [Great Britain] were anxious to bring the North Borneo territories to independence as soon as we could, but always having regard to their future well-being. For that, two requirements were essential:

- a stable government, and
- economic viability,

which Malaysia would provide. Moreover, just as Indonesia had claimed succession to all territories of the Netherlands East Indies, and indeed had now united them, so we consider that full powers should embrace all former British and British-protected territories in this area. No doubt there would be some initial troubles, for newly-independent States rarely come into being without them; we are, however, entitled to seek Indonesia’s help in overcoming them.404

On that day, Fry also responded to the proposal that Selkirk visit Jakarta with the news that he was no longer ill and stated that he agreed with the FO that military success combined with a friendly attitude would be the most likely approach to prevent further Indonesian intervention. He suggested that a visit to Jakarta from a top-ranking Malayan official might be more beneficial, if a common line could be agreed with the Federation in advance: “to receive a special emissary from the Tunku for the purpose of friendly discussions would, I think, flatter the Indonesians”.405 If this idea did not meet with Malaya’s approval, Fry proposed that a personal message from the Tunku to Subandrio might be sent instead, in order to further the latter’s professed desire to maintain the friendship between Indonesia and Malaya. In the meantime, Lord Home should send his own personal message to Subandrio along the lines of the suggestions recently made.406

Selkirk continued to advocate further international involvement:

- I think our SEATO allies should realise that the Indonesians are playing with fire. We are up against a man with much of the instability and lust for power of Hitler and military forces, if not so efficient, at least comparable in size for the area. Further[,] that the longer we appease him the more extensive the war will be which will ensue.

403 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 492, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 768, 19 December, 1962, para. 2.
404 Ibid., para. 3.
405 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 494, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 771, 19 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.
406 Ibid., para. 3; Item 495, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 772, 19 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
I therefore recommend that unless protests in Djakarta are immediately effective that we be prepared to bring the matter to the attention of the [UN] Security Council.407

On 20 December, Denis Greenhill, second in charge at Britain’s Embassy in Washington, informed London that the State Department had instructed Jones in Jakarta to give the friendly warning that Caccia had previously suggested that Home request from the Americans. The discoveries in Tawau discussed in Chapter VI caused Fry to request instructions for his mooted conversation with Subandrio, perhaps based on this new intelligence and any other information that had been gathered about Indonesian complicity. These developments in Tawau and Sukarno’s call for his people to support the revolt had repercussions for Indonesia’s Consul in Jesselton, with Goode requesting that he not visit those who had been arrested in Tawau, to which he had agreed, but Goode sought instruction from the CO on whether the Consulate should be closed entirely or the staff formally prevented from leaving Jesselton.408

The FO requested that Fry inform them of the result of the Malayan Ambassador’s mission to convey his government’s formal protest against Subandrio’s recent statements about the Federation, with a view to assessing whether Fry’s proposal that a high-ranking Malayan official or a personal message from the Tunku might restore the deteriorating relations between Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. RW Selby, the Counsellor at the British Embassy, delivered an aide-memoire to Supeni, the Acting Second Deputy Foreign Minister, that addressed Indonesia’s increasingly public support for the rebels. Selkirk despatched another cable on 20 December that made clear his apprehension about Indonesia’s intentions, which is reproduced in full in Appendix VII. His primary thesis was that the Republic had “always wanted to get hold” of northern Borneo and he asserted that “the only way to pull the Indonesians up short is by a display of force”, perhaps including a flag waving exercise

407 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 505, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 374, 20 December, 1962, paras. 2-4.
408 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 519, Telegram to the FO from the Minister at the Embassy to the United States, No. 3188, 20 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 529, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 778, 20 December, 1962, paras. 1-3; Item 531, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 350, 20 December, 1962, paras. 1-4.
by the US Navy’s 7th Fleet in Borneo waters.409 At a minimum, he opined, the Military Intelligence Officer at the Indonesian Consulate in Jesselton should be declared persona non grata, as well as Colonel Soegih Arto, the Consul General in Singapore.410

On 21 December, Tory stated that Malaya’s formal protest against Subandrio’s comments, to be delivered by the Federation’s Ambassador to Indonesia, Dato Haji Kamaruddin, was not expected to be “very robust”, so it would not interfere in any move Great Britain might want to make.411 He also offered this analysis of Malaya’s thinking on Indonesia:

Indonesian support for the T.N.K.U. is likely to take any and every form short of open military assistance. There is an almost complete identity of aims between the PKI and its front organisations on the one hand and “military intelligence” operating under the political direction of Subandrio on the other. Indonesian unattributable assistance is expected to take the following forms:[

(a) Infiltration of arms[,] supplies and possibly reinforcements by the jungle routes linking Kalimantan with North Borneo and Sarawak.
(b) Infiltration of T.N.K.U. personnel for rest, trainin [sic], rearming, etc.
(c) Fomenting of sympathetic action by other opposition parties and groups in Malaysia through the exploitation of the links between the PKI and these parties or groups.

Overt political encouragement is expected to continue and increase both inside Indonesia and outside through international forums. Inside Indonesia this may include a campaign to raise “volunteers” under the aegis of such notionally independent organisations as the veterans legion; the “volunteers” could be infiltrated as in paragraph 4(a) above; but support is thought likely to stop short of open armed intervention by RI forces.412

The FO’s investigation into the evidence of Indonesian complicity in the rebellion concluded that strong evidence only existed for the training of TNKU cadres; no useful proof had been obtained concerning finances, weapons, or uniforms. The evidence for diplomatic and consular activities was also strong, but it was not regarded as usable. The FO had decided against any move in the UN, as noted above, preferring to deal with the matter bilaterally with as much assistance as the USA was willing to give, “as [the] only friendly

409 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 142A, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 375, 20 December, 1962, paras. 1-4; CO 1030/1074, Item 534, Telegram to the Ambassador to Indonesia from the FO, No. 1081, 20 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; CO 1030/1013, Item 94, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 780, 20 December, 1962, para. 2.
410 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 142A, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 375, 20 December, 1962, para. 4.
411 TNA, CO 1030/1074, Item 541, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 980, 21 December, 1962, para. 1.
412 Ibid. paras. 2-5.
power likely to have any influence on [the] Indonesians”. Critchley, in Kuala Lumpur, commented that “Selkirk is still awaiting authority to make [a] strong demarche in Djakarta meanwhile Fry...has recommended [a] conciliatory approach”, a fine summation of their respective positions.

Critchley also reported that the US Ambassador had been instructed to relay details of Malaya’s reactions to Indonesia’s movements as a basis for talks between Great Britain and the USA. He commented that, although he thought that it might be advantageous for the two powers to make “robust diplomatic representations” to Jakarta, Malaya would be “well advised to take Indonesia quietly”. Fry responded to suggestions that Indonesia’s Consulate in Jesselton should be closed by stating that such a move would be “well calculated not merely to bring about the closure of one of Her Majesty’s Consulates in Indonesia but to increase substantially [the likelihood of] dangerous Indonesian intervention”. He suggested that even preventing the Consul from visiting those detained at Tawau would impede Britain’s own activities in the Republic, and he doubted that the Consul would be in a position to “make mischief” amongst the detainees if he was accompanied by a suitable government official.

The British government seriously considered sending a personal message from Macmillan to Sukarno in order to arrest the drift towards definite public support for Azahari, the TNKU, and the revolt, with a draft text sent to Nassau for Macmillan, Home, and Duncan Sandys, the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Commonwealth Relations, to consider. In the end, Fry was instructed to deliver a personal message from Home to Subandrio, with additional orders to emphasise Home’s concerns about statements made by Indonesian government figures in support of the revolt, to discuss the available evidence, and to highlight Britain’s determination to honour its obligation to protect the Borneo territories.

413 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from Australia House, London, No. 6285, 21 December, 1962, paras. 3-4.
414 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, No. 461, 21 December, 1962, para. 2.
415 Ibid., paras. 3-4.
416 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 118A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 788, 21 December, 1962, para. 1.
417 Ibid., para. 2.
“from any form of outside intervention”. The proof of Indonesia’s involvement with the TNKU that Britain was willing to reveal to Indonesia at this stage is reproduced in Appendix VII.

The Commander-in-Chief, Far East responded to the intelligence that was available on Indonesia’s activities in northern Borneo on 21 December with an Army reinforcement plan that called for three more units to add to the five and a half major units already in the area, which was all that present theatre resources could support. The Tunku had written a letter to the Sultan on 17 December expressing his concern over Indonesia’s reported intentions regarding the future of Brunei at the UN and suggesting that the Sultan should formally and publicly declare that “the power to decide on whether the State should attain her independence rests with Your Highness alone”. Selkirk, on 22 December, suggested that a defence agreement between Great Britain and Indonesia might contain the Republic within its present borders and negate its frequent use of the idea of encirclement by neo-colonialist forces that would later fuel the propaganda behind Konfrontasi. The Commissioner-General himself doubted the viability of this proposal, but thought that there was an outside chance that it might find favour with Sukarno.

Naval sources reported that on three occasions, on 22 and 28 December and 2 January, an Indonesian Naval gunboat had been observed acting in an aggressive manner in the waters near Tarakan, even though a RN destroyer was in the area. Selkirk and Tory visited the Tunku and his deputy, Tun Razak, on 23 December and were forced to deploy every argument they could to dissuade the Prime Minister when he declared that he was ready to make “a fiery speech” on the subject of Indonesia. Meanwhile, Governor Waddell had received information of “very doubtful reliability” that up to three battalions of the

418 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 151, Telegram to the Ambassador to Indonesia from the FO, No. 1093, 21 December, 1962, paras. 1-4; CO 1030/1013, Item 119, Telegram to the UK Delegation to the Bahamas Meeting from the FO, No. CODEL 60, 21 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
419 TNA, DO 187/33, Item 141A, Telegram to the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 168, 21 December, 1962, para. 2; DEFE 11/391, Item 148, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCSEACOS 98, 21 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
420 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 131A, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 387, 22 December, 1962, paras. 1-3.
421 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 146, Telegram to the CRO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, Bleak No. 57, 23 December, 1962, paras. 1-2; WO 305/2519, Part II: Naval Intelligence, Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 1: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 5 January 1963, 8 January, 1963, para. 3.
Indonesian Army had been despatched from Pontianak to Sanggau, a regency adjacent to the Kalimantan border near Serian, in order to patrol the area; the military commander was also said to have been called back to Pontianak to confer with superiors.422

Shann, Australia’s Ambassador in Jakarta, commented that Indonesia would “consider carefully” before becoming militarily involved in northern Borneo if it thought that the USA and the UK would react strongly; this would not, however, prevent it from providing covert support, for the time being at least.423 On 23 December, Sukarno was reported to have reiterated his government’s sympathy for the rebels and to have denied that Indonesia had any desire to claim northern Borneo for itself. The Tunku also spoke before a large audience that day, with the pleas made by Selkirk and Tory to temper his comments about Indonesia having little apparent effect, if his words are anything to go by:

The Indonesian Communist Party feels concern because by the formation of Malaysia it will no longer have the freedom to expand its activities in Borneo. So long as the Indonesian Communist Party is strong it will continue to work for the worsening of relations between Indonesia and Malaya. Relations between both countries will only improve when the Party has been eliminated.424

On 24 December, Fry met with First Deputy Chief Minister Johannes Leimena to deliver Lord Home’s personal message and also handed Leimena a bout de pâté outlining much of what he said to ensure that misunderstandings were minimised. Leimena stated that Indonesia opposed the formation of Malaysia and would prefer that the three Borneo territories form a single independent state. Fry’s attempts to make him commit to speaking to the President on the issues raised were in vain, with Leimena only promising to consult First Minister Djuanda. Fry speculated that Subandrio, as the main player in this affair, might be the one that Djuanda and Leimena would report to, rather than Sukarno; Fry hoped that the representations that American Ambassador Jones had yet to make might combine with his to produce some action.425

422 TNA, CO 1030/1075, Item 605, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.311, 24 December, 1962, para. 1.
423 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 1025, 24 December, 1962, para. 1.
424 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 150, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 984, 24 December, 1962, para. 6; Item 148B, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 798, 24 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
425 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 151, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 803, 24 December, 1962, paras. 1 & 3; Item 152, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 804, 25 December, 1962, para. 3; Item 153, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 805, 25 December, 1962, para. 3; Item 154, Telegram to the FO
Later on 25 December, Fry expressed the view that Indonesia would continue to expend effort on prising the Borneo territories away from Malaya, with its attention focussed on the most attractive prospect, Brunei. He opined that this attractiveness could only be enhanced if the Sultanate’s entry into Malaysia was still obviously opposed by its people, and that Azahari was therefore the key to the problem. He asked if there was any prospect of persuading Azahari to switch sides, in order to spike the guns of both Indonesia and the Philippines.  

No direct reply to this suggestion seems to have been made, but it was well known in London that the Sultan would not countenance any kind of conciliation with Azahari.

Selkirk sought permission from London to conduct reconnaissance flights in border areas to find out if bases, airstrips, or bodies of volunteers might be seen from the air. He also opined that Indonesia was still hesitating about really committing itself to support the rebels and suggested that the maximum diplomatic effort, allied with a clear demonstration of military resolve, should be marshalled to seize this moment. He again suggested that Britain’s SEATO allies might be persuaded to provide some diplomatic support, because he believed that these countries, as well as South Vietnam and Cambodia, had been disturbed by Indonesia’s recent activities. The Acting Chief of the Defence Staff, responding to Selkirk’s cable about reconnaissance, sought further information from Admiral Luce about how far into Indonesian territory such flights might travel and the likelihood of interception.

Shann and Kamaruddin both saw Subandrio on 27 December and received similar messages: the problem was not what was happening in northern Borneo, but rather the state of Indonesia’s relations with Malaya. Jones had met with Sukarno the previous day, with the latter giving two reasons for his hostility towards Malaya: his belief that it was a ‘made in

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from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 806, 25 December, 1962, para. 3; Item 155, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 807, 25 December, 1962, paras. 1-2. In the diplomatic world, a *bout de papier* is a less formal document than an *aide-memoire*.

426 TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 156, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 808, 25 December, 1962, paras. 1-6.

427 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 176A, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 388, 26 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 176R, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK to Southeast Asia, No. 389, 26 December, 1962, para. 1; Item 183, Telegram to the CINCFE from the Acting Chief of the Defence Staff COSSEA 80, 27 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
Britain’ solution and that it was motivated by anti-Indonesian sentiment. Sukarno refused to be drawn when asked if Indonesia would withdraw its opposition should all peoples involved in Malaysia demonstrably support the concept. He was more forthcoming on the subject of the possibility of volunteers going to northern Borneo, saying that he “could do nothing about such spontaneous manifestations of his people’s spirit”. Sukarno also made a point of saying to Jones that Indonesia supported the concept of independence for Brunei and that he hoped that the USA would not assist the British to force the Sultanate into Malaysia, a message he particularly wanted Jones to pass on to Washington.

On 26 December, Perbum, the oil workers’ trade union, released a statement declaring that its members would boycott all British oil tankers and all vessels bound for Britain in support of the struggle of the North Kalimantan people for independence. It also called for the Indonesian government to nationalise all British enterprises in the Republic, including Bataafse Petroleum Maatschappij, Royal Dutch Shell’s subsidiary in Indonesia. Antara also reported that 33,000 veterans in Bandjarmasin had pledged themselves as volunteers ready to be despatched to Kalimantan Utara at any time. Meanwhile, the FO had cabled Jakarta to enquire whether Fry thought that Britain’s views had been conveyed by Leimena or Jones to Sukarno; if he did not think so, the suggestion he had made of a personal message from Macmillan to the President would be urgently considered. On another matter, Fry and his Military Attaché were requested to provide their views on Indonesia’s capacity to both support the TNKU and infiltrate volunteers into northern Borneo.

Fred Warner of the FO, at a meeting of the Chiefs of the Defence Staff on 27 December, made some interesting comments:

The most effective action we could take would be to make it impossible for the rebels to contact Indonesian sources of assistance. Our clear determination to crush the rebellion without delay would also contribute. The President however was now in a most difficult and unreasonable mood and was not likely to be deterred from

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428 ANA, File 248/5/6, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Washington, No. 3486, 27 December, 1962, paras. 3-5 & 7; Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 1032, 27 December, 1962, para. 1.
430 ANA, File 248/5/7, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 12 Saving, 27 December, 1962, paras. 1-3; TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 161, Telegram to the Ambassador to Indonesia from the FO, No. 1126, 27 December, 1962, paras. 1-2.
trying to assist the rebels unless we made it physically impossible for him to make contact with them.
We were in no position to exert financial pressure on the Indonesians; on the contrary they could, if they wished[,] sequestrate British investments estimated at some £200 million. On the other hand the United States were negotiating an aid agreement with the Indonesians and if they were seen to be giving material assistance to the rebels, America might well be disposed to withhold such aid.431 Intelligence indicated that Subandrio had decided that Indonesia should not openly back the rebels and that the impression that the Philippines was their primary supporter should be fostered. In pursuit of this policy, Subandrio had cancelled tentative plans to give Azahari an Indonesian passport and add him to the Republic’s delegation to the UN. Another secret report noted the formation of the People’s Volunteer Pioneer Command by the National Committee for Solidarity with the North Kalimantan Revolution, which would comprise volunteers from all National Front groups under the command of a major from the ABRI.432

Fry gave an account of the meeting between Subandrio and Kamaruddin on 27 December mentioned above, when the latter delivered an aide-memoire that expressed Malaya’s continuing desire for friendship with Indonesia and reiterated the advantages of Malaysia for the region. Less conciliatory were the assertions made about Subandrio being the cause of the poor relationship between the two governments; of course, the Foreign Minister stated that he could not accept these statements and he would, in due course, respond. Fry also reported on the meeting between Subandrio and Shann on 28 December, where many of the same points were discussed; the only additional remark worth mentioning was the fact that Subandrio stated that Indonesia could not regard Malaya as fully independent and that its expansion into Borneo amounted to neo-colonialism.433

Peck of the FO, whilst making proposals for the next Cabinet meeting, characterised Britain’s policy towards Indonesia as “firm but friendly” and contrasted it with the “fulminations” of the Tunku.434 Fry saw Subandrio again on 31 December and ascertained that Sukarno had seen the personal message from Lord Home and that Subandrio would

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431 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 180, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Extract from COS(62) 83 Meeting held on 27th December, 1962, para. 1F.
432 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 185, Telegram to the Secretary, Joint Intelligence Committee, London from the Secretary, Joint Intelligence Committee (Far East), JICFE 193, 28 December, 1962, paras. 3 & 5.
433 TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 189, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 815, 28 December, 1962, paras. 1-3; Item 195, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 821, 29 December, 1962, para. 3.
respond as soon as possible. Fry also took the opportunity to clarify Subandrio’s views on the future:

(a) first [sic] thing to do was to allow agitation in Indonesia to subside; the Indonesian Government were “trying to canalize it”;
(b) There was no question of Indonesian intervention in the three Borneo territories and no volunteers would go there;
(c) The basic problem was that of relations between Indonesia and Malaya and thus between Indonesia and Malaysia when it came into being.\footnote{TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 168, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 827, 31 December, 1962, paras. 1-2 & 7.}

Fry then responded to the FO’s cable of 27 December raising the possibility of a personal message from Macmillan to Sukarno to ensure that the President heard Britain’s views on Indonesia’s recent activities, saying that such a message should be held back until Subandrio had time to show his hand after their meeting that day. He also expressed the following opinion:

I have no evidence to support this view, but it seems to me likely that the Indonesians will in fact let their current agitation subside quietly. They are realists enough to recognize that the revolt is to all intents over and to bring it to life again would be difficult. I should hope, moreover, that they know us well enough to understand that we mean what we say in proclaiming that the responsibility of Her Majesty’s Government for defending the three Borneo territories will be discharged. They may well argue, therefore, that it would be prudent to wait until our forces have withdrawn even if that does not happen until Malaysia has come into being before beginning their machinations again.\footnote{TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 207, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 830, 31 December, 1962, paras. 2-3.}

Admiral Luce reported on 1 January that an unconfirmed secret report had been received stating that the West Borneo Army Command had requested 500 Lee Enfield rifles from the Surabaya Army Supply Depot for training purposes on 13 and 15 December and that 300 such rifles had been despatched on the 21st; the inference was that these rifles might be used to train and arm volunteers for infiltration into the Borneo territories. The American Embassy in Jakarta was said to have informed Washington that the Indonesian press coverage of Brunei had died down and that Ambassador Jones was unsure of the impact of his conversation with Sukarno. Australia House in London, meanwhile, reported that, as a result of Fry’s recent meeting with Subandrio, Britain was confident that Indonesia would
tread carefully with regard to Brunei, though not much stock was placed in Subandrio’s assurances that Indonesia would neither intervene in northern Borneo nor send volunteers.\footnote{437 TNA, AIR 20/11540, Item 72, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 2, 1 January, 1963, para. 1; ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Washington, No. 1, 2 January, 1963, paras. 1-2; Cablegram to the DEA from Australia House, London, 2 January, 1963, paras. 1-2.}

As if in response to Subandrio’s assurance on the matter, Luce reported on 2 January that Azahari had claimed that Indonesian volunteers were in border areas of Kalimantan and that he expected the Republic to recognise the NKKU in the next few days. Ralph Selby of the British Embassy in Jakarta, in a letter to a colleague in London, reported that local branches of the National Committee for Solidarity with the North Kalimantan Revolution were being established all over the country, according to the Indonesian press, and that he anticipated a flood of resolutions of solidarity from these bodies as time went on. He also noted that the Medan branch of SOBSI had released a statement announcing their desire to “become volunteers to drive the British imperialists and their henchmen out of North Kalimantan” and threatening to seize British interests in Indonesia, starting in Medan, if Britain “did not stop suppressing and oppressing the people of North Kalimantan”\footnote{438 TNA, FO 371/169897, Item 1061/7, Letter to JE Cable (FO) from RW Selby, British Embassy, Djakarta, 1043/62, 2 January, 1963, paras. 1-2; AIR 20/11540, Item 75, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, SEACOS 4, 2 January, 1963, para. 7; FO 371/169897, Item 1061/4, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 12, 5 January, 1963, para. 1.}

On 2 January, Selkirk passed on a Brunei Special Branch report dated 15 December that a suspicious aircraft had been seen dropping a package to rebels at Limbang on the 8th. The aircraft was thought to have been an Indonesian B26, twin-engined with a blunt nose and bomb doors, and with RAF roundels painted on with the colours in the wrong order. The Indonesian Foreign Ministry finally rejected the aide-memoire handed to Supeni on 20 December because it was said to contain abusive allegations. The British Embassy in Jakarta released a statement in response denying that any such statements had been made, describing the document as merely concerning a matter of detail. Selby, the Counsellor at the Embassy, was called in to the Department of Foreign Affairs to be told that Supeni had been the wrong person to whom to give such a message, as she had nothing to do with the subject. Selby replied that the aide-memoire had been given to Supeni because she had agreed to receive it
beforehand and he emphasised that, whether the Indonesian government rejected it or not, Britain’s message had been conveyed and it remained valid.439

The Borneo Bulletin reported that the Indonesian Navy had announced on 3 January that all warships had been ordered to increase their vigilance because of the tension caused by events in the Borneo territories. Shann visited Djuanda on 7 January and pressed Australia’s support for the Malaysia concept and its view that Indonesia and Malaya must be friendly in order to maintain the stability of the area. Djuanda expressed his personal disappointment in light of the fact that he had signed Indonesia’s Treaty of Friendship with Malaya when he had been Prime Minister and described the war of words as “unproductive”; Shann, however, concluded that Djuanda, “like everyone else, dislikes the concept of Malaysia”.440

Colonel Rusmin Nurjadin, Indonesian Air Force Operational Commander, said in an interview on 7 January that Indonesia would shoot down any aircraft that violated its airspace, in response to reports that the RAF was charting remote parts of northern Borneo in an effort to locate Brunei’s rebels. The Republic’s Air Force, in the meantime, had announced that air patrols would be conducted in border areas to prevent such incursions, while similar duties would be assigned to naval units in Borneo waters. The Australian Embassy in Washington reported a conversation with Edward Ingraham of the State Department in which the latter said that it had been decided to postpone any announcement of the USA’s support for the Malaysia concept until agitation against it in Indonesia had died down. In addition, the State Department believed that its approach to Sukarno was already at the limit of what it was prepared to do in a matter in which the USA was not directly involved.441

439 TNA, FO 371/169897, Item 1061/1, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 3, 2 January, 1963, paras. 1-3; ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Annex to JIC(PE) Review of Current Intelligence as at 4th January, 1963, Annex to JICPE 1, 4 January, 1963, para. 13; File 248/5/7, Telegram to the British High Commissioner to Australia from the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, W. No. 11, 4 January, 1963, para. 1; Telegram to the British High Commissioner to Australia from the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, W. No. 9, 4 January, 1963, paras. 1-3.
Also on 7 January, Fry reported the receipt of reliable information that a C-130B Hercules was known to have been making up to five sorties a day northwards from Balikpapan, perhaps for the purpose of dropping supplies in border areas. The next day, he suggested that perhaps Azahari might be used to make the Malaysia concept popular in Brunei, which would be far better than leaving him to be manipulated by the Indonesians, whatever the difficulties involved in persuading the Sultan and his government of the advantages of this course. The Australian Embassy in Jakarta informed Canberra that Djokojuwono had told them that Indonesia did not wish to quarrel with either Britain or Malaya; he was also said to have given the impression that the shift in emphasis evident in Indonesia’s recent actions had been caused by the collapse of the revolt.442

The National Committee for Solidarity with the North Kalimantan Revolution sent a 15-strong delegation to wait on the British Ambassador on 9 January led by Brigadier General Latief, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs. An embassy official later described the delegation’s conversation thus:

Briefly they asked in substance for the recognition of Azahari’s Government and the withdrawal of British troops and gave warning that if their appeal was not met they would not be responsible for the Indonesian people’s anger. A copy of a telegram to U Thant showed that he had been asked to help Azahari forward his case in the United Nations in keeping with resolution no. 1514 of 1959. A copy of the message to the Prime Minister of Malaya showed that the Tunku had been asked to ban the pan-Malayan idea as a form of colonialism.443

The FO regarded Indonesia’s recent military movements primarily as “cover for [a] clandestine build-up to foment further insurgency and subversion in [the] Borneo territories”, in line with intelligence received.444 On 11 January, Lord Home requested a meeting with BM Diah, Indonesia’s Ambassador to Great Britain, to discuss recent developments:

Home expressed his concern at recent Indonesian statements and surprise that Indonesia had not first approached Britain diplomatically to [sic] get [its] facts straight.

Ambassador claimed [that the] statements had been provoked by [the] Tunku.

442 ANA, File 248/5/7, Telegram to the British High Commissioner to Australia from the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, W. No. 26, 8 January, 1963, para. 2; Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 29, 11 January, 1963, para. 1; TNA, DO 169/259, Item 145, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 21, 8 January, 1963, para. 2.

443 TNA, FO 371/169897, Item 1061/13, Letter to JE Cable (FO) from RW Selby, British Embassy, Jakarta, No. 1064/63, 9 January, 1963, paras. 4 & 8. The UN resolution referred to was the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

444 ANA, File 248/5/7, Cablegram to the DEA from the Senior External Affairs Representative, Australia House, London, No. 166, 11 January, 1963, para. 2. The source of this intelligence has been expunged on the copy of the cablegram available on the website of the Australian National Archives.
Home said Indonesian interest had apparently now spread beyond support for [the] Brunei Revolt [and the] latest statements seemed designed to incite revolt in North Borneo and Sarawak where there was not only no current rebellion but public opinion favoured Malaysia and opposed Azahari’s aims. What exactly were Indonesia’s objections to Malaysia? Ambassador said he had never seen any such objections formalised and thought [the] Indonesian attitude was largely reactive to [the] Tunku’s provocation. In conclusion Home said Britain wanted [sic] friendly relations with Indonesia but “would not tolerate interference of any kind by Indonesia or any other country” in [the] internal affairs of [the] Borneo territories.445

At the time, Diah was on the verge of returning to Jakarta at his own request for consultations; Eastman stated that he had hinted that he was concerned about the growing tension between Indonesia and Britain.446

A spokesperson from the Indonesian FO was quoted in the Jakarta press as having stated that the Indonesian government did not intend to permit any volunteers to assist the rebels in northern Borneo at the present time, but that the people of the Republic would demand action if British and Gurkha atrocities there continued. The ABRI had already instructed a group of veterans to desist from organising a volunteer force, with any order to take action to be given by Nasution alone. Fadillah, in his role as the NKKU’s Permanent Representative to Indonesia, gave an interview to Radio Australia in which he promoted the fiction that the Brunei Rebellion continued and sidestepped a question about the intentions of his government regarding any possible future integration into Indonesia.447

On 15 January, Britain’s High Commission in Canberra was requested to inform the government there of the instructions that Ambassador Sir David Ormsby-Gore in Washington had been given to convey Lord Home’s concerns about developments in Indonesia to the USA. The suggestion was made that talks between the UK, USA, and Australia at ambassadorial level on the subject of policy towards Indonesia might take place and Canberra was invited to express its view on whether it might wish to participate. Ormsby-Gore’s instructions detailed Britain’s suspicions about Indonesia’s expansionist aims, apparently encompassing not only West Papua and the Borneo territories but also

446 Ibid., paras. 1 & 3.
Malaya, Singapore, the Philippines, Australian New Guinea, Portuguese Timor, and, finally, the entirety of Melanesia. To accomplish these goals, military and political assistance would naturally be sought from Russia or China; any aid that the USA might provide to Indonesia would thus be used to subsidise the purchase of arms from the Communist bloc. In light of these assertions, Great Britain was seeking American assistance to contain the Indonesian threat.  

Actual intelligence received by Britain was more limited:

We have received what seems to us a reliable report [from an expunged source] saying that Indonesian policy towards the British Borneo territories is as follows:

(i) The principal Indonesian aim is to prevent the formation of Greater Malaysia.
(ii) In order to do this they will stimulate a rebellion in the three British Borneo territories.
(iii) If necessary Indonesian guerrilla [sic] fighters will have to assist the rebels.

We believe this to be a correct assessment; President Sukarno would jealously resent any extension of Malayan influence and it would in any case frustrate his expansionist plans.

Fry despatched a telegram detailing recent manifestations of Indonesian agitation regarding northern Borneo, including a meeting of high-ranking officers of all three services to discuss measures designed to strengthen the vigilance and combat readiness of the armed forces. It had also been reported that press and radio services, telephone conversations, and cables had been censored in the East Kalimantan military district since 18 December. The increased naval and air patrols in and around Borneo were also mentioned. Fry did emphasise, though, that Indonesian defence officials were downplaying all these tensions and precautions in conversation with his staff.

JC Ingram, the First Secretary at the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, provided some background information on the interview with Djokojuwono on 11 January, stating that the latter spent most of the conversation downplaying Indonesia’s support for the TNKU and the agitation in the press. Fry cabled London on the 16th recommending that the continued wide coverage that Fadillah received in the Indonesian press should be ignored whilst he remained

448 ANA, File 248/5/7, Letter to EJ Bunting, the Prime Minister’s Department, Canberra from G Kimber, Office of the British High Commissioner to Australia and enclosure, POL.35/1, 15 January, 1963, paras. 1-2.
450 ANA, File 248/5/7, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 2 Saving, 15 January, 1963, paras. 1-6.
an unofficial representative of the NKKU; should any moves be made to recognise his claim and, by extension, that of the NKKU, then action might be taken. Two days later, Selby expressed the view that the Balikpapan correspondent of Antara had been “doing his utmost to whip up feelings of hostility towards the British in North Borneo”, citing three recent reports on allegations of maltreatment of Indonesians in Tawau, British smuggling, and Indonesian counter-measures.451

Jeffrey Petersen of the British Embassy in Jakarta commented on the “curious schizophrenia apparent here over the Brunei affair” in a letter describing the visit of a member of the National Committee for Solidarity with the North Kalimantan Revolution: “Professions of private affection and regard for Britain, and approaches designed to show that the persons concerned, although unable to do anything about it, do not really approve of the Brunei agitation, have become very frequent since the affair began”.452 On 18 January, Admiral Luce reported that Peralta, the Philippines’ Secretary for National Defence, had told him that Indonesia intended to attack northern Borneo in approximately a month’s time and that more information would be passed to Great Britain after the Philippine Army Chief of Staff visited Jakarta presently. Two days later, an intelligence report noted that recent minor troop movements in border areas near West Sarawak might be related to such plans.453

Eastman in London described the reaction to Peralta’s warning, largely characterised by cautious scepticism, but plans were made to counter any such infiltration based on what was thought to be the worst-case scenario of six to seven thousand volunteers being sent over the border. On 20 January, Subandrio made a speech at Yogyakarta in the course of which he announced that Indonesia would adopt a policy of confrontation against Malaya. Mackie has remarked on the significance of this statement:

451 TNA, FO 371/169898, Item DH1061/22, Letter to JE Cable (FO) from RW Selby, British Embassy, Djakarta, 1043/63, 18 January, 1963, para. 1; FO 371/169897, Item DH1061/14, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 37, 16 January, 1963, paras. 1-3; ANA, File 3030/2/1, Part 3, Memorandum to the Secretary, DEA from the First Secretary, Australian Embassy, Djakarta, No. 100, 16 January, 1963, paras. 1-8.
453 ANA, File 248/5/7, Telegram to the Chief of the Defence Staff from the CINCFE, No. 82, 21 January, 1963, para. 1; TNA, WO 305/2519, Part III: Army Intelligence, Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 3: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 19 January 1963, 21 January, 1963, para. 16.
What ‘confrontation’ was to mean was not at all clear at that stage. Even Subandrio could not immediately throw any light on the consequences that might follow, when questioned shortly after his speech—except that it did not mean that Indonesia was contemplating war over the issue. But the parallel with Indonesia’s earlier confrontation of the Netherlands during the West Irian crisis was obvious, not only in the threat of armed force which had characterized the last stages of that struggle, but also in its conveniently imprecise connotations. After all, confrontation of the Netherlands had been proclaimed as early as June 1960, at the time of the Karel Doorman incident, before diplomatic relations with Holland were severed and long before any serious clashes developed. Confrontation, it was frequently asserted, had many aspects—diplomatic and economic, as well as military. The ambiguity was to be exploited to the full.454

On 23 January, Eastman relayed Fry’s comments on Subandrio’s speech to Canberra:

Clearly, Indonesia is not contemplating [an] invasion of Malaya although infiltrations into [the] northern Borneo territories cannot be excluded. But we must assume, as all Indonesians will, that Dr Subandrio’s declaration means that Indonesia is to be committed to opposing Malaya [sic] by all means short of war.455

Fry suggested that every effort should be expended to induce Indonesia to alter its policy, or, at the least, to downplay it before they were too deeply committed to it.456

The Tunku then weighed in, warning Great Britain that Indonesia intended to start guerrilla activity across border of Kalimantan with a view to exploiting what is left of Brunei revolt unless we meanwhile show by sending reinforcements or by troops [sic] movements obviously designed to met [sic] Indonesian threat, that we are aware of what Indonesians are doing.457

The British government, learning from its failure to listen to the Tunku’s warnings before the rebellion, responded to this one by placing a brigade of the Strategic Reserve in the UK on alert. Up to three squadrons of V Bombers were also on a 72 hours’ alert for despatch to the region; though these aircraft were the usual platform for the delivery of Britain’s nuclear weapons at the time, it is probable these would have been employed as conventional bombers in this case. In Singapore, Luce placed one RM Commando at 24 hours’ notice to move and another army battalion and HMS Albion at 48 hours’ notice. Aircraft carrier HMS Hermes, with its strike aircraft, was also available to sail from Hong Kong. The Tunku later admitted to Critchley, the Australian High Commissioner to Malaya, that his warning “was

456 ibid., para. 6.
457 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 124, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 109, 24 January, 1963, para. 1.
not based on private intelligence” but rather on his instinct that “the Indonesians [were] likely to do something soon”.458

Michael Forrestal, a senior aide to US National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, on a visit to Jakarta during which he met both Sukarno and Nasution, received an assurance from the former that he had no plans to embark on any external adventures, while the latter stated that Indonesia would not send forces or volunteers to the Borneo territories, though training would be provided to any independence movement that requested it. An official in the US State Department remarked that “Sukarno was obviously telling Forrestal what he knew the White House wanted to hear”.459 Commenting on Subandrio’s Konfrontasi speech, Shann stated that it probably foreshadows a more active Indonesian policy to isolate Malaya diplomatically in the Afro-Asian bloc and perhaps to undermine the Tunku domestically. In the long run, these tactics, if successful, would be likely to make later Indonesian pressure on Malaysia in being (for example through the creation of an active dissident movement in North[Borneo]) more fruitful.460

On 27 January, Kuching reported that rumours continued to abound of Indonesian volunteers gathering in border areas. Intelligence also indicated that a volunteer body known as Organisi Pertataanhan Ra’ayat had been formed in border areas of the Sintang district to provide rudimentary military training to villagers. HQ COMBRITBOR concluded that Indonesia’s strengthening of its border forces in Kalimantan had several purposes: reducing intelligence available to the British and correspondingly increasing its own through the use of the porters and villagers who usually disseminated information in border areas; creating an air of tension; inventing an international incident by seizing any military or police patrol that might stray too close to the border; and providing a firm base from which to launch operations and to assist any rebels who managed to make their way into Indonesia. The

460 ANA, File 248/5/7, Cablegram to the DEA from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 69, 25 January, 1963, para. 3.
reactivation of the airstrip at Long Bawan, near the junction of the Sarawak, North Borneo, and Indonesian borders, was regarded as particularly significant.\textsuperscript{461}

In London, the possibility of referring the situation in Brunei and the threat posed by Indonesia to the UN Secretary-General was discussed within the FO, with Peck suggesting that it would prevent Britain from taking defensive action in the Sultanate, whilst having few benefits of its own to recommend such a course. Fred Warner of the South East Asia Department referred to the difficulties such an approach would create for the Malaysia project, including raising the possibility of a plebiscite in the Borneo territories on the question, upsetting all parties involved with unpredictable results for the new federation, and mayhap leading to significant opposition to the admission of Malaysia to the UN itself. In addition, any application to the UN might make some of the constitutional arrangements already agreed upon untenable.\textsuperscript{462}

The JICFE, asked to assess Indonesian intentions and capabilities in light of Peralta’s warning, stated on 24 January that small parties of volunteers or military forces could infiltrate the Borneo territories within a month, but that a larger force on the scale indicated by Peralta would require more extensive preparations over several months. It was believed that such overt action was not likely in the short term, but that the tactics used during the West Papua campaign, such as political pressure and military threats, might be used in the longer term. Expanding on discussions within the CINCFE’s committee, the Australian Commission to Singapore commented that

\begin{quote}
\textit{it is clear that overt Indonesian military intervention\[is\] not expected at present but that if it happened, [a] combination of infiltration[,] disident [sic] activity and open attack would present British Forces with virtually insoluble problems. How [an] open attack could be launched without escalation to limited war is not clear to us.}\textsuperscript{463}
\end{quote}

A review of intelligence known to Great Britain and Malaya at the end of January, requested in the wake of the Tunku’s warning, found that, though no overt threat of Indonesian intervention in the Borneo territories existed in the foreseeable future, there was

\textsuperscript{461} TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 136, Telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of Sarawak, No. C.43, 27 January, 1963, para. 1; WO 305/2519, Part III, Army Intelligence, Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359 hours on Saturday 26 January 1963, 28 January, 1963, paras. 2c(4) & 14c.
\textsuperscript{462} TNA, FO 371/169898, Item DH1061/25, Minute by EH Peck and responses, 28 January, 1963, pp. 1-2.
considerable scope for the infiltration of volunteers in the next two to three weeks, with perhaps as many as 1,000 men involved. The Malayan government had also requested British assistance to raise two regular battalions in Sarawak and North Borneo that would be transferred to Malaysia’s army when it came into being, as well as the erection of a military barracks west of Kuching.  

On 1 February, Antara reported that General Ahmad Yani, Deputy Chief of Staff of the ABRI, on a routine inspection tour of installations in Kalimantan, had stated that the Army would “extend the fullest moral support to our friends who are now struggling for independence in Kalimantan Utara” and that it was merely awaiting orders to parlay this into practical support. Responding to this statement, the Sultan announced that he would not hesitate to seek the assistance of his allies if any Indonesian volunteers were found in Brunei. He also said that he hoped that Indonesia would not precipitate a crisis that might lead to a regional conflagration, and that he had received over 20,000 letters from his subjects pledging their loyalty to him and strongly condemning the revolt, as noted above.

Indonesian support for the Brunei Rebellion also extended to a radio station called the Voice of the Freedom Fighters of Kalimantan Utara, which was established in early March to broadcast propaganda from somewhere in Indonesia, probably in Java, that promoted the idea that the revolt continued on. The Borneo Bulletin, one week after the station began broadcasting, stated that the most frequent speakers had been Azahari and Zulkifli; the newspaper went on to remark that “the programmes have been monotonous and very poorly produced”. The following sample of one of Azahari’s speeches provides some idea of the content of these programmes:

Two helicopters of the British have already been shot down by our freedom fighters, and nearly 2,000 British troops and their stooges have been killed or wounded by our fighters, and more than 1,000 weapons of the British have been captured by our fighters. Three British ammunition dumps have already been captured by our fighters. My brothers, you can be confident that our attacks against the British will be intensified.
I firmly believe that the people throughout Kalimantan Utara have heard the speech
of President Sukarno, the great leader of the revolution. A speech where he voiced
his full support for our revolution. My brothers, you can be sure that we are not
standing alone. We have friends and courageous comrades-in-arms who are
supporting us.
Sheikh Azahari—May 24, 1963. 468

Whilst these events were occurring, Azahari and Zaini had been languishing in Manila,
unable to return home without risking arrest and an unknown fate, and unable to travel
elsewhere without the proper documentation. There are indications that Zaini was
approached by both the Malayan and British governments in January in an attempt to
persuade him to abandon Azahari. The Malayan diplomat who spoke to Zaini reported that
he wanted Kuala Lumpur to mediate with Britain on his behalf, that he was “all against”
going to Indonesia and that he would now accept Malaysia if the Borneo territories entered
as one unit.469 Tory reported that the Tunku was not amenable to having the Malayan
Embassy in Manila involved in any approaches to either Azahari or Zaini, though he was not
opposed to any gambit that Britain wanted to make on its own account. He regarded Zaini as
being “completely untrustworthy” and refused to allow Azahari to reside in Malaya,
suggesting that the latter might instead go to Britain.470

Britain made its approach to Zaini using Noel Rees, a Sarawak schoolteacher who knew
Zaini well and had been despatched to Manila solely for this purpose. Rees sounded Zaini
out at his favourite nightclub, suggesting that he should seek an arrangement with the British
in light of the situation in Brunei; Zaini agreed and began meeting with an official from
Selkirk’s office to work out the details. Press reports then began to appear of a rift between
Zaini and Azahari and of the former’s lack of pre-knowledge about the revolt, which was
clearly a way of preparing the ground for Zaini’s defection from the rebel cause. Also

468 TNA, FO 371/169901, Item DH1061/91, “Recent Developments in Anglo-Indonesian Relations including Record of
Indonesian Activities Concerning Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei”, Second Proof Copy of White Paper, 30 September, 1963,
Appendix A, Extracts from Broadcasts by Radio Kalimantan Utara, the Voice of the Freedom Fighters of Northern Borneo,
para. 4.
469 TNA, DO 169/259, Item 143A, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 19, 5 January, 1963, para. 1.
470 TNA, DO 169/259, Item 144, Telegram to the CRO from the High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya, No. 29, 8
increasing the pressure on Zaini was a Radio Sarawak report that his father, Pehin Dato Setia Orang Kaya Shahbandar Haji Ahmad Daud, had disowned him.471

On 27 January, Zaini flew to Hong Kong to seek protective custody by arrangement with the British Embassy in Manila, who organised his passage under an assumed name with the assistance of Philippine immigration authorities. The rumour mill had already broadcast his plans, though Azahari had publicly laughed the suggestion off when it was put to him by reporters. Reuters quoted “British sources in Manila” as having revealed that Zaini had been negotiating with officials at the Embassy for a little over a week, while an Embassy spokesman explicitly said that it had “granted his request”, suggesting that Zaini had approached the British.472 Upon arrival in Hong Kong, Zaini was granted permission to stay there under official protection indefinitely, but he was not given political asylum.473

Azahari’s public reaction to Zaini’s departure was temperate:

Of course, the revolution continues and no plans will be changed. In a revolution many leaders can leave but the revolution does not consist of one man or two or even a hundred – it consists of a whole people and the defection of one man cannot change its course.474

When asked if he thought Zaini would betray the rebel cause, he said, “I do not think so because I believe Zaini will keep in his memory the blood of those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Kalimantan Utara’s independence – at least one or two of those who already passed away in the revolution were his friends”.475 He also remarked, “I did not know he was going to leave: I regarded him as my own flesh and blood”.476

Decades later, Azahari related his memory of the events of that day to Zarani:

One Sunday morning Azahari and his family went to Los Banyos for the day. When they came back to Lokman’s villa in the evening Azahari asked the security where Zaini was. They replied, “Mr. Zaini has left, we don’t know where.” Azahari went to Zaini’s room and found a note attached to the typewriter. The note from Zaini read: “Brother, I am very sorry I have to leave you. I can give you no reason.”


475 Ibid.

476 TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 141, Telegram to the FO from the Chargé d’Affaires, British Embassy, Manila, No. 134, 29 January, 1963, para. 2.
Whatever I do please don’t brand me a traitor. I will never betray you.” It was simply signed “Zaini.” Just a few days ago, as reported in the regional papers on 24 January 1963, at the press conference both of them were giving Zaini had said, “I have no intention of going to London.” Azahari’s mind was racing…Zaini has been trapped, just keep quiet. Azahari considered it just as another political game by the British. The security said to Azahari, “You are now safe, Mr. Azahari, you are free from all the nuisance. Mr. Zaini will not be happy after leaving you.” Zaini left Manila with 2 British Intelligence men. The following morning in Hong Kong Zaini issued a press statement condemning Azahari which appeared in many papers. Aida Francillo said, “I never thought Mr. Zaini could act so drastically with false accusation against you. Don’t you think Zaini is a traitor?” Azahari merely told the Nancy-Kwan look-alike, “I just consider him naive and immature. I know his position therefore I don’t call him a traitor.”

By contrast, Reuters reported that Zaini and Azahari had recently quarrelled over the conduct of the rebellion. Later, the same source stated that financial problems were also a factor. Lord Selkirk, during a meeting of the Commissioner-General’s Committee in Singapore on 30 January, said that Zaini had revealed that he had differed with Azahari over the matter of Indonesian support for the TNKU and the rebellion. During his sojourn in Hong Kong, Zaini stayed incommunicado, apparently at his own request. No other information on this time is available, apart from Selkirk’s comment that he was interrogated during this period. The RAF conveyed Zaini to Brunei on 27 February and into detention at Muara Lodge with the other high-ranking detainees, a journey home that came, according to White, again at his own request.

As for Azahari, Pelaez had already foreshadowed his departure from Manila on 23 January when he was quoted in the press as having said that Azahari would leave the Philippines “pretty soon through normal means with travel papers from his foreign country of destination”; he did not name the nation concerned. Eight days later, Azahari, his wife, daughter, and father-in-law boarded a Garuda Indonesia flight to Jakarta in the early afternoon, said to be en route to Cairo for the opening of the AAPSO Conference in Tanganyika on 4 February. Reuters reported that he had been given travel papers by the Indonesian Embassy in Manila and that a spokesperson from the Indonesian Foreign

477 Zariani, op. cit., p. 184.
479 ANA, File 248/5/7, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 109, 23 January, 1963, para. 1.
Ministry could neither confirm nor deny that Azahari was in Jakarta. The travellers were observed disembarking from the aeroplane, however, and then being ushered into a waiting car by Army officers.\footnote{TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 156, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to the Philippines, No. 151, 31 January, 1963, para. 1; Reuter’s News Service, “Aza Off To Djakarta”, The Sarawak Tribune, 1 February, 1963, p. 1; “Aza’s Arrival Not Confirmed Or Denied”, The Sarawak Tribune, 2 February, 1963, p. 1.}

On 3 February, authoritative sources in Jakarta informed Reuters that the Indonesian government was pressing Azahari to remain beyond the originally scheduled two days, in order to gain more information about the NKKU. Two days later, Selby of the British Embassy in Jakarta told London that Azahari had abandoned his intention of travelling to Moshi, though his precise whereabouts were unknown. The US Embassy shared fairly firm intelligence with their British counterparts on 7 February that Azahari was undergoing a course of indoctrination in Jakarta before being despatched to West Kalimantan, perhaps Pontianak, for an unknown purpose. No further information was available until 19 February, when Fadillah announced to Antara that Azahari had returned to North Kalimantan to wage a determined fight against the imperialists, having parachuted into the jungle from a civilian airliner \textit{en route} from Manila. Fry’s dry remark that “[c]omment seems superfluous” on this rather fanciful story is especially apt.\footnote{TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 224, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 144, 20 February, 1963, paras. 1-3; Reuter’s News Service, “Aza Asked To Stay Longer”, The Sarawak Tribune, 4 February, 1963, p. 1; TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 190, Telegram to the FO from RW Selby, British Embassy, Djakarta, No. 95, 5 February, 1963, para. 1; Item 198, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 102, 7 February, 1963, para. 1.}

Reuters quoted a source within the Indonesian Foreign Ministry as having described Azahari as “sort of an unofficial guest” of the Republic, a description of his status that was reinforced by a comment made by another FO official in early January: “Indonesia was not encouraging him to come” to Jakarta.\footnote{ANA, File 248/57, Cablegram to the DEA from the Australian Embassy, Jakarta, No. 29, 11 January, 1963, para. 2; TNA, CO 1030/1490, Item 168, Extract from Reuter’s News Service, “Azahari 2 Djakarta”, Jakarta, c. 1 February, 1963.} Quite why Indonesia allowed him to stay in the country is difficult to assess: his presence was not exploited, even at the height of \textit{Konfrontasi}, apart from a single public appearance at a rally in Pontianak in December 1963 and his radio broadcasts. Presumably this seclusion was motivated by the apparently widespread opinion that Azahari was, as one erstwhile colleague later remarked, “an ‘alien’, of ‘unsavoury reputation’, a ‘notorious embezzler’, who had ‘falsely proclaimed’ himself...
Prime Minister, but now wallowed in luxury while others bore the brunt of colonial and neocolonial oppression”. 483

The story of the Brunei Rebellion ends here, with Azahari in Jakarta, his followers in detention camps in Brunei, desperately hiding in the jungles and swamps of the ulu, or having slunk ignominiously back to their kampons, soon to join their comrades in Berakas, and the primary victims of their folly, the peoples of Brunei, Sarawak, and North Borneo, left to pick up the pieces for themselves. A telling indication of this appeared in The Borneo Bulletin’s usually upbeat social column, Here and There: “Not that we wanted firecrackers. Only recently a military truck backfired and a cinema emptied in record time—even in the middle of a torrid love scene”. 484 Only weeks later, the Belait DEC reminded shopkeepers and the public that firecrackers had been prohibited indefinitely because of the fear and anxiety that the explosions caused the populace. Linda Kimball, in an anthropological study of one kampong in Temburong, contributed an even more poignant observation on the long shadow cast by the revolt:

The hunting and killing of the Azahari Rebellion in 1962 left scars of hate and fear. Some people said that ghosts haunted the place, others saw a declining economy. Many left to go elsewhere. Those who remained clustered their houses together along one stretch of the river. 485

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on the aftermath of and the recovery from the Brunei Rebellion, beginning with the Brunei and British governments’ efforts to reactivate and reform the administration of the Sultanate. The partial suspension of the constitution was discussed, as was the initial misrepresentation of the action that created the impression that it had been suspended in its entirety. The public’s perception of the constitution as one of the central pillars of Brunei’s government system made such an erroneous idea extremely dangerous in the Sultanate’s fragile situation immediately after the revolt, especially in light

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483 TNA, FO 371/175057, Item D10111/3, Telegram to Certain of Her Majesty’s Representatives from the FO, No. 132 Guidance, 14 February, 1964, paras. 1-4; FO 371/169901, Item DH1061/92, Telegram to the FO from the Ambassador to Indonesia, No. 1574, 4 December, 1963, para. 1.
of all the damage the administration’s reputation had sustained in the years leading up to and as a result of the rebellion and with the pressing necessity for confidence in the government to be restored as soon as possible. If the constitution had been suspended in its entirety, this would have left the Sultan ruling by absolute decree under the protection of British forces, an untenable situation in the anti-colonialist and pro-self-determination atmosphere pervading the world at the time. More importantly, though there is some evidence that the Sultan was still held in high regard as a ruler, the record of the government that he had led since 1959 was certainly not good enough for any confidence to be placed in an administration solely under his control, particularly when his public assertion even before the constitution was promulgated that he was personally responsible for his government’s policies is recalled.

Another important point that arises from the discussion of governance issues here is the vital role played by Deputy High Commissioner PH Meadows in the rejuvenation of the government of Brunei in the aftermath of the rebellion. The comments made by MacKintosh and Linton referring to the success he had had in infusing a sense of urgency into the bureaucracy and the extent of his authority and influence in the government demonstrate this effectiveness, as does the speed with which the administration regained some authority and returned to functioning relatively smoothly in the wake of the revolt. Meadows’ efforts in reforming, re-organising, and improving the Brunei government suggests that he was largely responsible for the structure, effectiveness, and efficiency that the administration achieved in the months following the rebellion.

The efforts made by White to foster the development of a new political party to replace the PRB using moderates from that party and a figure of high standing in the community like Pengiran Yusuf received initial support from the Brunei government, but, in the end, failed to progress much further than the discussion stage. The major reason for this was the marked lack of enthusiasm exhibited by the Sultan and his government for any kind of political activity not controlled by the administration that was apparent in the wake of the rebellion. This attitude was evident in the decision not to invite representatives from the existing political parties to join the delegation sent to Kuala Lumpur to negotiate terms for Brunei’s
entry into Malaysia and other similar treatment that has not been mentioned elsewhere. The decision not to support the new political party may also have been motivated by a lack of trust in the intentions of the ex-PRB members, which is especially understandable so soon after the trauma caused by the revolt.

One side point might be made about this mooted political party, and that is that its quiet shelving by the Brunei government once White had retired could be described as a portent of what was to come in the future for the Sultanate in the realm of democratic activity. The lack of interest evinced by the traditional élite in politics in the western understanding of the term certainly recurred as time passed and elections were held once again, especially as Britain became less and less involved in the day-to-day running of the government and consequently lost its ability to influence events in Brunei. Indeed, even the treatment accorded to the existing political parties when they asked to be included in the delegation to negotiate Brunei’s terms for entry into Malaysia in February 1963 was indicative of later trends: a blank dismissal and a refusal to consider their input, despite their unwavering support for the Malaysia concept and the Sultan’s government.

The profusion of pledges of loyalty and professions of support for the Sultan and his government after the revolt mentioned above raise the question of exactly how deep this renewed faith in the administration was. On the one hand, the PRB’s status as Brunei’s premier and only political party of any substance, its resounding victory in the Legislative Council elections, and the extent of the active support for the TNKU all suggest that these public statements of confidence in the government were less expressions of the true feelings of the people than meaningless declarations made when it was expedient to do so, such as when the Sultan visited a particular town. On the other hand, the Sultan was still personally popular and there was a residual respect for the authority of the government that had not yet been exhausted, though it had been diminished by events preceding and during the revolt. The fact that the Sultan had received so many unsolicited letters of support from his people, especially when the far from universal rate of literacy in the Sultanate is considered, should also be emphasised. In addition, despite the popularity of the PRB that was just noted, there
were certainly people in Brunei who did not support them, such as the other political parties, the Sultan’s personal supporters and other members of the traditional élite, and those who had no interest in or time to devote to politics, the majority of whom would likely be grateful to return to the stability offered by the Brunei government after the rebellion. As always, the line probably lies somewhere in the middle, with most of those expressing their support for the government willing enough to do so while the administration was performing at least adequately, especially with the chaos and fear caused by the revolt so fresh in their minds.

The question of whether the Sultan was actually complicit in the rebellion, or at the least had been forewarned of its outbreak, was also discussed at length above. It seems unlikely that he would support a coup against his own government, especially when the extent of his authority within that administration as compared to the subordination he could expect if the NKKU came to power is considered. That the Sultan would back the PRB’s plan for the future of Brunei appears even more improbable, in light of his steady opposition to the Party’s suggestions and policies since its inception. The views of Stockwell, quoted above, are also persuasive, as is the point made by the Brunei government itself that British troops would never have been called in if the Sultan did support the revolt, though the fact that it was the Mentri Besar who made the actual request may negate this argument somewhat. The most convincing point of all, however, is that the Sultan had every opportunity to join the rebels when it would certainly influence the outcome, such as on the night of 7 December before the revolt began, when the two PRB leaders visited the Istana on the morning of the 8th, and during the daylight hours that day before British troops arrived, and he, quite simply, did not.

The mopping up operations that followed in the wake of the rebellion successfully dealt with a problem that could have lingered for much longer than it did and may even have led to further and more successful attempts by the TNKU to seize control of Brunei. The strategy and tactics employed by British forces were decisive in this success, cutting the Tentera off from its refuge and potential base of support in Kalimantan, isolating it from most of its supply lines, and scattering it into small bands that had no chance of adopting any
offensive action that might avert the collapse of the revolt. The operation also exposed the weakness of the TNKU’s supporter base after the rebellion failed, since greater material assistance from the community akin to that the communists had enjoyed during the Malayan Emergency could have prolonged the Tentera’s active life.

One element of this mopping up campaign that was especially influential was the psychological warfare component of the operation, which played a key role in acclimating the people of Brunei to the new situation and promoted the efforts of the Brunei government to reform and renew themselves, as well as the more basic aspect of encouraging the public to provide information to the security forces. The TNKU, too, felt the effects of psychological operations, for example, with the success of the safe conduct passes noted briefly above: they were an important element in persuading the rebels to abandon their attempts to avoid arrest. The intelligence volunteered by the community on the location of rebels and their supporters was an especially significant aspect of the success of the mopping up operation, helping to apprehend those at large much faster than might otherwise have been the case.

Nevertheless, as the accounts of the capture of the TNKU command group reproduced in Appendix VI suggest, there were still those in the Brunei community who aided rebels on the run. Their reasons for doing so varied, from PRB supporters who had been called upon to assist their colleagues to family members who were simply helping their sons, brothers, or husbands to survive. It is likely that some were forced to aid the rebels or had possessions and food stolen from them, particularly outside the main towns and in the ulu. Some may even have been swayed by the offer of monetary compensation for their assistance, though there is no evidence that this occurred. Overall, however, it is probable that the majority of the people who aided the TNKU were Party members or relatives of the rebels.

The positive effect that flood recovery efforts had on public confidence in both the security forces and the Brunei government was noted above. This came at a crucial stage, when the shock of the rebellion had worn off, the mopping up operations had been going for a month and faith in their success had begun to flag, and the onset of the floods plunged the
country further into misery and anguish. The willingness of the security forces to drop everything to attend to flood relief did much to persuade the public that they were truly there to help the people of Brunei recover from the twin body blows of the revolt and the floods, while the government’s contributions assisted in renewing the public’s faith in the administration. The floods themselves had a unifying effect, since they affected the entire community, whether the individual was a PRB or government supporter, and the relief efforts required nationwide commitment and determination if they were to be effective.

It is evident from the account of the mopping up operations given above that Limbang was the major centre of TNKU resistance, with White elaborating in a letter to Lord Selkirk in late January: “Rebels are still active there, in uniform and armed. Food stocks are considerable, and clearly available to the ‘hard core’. The women are sullen and silent. The General describes Limbang as the ‘sink’.” White went on to speculate that the campaign before the rebellion for the return of the District to Brunei was the reason for this ongoing recalcitrance, an easy assumption to make in light of the fact that it is the major point of difference between Limbang and the other affected areas. However, Temburong had been nearly as troublesome, so Limbang’s remoteness and the sparseness of its population may have been equally influential. The possibility that Limbang was simply better prepared for a long struggle against British forces, as a result of its being part of a Crown Colony and thus able to receive British assistance even if the Brunei government had fallen to the TNKU, has also been mentioned.

One of the other topics discussed in this chapter was the subject of the arrangements made for those rebels who were detained by the Brunei government, who were mostly held for short periods of time in the detention centres at Seria and Berakas; a small number, largely high-ranking members of the TNKU and PRB, remained in gaol for years, with the last held into the 1990s. Apart from the failed prosecution of some TNKU members for robbery-related offences mentioned above, none of the rebels actually faced court or

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486 TNA, CO 1030/1296, Item 107, Letter to the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia from the High Commissioner for Brunei, HCO/S/510/1/63, 23 January, 1963, para. 2.
487 Ibid., para. 3; WO 305/2519, Part III: Army Intelligence, Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 4: Covering week ending 2359 hours on Saturday 26 January 1963, 28 January, 1963, para. 12c.
received defined sentences for their involvement in the rebellion. All were held until the government deemed them worthy of release, with the terms being set progressively higher for those detained the longest. This leads to the question of whether this punishment was appropriate, a debate that is both emotive and complex.

For the vast majority of those detained, who were released before many months had passed, one would say that, on balance, their punishment was fair, if on the lenient side: though they had not been overly involved in the rebellion, they still joined an organisation dedicated to the overthrow of a lawful government, with some also participating in crimes such as robbery and deprivation of liberty. It is the cases of those held for decades that one would say were unjust, being detained without charge for an indeterminate length of time at the pleasure of the Sultan and his successor. Though the primary condition of their release was that they pledge their loyalty to the monarch, it is not difficult to infer that the opportunity to do so would not have come very often and when it did, it would occur only when it was convenient for the government. Some of those held for decades, too, were not especially culpable in the inception and direction of the revolt, so the length of their detention appears particularly unfair, the prime example of this being Nikman Mahmud, who was held until 1990 solely, one suspects, because he was Azahari’s brother.

The activities of Azahari and Zaini in Manila were also discussed at length above and it is clear from their public statements that they realised the necessity of portraying the rebellion in Brunei as far more successful and longer lasting than it actually was. There were several reasons for this: firstly, to attract international support for the NKKU, which would be nearly impossible if it was apparent to all that the revolt was over. Secondly, perpetuating the fiction that the TNKU was still a viable entity might encourage rebels on the run to regroup and mayhap rekindle the flame of the rebellion. Thirdly, admitting that their revolt had failed was tantamount to admitting that they had failed and that their dreams of a resurrected Brunei Empire in a modern form were as good as dead. The strategy did not, in the end, bear fruit, as was shown above, but there was little else that Azahari and Zaini could contribute from afar.
The two men’s efforts to reach New York were unsuccessful, partly because the Philippine government decided not to assist them. The talks that Great Britain agreed to hold with the Philippines on security issues in the region were a key reason behind this decision, discussions that Britain had managed to avoid since Manila’s campaign to claim North Borneo had begun. This diplomatic coup meant that the Philippines did not need the leverage that supporting Azahari would have provided and diverted the Filipinos from forming an alliance of convenience with Indonesia, temporarily at least. Had Manila chosen to aid Azahari and Zaini to reach New York by providing travel documents, the international aspect of the Brunei Rebellion would have been vastly different and may, in fact, have extended its life by virtue of the involvement of the UN, even if it was artificially.

As this chapter has demonstrated, however, the revolt did not attract any appreciable international support, apart from that of Indonesia. This was a clear sign of the weakness of the rebels’ position: they were unable to persuade anyone that theirs was an anti-colonial struggle worthy of more than verbal support, while the failure of the revolt itself discouraged potential backers from becoming involved. The rebels’ cause was not helped by the lack of interest in and knowledge about Brunei in much of the world, which allowed those opposing the TNKU to shape the narrative about the rebellion that appeared in the press and thus influence perceptions about the rebels’ nature and purpose. Finally, the timing of the revolt, only weeks after the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Sino-Indian War had both ended, affected the capacity of the major powers to interest themselves in events in northern Borneo: they had neither the stomach nor the need to become embroiled in such a minor affair.

A symbol of this lack of international interest in events in Brunei was the apathy that met Indonesia’s attempts to raise the issue at the UN. Though it may be concluded from the account here that the Republic did not push these efforts very hard, it is likely that more action was taken of which the Commonwealth delegations were not aware. Such behind the scenes lobbying and negotiation would have been kept especially quiet if it was unsuccessful. Indonesia’s efforts were not assisted by the New York newspaper strike, which concealed the severity and extent of the revolt from the various diplomatic delegations to the
UN, while, as previously noted, the lack of knowledge about Brunei’s constitutional situation left the competing arguments of Indonesia and the Commonwealth nations as virtually the only information on which many of those who were lobbied could judge the position.

Indonesia was, as has already been observed, the PRB’s primary supporter once the revolt collapsed. The near eradication of both the Party and the TNKU during the rebellion left them utterly dependent on their sole remaining ally, to the extent that they became completely beholden to the Republic’s priorities and interests. Azahari’s virtual disappearance after his arrival in Jakarta at the end of January 1963 and the similarly unremarkable showing of the remnants of the TNKU during Konfrontasi demonstrate this point. This submersion of the PRB’s interests meant, of course, that they went unmet and, consequently, that the Party became increasingly irrelevant.

Nevertheless, the significance of Indonesia’s support for the PRB after the outbreak of the revolt cannot be overstated. Once the rebellion collapsed, it was the Republic’s patronage that sustained the TNKU and the PRB and kept both entities alive, even if it was, for all intents and purposes, in name alone. More positively, Indonesia’s verbal support imbued the rebellion with a firmly anti-colonial aura that might otherwise have been absent, which attracted more international attention than a revolt motivated by purely parochial concerns might have. Finally, the failure of the rebellion put the Party in the unpleasant position of having to accept whatever assistance Indonesia was willing to give, which resulted in an inability to influence the course of events and a consequent loss of relevance and, ultimately, purpose.

Glimpses of the beginning of Konfrontasi appear in this chapter, with the declarations of support made by various mass organisations throughout the archipelago for the Indonesian government’s opposition to the Malaysia concept. It is necessary to emphasise that the mass organisations had manufactured public support in a similar manner during the confrontation with the Dutch over West Papua, and, as a result, Malaya and Britain knew the form that the Republic’s opposition to Malaysia was likely to take, if not the scale. Another important point to remember is the symbiotic relationship that existed between the mass organisations
and the Indonesian government, with the former rarely acting independently of the latter. Finally, once the cycle of anti-Malaysia, pro-TNKU, and anti-British propaganda began, it became a juggernaut that continually fed on the public hysteria that it had created until neither its source nor its origin mattered and it had become an independent entity in itself.

A major issue discussed throughout this chapter was the question of the extent of Indonesia’s involvement in organising and supporting the TNKU. No definitive conclusion can be reached on this issue without extensive research in Indonesia, but certain inferences can be made, mainly that the only thing that is known for sure is that some training was supplied to TNKU cadres in Malinau in 1962. The nature of this training and the experiences of these volunteers, related in detail in Appendix IV, indicate that, if there was solid central government support for the programme, it was kept so quiet that it rendered the training ineffective. Indeed, the repeated injunctions of provincial officials and army officers for the cadres to return home seem to point toward an ad hoc programme organised by a small group within the Indonesian government, perhaps at the behest of a single high-ranking official.

The other indications of Indonesian complicity mentioned above, such as the financial aid given to Azahari by Sukarno and the activities of certain officials in the embassy in Manila before and during the rebellion, suggest that support for the TNKU may actually have been more extensive, especially the direct involvement of the President himself. However, there is no evidence that the money was specifically intended to finance the revolt or the TNKU, nor is there any indication of the content of what Azahari discussed with the diplomats in Manila, so this kind of information is far from conclusive. Even more speculative was the story related to Fry regarding Russian communist agents active in Kalimantan, which even the Ambassador was quick to identify as a possible instance of deliberate misinformation.

On balance, the scenario where a small group within the Indonesian government created and managed the training programme is the most probable, especially if it is accepted that Subandrio was its director. The Foreign Minister was quite clearly the one to take the lead in the diplomatic manoeuvres with Great Britain, and there is intelligence quoted above that
specifically named him as the political director of the relationship with the TNKU; other evidence for this is also discussed in Chapter VI. In this scenario, the more disorganised aspects of the training programme detailed in Appendix IV are explained by the smallness of the group concerned and the absence of the direct involvement of General Nasution or another high-ranking ABRI officer. Consequently, Subandrio’s more intelligence-oriented connections procured some ABRI support, but not enough for the effective, well-organised programme that was required if the endeavour was to be successful. Indonesia’s failure to provide material support once the revolt began is also explained in this scenario, since such support would require more extensive involvement from the ABRI and most likely even presidential approval.

Indonesia’s failure to provide material support for the TNKU and the consequences of this decision must be highlighted. Whether or not the Republic ever intended or pledged to provide military assistance to the Tentera, the absence of such support was quite clearly felt by the TNKU once the British Army arrived in Brunei. Though the utter failure of the revolt had many causes, it is probable that significant military aid from Indonesia in its first two days would have at least prolonged the active phase of the rebellion, if not altered the result entirely. The Republic’s decision not to provide this assistance also had the effect of distancing it from the revolt, allowing them to use the Tunku’s comments about Indonesian complicity in the rebellion to their advantage and increasing the PRB’s isolation.

Thus, the nature of Indonesia’s assistance was more symbolic than functional. The Republic’s pursuit of its own interests naturally shaped the kind of support that it offered; for example, the kind of direct intervention that may have altered the outcome of the rebellion would certainly have put Indonesia at risk of causing a potentially disastrous conflict with Britain, so this course was not adopted. This divergence of interests between the PRB and its main supporter resulted in the Party becoming a mere spectator as the sequence of events its rebellion had begun gradually escalated into the low-intensity conflict known as Konfrontasi.

The juncture between the Brunei Rebellion and Konfrontasi is not particularly sharply delineated, so the point at which this chapter ends requires some justification. The departure
of Azahari from Manila was a clear sign that he had lost all hope of reaching New York to plead his case before the UN, as well as any expectation that the Philippines would provide anything more than temporary sanctuary. The fact that he went to Jakarta was also a direct acknowledgement that Indonesia was now his patron and that the building campaign in Indonesia against the Malaysia concept was his best hope of furthering the NKKU’s cause. More importantly, it demonstrated that Azahari now accepted that the revolt was well and truly over and that Indonesia represented his only chance of furthering his cause in any way. Finally, and most simply, the majority of events that occurred after his arrival in Jakarta had more to do with Konfrontasi than with the rebellion.
Chapter X: Conclusion
The aim of this thesis has been to elucidate the reasons behind the Brunei Rebellion, as well as to examine its course and immediate aftermath. The first major cause that was discussed was the politicisation of Bruneian society and the development of formal political activity outside of the traditional sphere. This was a fundamental cause of the rebellion, since, quite simply, the Partai Rakyat Brunei (PRB) and, therefore, the revolt could not have existed if politicisation had not occurred. The measured pace of this political development was also crucial in shaping Brunei’s political culture, producing a sense of frustration with the British authorities who had initiated and regulated this politicisation before the resumption of self-government in 1959. This coloured the nationalists’ view of Britain’s intentions regarding the future of Brunei and, therefore, of the nature and consequences of the Sultanate’s relationship with its protector. The slow pace of political development was maintained even after 1959, which adversely affected the relationship between the nationalists and the Sultan’s government and diminished the PRB’s effectiveness as a political party.

A key driver of the frustration with the status quo that fuelled the PRB’s popularity was the widespread belief that the people of Brunei were still living in poverty while the country was growing richer due to the oil produced and exported by Brunei Shell. The absence of swift change in the general standard of living was the primary reason for this disappointment with the Brunei government, since the sudden onset of such wealth for the state naturally raised expectations that life would immediately improve for all on a commensurate scale. This was a direct criticism of the way that the Brunei government, both before and after 1959, had used this money to improve the lives of the general public, in spite of the efforts made in the sphere of development. Later, when the Sultanate was in economic recession and Shell had declared onshore extraction unviable, it was clear that the opportunity that the oil boom had represented had been squandered, while the lot of the people of Brunei remained virtually unchanged.

The PRB’s rift with the Sultan and his government, another of the fundamental causes of the rebellion, was a basic source of conflict in Bruneian society, between the nationalists of
the PRB on the one hand and the traditional élite on the other: both sides sought to rule, with competing agendas, goals, and interests, and little room or inclination for compromise. The primary symbol of the subordination that the PRB suffered as a result of this rift was the supreme state power wielded by the sultan under the constitution, which effectively excluded the nationalists from access to governmental power until a sultan granted them such access, in the form of election to a fully representative parliament. The PRB’s decision to revolt was precipitated by the belief that such an eventuality was years, if not decades, in the future; Brunei’s proposed membership of the Federation of Malaysia placed even this distant prospect in jeopardy, increasing the urgency of the Party’s situation and, as a result, accelerating the outbreak of the revolt.

The PRB’s inferior position naturally meant that its ability to avert Brunei’s participation in Malaysia was limited by the willingness of the Sultan’s government to be influenced by the Party and its claims to speak for the people, which, in the event, turned out to amount to no willingness at all. The negotiations that the government had undertaken with its Malayan counterpart in September 1962 on possible terms for Brunei’s entry into Malaysia were a clear indication that the Sultan had gone beyond considering the idea and was moving towards acceptance of it, while the rejection of the PRB’s proposed motions for debate in the Legislative Council in December only enhanced this view. The PRB’s own northern Borneo federation concept was similarly affected, with the Party unable to bring it to fruition in its current constitutional position and equally unable to change that position any time soon.

After the promulgation of the constitution in September 1959, the Sultan began to be personally identified with the decisions and policies of the government he was now solely responsible for, a change that affected his standing with his people, though the affection and respect with which he was regarded mitigated this to some extent. For the PRB, this situation created a need to avoid directly criticising the monarch for fear of alienating its supporter base, a constraint that, in turn, chafed on the PRB because it was unable to hold the Sultan publicly responsible for the dysfunction of his government, even for those failings that were clearly directly attributable to him. Furthermore, this limitation only encouraged the PRB’s
tendency to blame the British in the Sultan’s stead, even after self-government had been regained and there was no longer a plausible basis for such criticisms. This called the legitimacy of the Party’s pronouncements into question and consequently reduced its political effectiveness, exponentially increasing the PRB’s frustration with its position.

An important underlying element in the PRB’s decision to revolt was the youth of its leadership, because of the role it played in their reactions to the many problems they encountered. Of the Party’s top four leaders, only HM Salleh had completed his education before World War II, a shortcoming that likely extended to the other members of the upper hierarchy as well. This relative youth meant that the PRB’s decision-makers tended to be both impetuous and impatient, especially in response to the unusually high levels of frustration that they endured in the latter months of 1962. An excellent example of this impatience is the target date of 1963 that the Party set for Brunei’s independence, which was obviously impractical when even something as basic as the government’s staffing problems was considered. This impatience meant that the young leaders of the PRB were unable to accept the Sultan’s decision to introduce democracy gradually, nor wait to see if his government would ultimately consent to entry into Malaysia, both of which were fundamentally important factors in their decision to rebel. Even the process of making this decision demonstrated their impetuosity, with the revolt beginning earlier than planned and before all necessary preparations could be made.

The second major cause of the revolt explored here was Brunei’s mooted participation in the proposed Federation of Malaysia, which was obviously a turning point in the Sultanate’s history, whether Brunei decided to join or not. The impressive progress that had taken place in the short time since the proposal had been made in May 1961, as well as the Brunei government’s announced intention of negotiating suitable terms, made it appear that the Sultanate’s participation had already reached the stage of fait accompli, as it had in North Borneo and Sarawak. Such a situation would considerably reduce the Party’s options for manoeuvre and end its dream of a northern Borneo federation forever. Most importantly, the PRB felt that it had been backed into a corner, its opposition to Malaysia rapidly becoming
hopeless, its vision of a greater Brunei fading swiftly, its political position unimproved by the elections, and, worst of all, as far from power as ever; in such a predicament, the decision to revolt may be somewhat more understandable.

The threat that Malaysia posed to the PRB’s own federation concept was an important motivating factor behind the rebellion, simply because there could be no northern Borneo federation without Sarawak and North Borneo. Kalimantan Utara had been the Party’s dream since its inception, at once a solution to the questions surrounding the future of Britain’s possessions in the region and a revival of Brunei’s empire in a modern form. To have this dream superseded by a larger federation in which the Sultanate could not play a leading role, indeed, in which it would become the smallest constituent member, was nigh on unthinkable. Moreover, the probability of Brunei joining Malaysia with its present system of government intact appeared to be high, an unacceptable state of affairs for a political party as committed to democracy as the PRB was, quite apart from its own ambitions to govern the country.

The apparent willingness of the Brunei government seriously to entertain the Malaysia proposal increased the threat that it posed to the PRB, since it brought the new federation ever closer to reality and made any possible alternative future for Brunei more unlikely. Whether the government actually intended to join Malaysia or not, the impression it gave of favouring the proposal effectively pushed the Party into a more adversarial position and narrowed its options and field of endeavour to the extent that its primary objective became to spearhead the campaign against Malaysia, rather than to achieve any of its other policy goals. In addition, the government’s amenability had the effect of completely marginalising the PRB, since it made two facts all too evident: that the administration would not listen to the Party and that it did not believe that the PRB represented the views of the majority of the community. As a result of this marginalisation, the Party became even more frustrated, with all its efforts in regard to the Malaysia proposal going for naught, no matter how much public support it had garnered for its opposition.

The generally negative reaction to the Malaysia proposal in Brunei should also be emphasised, firstly as a sign of the extent of political development in the Sultanate in the few
years since the end of World War II, with the contrast between the negligible response to the closer association proposal in 1957 and the overtly active and vocal opposition to Malaysia in 1961 and 1962 being a fine example of this progress. Secondly, and more importantly, this widespread public opposition was a significant motivating factor behind the revolt, largely because the government had demonstrated signs of disregarding public opinion on the matter if it concluded that joining Malaysia would be in Brunei’s best interest. It also suggested that the PRB’s promotion of its policy of full independence for the Sultanate had resonated with the wider population, doubtless as a manifestation of pride in Brunei’s history, which acknowledged the simple truth that any independence achieved through membership of Malaysia would certainly be inferior to the independence of Brunei on its own or within a federation that its sultan led.

Another facet of this general opposition to the Malaysia concept that must be highlighted is how the resentment toward Malaya and its people that had been created during the Officers’ Affair had increased and intensified this opposition, effectively pushing Brunei further away from Malaysia when it should really have been lured closer. The pre-existing resentment towards Malayan officials, as well as the doubts about Kuala Lumpur’s intentions towards Brunei and its ability to run a larger federation that had arisen in the wake of the Officers’ Affair, ensured that many did not trust Malaya with something as precious as the future of Brunei, including, one suspects, at least some of the traditional élite. As a result of this basic lack of trust towards Malaya, the need to act became urgent for the PRB when it appeared that the Brunei government was leaning towards accepting Malaysia. The absence of other, more legal options and the existence of the TNKU meant that rebellion was the course that it adopted.

The general sense of discontent and frustration in Brunei was the third of the main causes of the revolt, one aspect of which, the effect of the end of the 1950s oil boom, had been especially influential in the development of these feelings. The extent to which government revenues and the economy in general depended on Brunei Shell and its activities meant that, once onshore oil reserves were declared no longer viable, the basis of the Sultanate’s
economy and thus its very future as an independent entity became uncertain. This insecurity encouraged and amplified discontent towards both Brunei Shell and the government, though primarily the latter, especially concerning its handling of the decline in economic activity and its efforts to diversify into other areas. Fundamentally, however, it was the grave threat that this economic shift posed to Brunei’s future that was the main problem, creating uncertainty, fear, and insecurity about the potential repercussions of the loss of this vital economic activity, most obviously that the Sultanate would once more become impoverished and thus be in no position to refuse any kind of federation with Malaya, no matter how damaging and even humiliating the terms might be in such an eventuality.

The dysfunction within the government was also influential, since it caused frustration amongst the community that remained simmering away, ready to erupt again at a moment’s notice, even when the administration was functioning relatively smoothly. The primary problem with this dysfunction was its persistence and, again, the government’s inability to resolve the situation completely: the very fact that the inefficiency continued, even after the extensive public protests and the turmoil caused by the Officers’ Affair, was enough to heap frustration upon frustration. The role that the Malayan officers played in this dysfunction was an especially exacerbating factor, because of the widespread belief that their employment had deprived eligible local candidates of desirable opportunities for advancement; for these interlopers then to prove to be incompetent was aggravating, to say the least.

This widespread public dissatisfaction with the government’s performance ensured that the PRB’s popularity increased at a corresponding pace. The Party, having established itself as the government’s natural opponent, led the campaign to improve the efficiency and functioning of the administration, which resulted in greater casual support for the PRB and thus more opportunities for the Party to grow its supporter base. The role that it played in this campaign also allowed the PRB to reinforce its position as the only significant challenger to the government in the political sphere, whilst affording multiple opportunities to promote its own prospects.
This dysfunction within the administration was a clear-cut failure of the government and, more specifically, of the leadership of that government. Naturally, the government was solely responsible for the efficiency and competency of its own operations, so its failure in this area damaged its reputation and inhibited the natural tendency of most people to follow its lead on matters big and small, simply because it was the government. It also created doubt in the minds of some about the administration’s capacity to govern, which encouraged the growth of further disaffection and eroded trust in the legitimacy of the government. Moreover, it allowed the PRB to cultivate the belief that it could surely do a better job, regardless of its inexperience in government, a self-confidence that was very necessary for a party that aspired to rule the country one day.

The final point to make about this government dysfunction concerns the Sultan’s role at the apex of the administration and how much responsibility he bore for the functioning of his government. Though he was, to some extent, shielded by the regard that his people had for him personally, the discontent and frustration within the community caused by this dysfunction could still be directed towards and attach itself to him, particularly amongst those who already supported the PRB. This eroded the confidence that some had previously had in the Sultan’s ability and capacity to rule and damaged their personal attachment to the monarch, which, in concert with the restrictions imposed on the Party by Brunei’s system of government, contributed to their willingness to rebel. Concerns about the Sultan’s ability to govern also fed doubts about his suitability to make the decision on whether or not to accept entry into Malaysia, which made the movement towards acceptance of the new federation even more unpalatable.

The District Council elections also played their part, with so much, however unjustly, expected from them, which, consequently, created a great deal of disappointment when it became obvious that the Party’s position had not been much improved by its impressive victory at the polls. It is difficult to understand why the PRB had failed to grasp the fact that, though it would have a voice in the Legislative Council if it won sufficient seats at the elections, the system of government itself would remain unchanged. It may have simply been
wishful thinking or ignorance about the constitutional situation, but most likely it was a strong belief in the inherently transformational properties of the democratic election. There may also have been an element of desperation, since the elections represented the only real opportunity the PRB would have to influence the course of events in the near future decisively, especially regarding Malaysia.

These hopes tumbled down around the PRB once the elections had taken place and it became clear that its position had not materially improved. Though its victory was not an inconsiderable achievement, the sheer weight of anticipation and expectation that the Party had piled onto the outcome of the elections made its victory appear to be of a more pyrrhic character than it really was. Viewed from the perspective that the elections were the only hope the PRB had of both preventing Brunei’s participation in Malaysia and winning greater influence in the government of the state, however, the extent of its disappointment when its position remained practically unchanged was, understandably, great.

The fourth contributing factor to the movement toward rebellion was the PRB’s regional and international links to other political parties and groups, especially those relationships with entities in Sarawak and North Borneo. They were a public symbol of support for the PRB’s own federation concept, which fostered the erroneous belief amongst the leadership of the Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (TNKU) that its revolt would attract widespread support in the two colonies and thus contributed to the decision to begin the rebellion. The formal links with anti-colonial and anti-government groups in North Borneo were a further indication that extreme elements there were willing to support the revolt, as was the significant number of recruits from Sarawak that the TNKU had attracted.

The Tentera’s relationship with elements within the Indonesian government did much to lead to the decision to begin the rebellion, due to the implicit encouragement offered by these links to such a powerful neighbour. More importantly, the level of support implied by the provision of military training to TNKU cadres, however basic or mishandled, as well as the promises of further material assistance during the revolt that appear to have been made, was one of the major reasons that the leadership of the Tentera felt confident enough about
its chances of success to begin its rebellion. In addition, the assurance of Indonesian support made it easier to take the decision to begin the revolt earlier than planned, with the Indonesian Army believed to be waiting in the wings to assist the TNKU if required.

The very existence of the Tentera contributed to the decision to rebel, being a sore temptation to the PRB leadership to take violent action when the Party’s efforts in the political sphere failed. There was, after all, little purpose in creating, building, and equipping an army of its own if it did not intend to use it, unless it was meant as a tool to blackmail the Brunei government into actually working with the PRB, though there is no evidence that this strategy was ever seriously considered. Even if the TNKU was regarded as an option of last resort, the situation in which the PRB found itself as 1962 drew to a close could be described as catastrophic, with the Brunei government appearing to have decided that the Sultanate’s future lay within Malaysia, the Party’s emphatic election victory turning out to be the dampest of squibs, and its attempts to effect change through the Legislative Council thwarted before the first serious meeting had even been held.

The revolt had two immediate triggers: the arrests of several rebels at Sundar in late November and the rejection of the PRB’s proposed motions by the Speaker of the Legislative Council. Of these, the former was more significant as a catalyst of the revolt, largely because of the threat that the arrests posed to the freedom of the leadership of the Party, and even the continued existence of the PRB itself. If the Sundar arrests were to lead to the apprehension of all of those on the Party executive implicated in the formation of the TNKU, the PRB would most likely lose its position as Brunei’s leading political party, as well as the opportunity to thwart the Sultanate’s entry into Malaysia; the Party would, in any case, most likely be proscribed. In these circumstances, with plans apparently already made to begin the rebellion in the very near future, bringing the starting date forward, whatever the consequences of doing so for its chances of success, was a decision that was easily made.

The postponement of the first serious meeting of the new Legislative Council, meanwhile, prevented the PRB from exercising the sizeable mandate that it had won in the elections. The very real possibility that it could win support for some of its proposals from
one of the government-appointed members of the Council had brought it closer to substantive power than it had ever been before, so to have this delightful prospect wrenched from its grasp was especially aggravating. The Brunei government’s role as the unambiguous author of this particular disappointment also clearly demonstrated to the Party that it had little hope of gaining control of the government by constitutional methods in the near future; the looming threat of Malaysia was, consequently, greater than it appeared to be from a more objective viewpoint.

The combination of the two catalysts together also had a significant effect, exacerbating the PRB leadership’s sense that a crisis point was imminent and, as a result, decreasing the objectivity of its decision-making process. As previously noted, the Party had already felt cornered due to the progress made with the Malaysia proposal and what was perceived to be the Brunei government’s amenability to the Sultanate’s entry, as well as the administration’s known reluctance to work with the nationalists in any meaningful way in spite of their success at the District Council elections. To have the Party’s Legislative Council motions disallowed when it believed that it had persuaded one of the non-PRB councillors to support it only exacerbated this feeling and increased its frustration with the government’s refusal to acknowledge its popularity in any way. The extreme threat posed by the Sundar arrests to the PRB leadership and, indeed, to the existence of the Party itself was merely the final straw, cementing its belief that it had no option other than to begin its revolt.

The primary cause of the Brunei Rebellion, however, and a point that has not yet been explicitly made, was actually the accretion of all the frustration and discontent discussed throughout this thesis. The existence of just one, or even two, frustrating issues would not have been enough in themselves to initiate such an extreme reaction: it was the combination and accumulation of the different causes discussed in this thesis, not one factor alone, that led to the rebellion. Moreover, the accumulation of so much frustration generated by so many different issues was the most important of the causes of the rebellion, primarily because of the long-term character of politicisation as one of these causes, while the PRB’s many frustrations were far more immediate. In addition, this frustration had a corrosive
effect on the Party’s ability to maintain a balanced view of its situation, as well as on its fortitude and determination to continue with its hitherto unavailing quest for power.

This accretion of frustration and disappointment was quite understandably blamed on the government, since it had neither resolved nor alleviated the issues that had created these emotions, and it is this identification of the discontent with the administration that also needs to be emphasised: the rebellion was, fundamentally, an action against the government, meaning that its causes were all linked to the actions of the administration. An unfocussed sense of frustration would not have been able to generate sufficient heat or impetus to trigger something as complex and unusual as a revolt, and the government’s failures and deficiencies ensured that it represented such a focal point.

The result of this accumulated frustration and discontent, combined with the looming threat of Malaysia, was that it pushed the PRB into a corner. Its position, if viewed from the Party’s own perspective, was an unenviable one: its dreams of a Brunei-led Kalimantan Utara were about to be obliterated by the apparently imminent achievement of Malaysia, the high hopes that had been invested in the outcome of the District Council elections were utterly dashed when it became clear that the PRB’s situation had not improved, and its rift with the traditional élite showed no sign of healing and, indeed, appeared to be worsening. A more objective assessment would, of course, be less pessimistic about its position, especially in light of the Sultan’s subsequent decision to reject the invitation to join Malaysia, which would have created many opportunities for the Party to achieve its goal of winning power legally; such objectivity and foresightedness was, however, beyond the PRB’s reach.

The course of the revolt itself demonstrated that the capture of the Sultan was vital if the venture was to be successful, both to boost morale amongst the rebels and to facilitate the TNKU’s seizure of the government of the state. Indeed, it would be difficult to exaggerate the benefits for the rebels of gaining control of the Sultan’s person, as well as the importance of doing so, making their failure even to put forth a concerted effort more puzzling and, in the end, disastrous. It may be that the rebels sent to parley with the Sultan on 8 December had too much respect for his dignity and position to force their way into the Istana, or
perhaps they believed themselves to be outnumbered by police and thus likely to be
overpowered before they could complete their mission. Whatever the reasons behind it, this
one failure did much to ensure that the revolt had no chance of succeeding.

This was merely one example amongst many of the utter incompetence that the TNKU
displayed throughout its rebellion, which was the primary reason that it failed. Some of its
most decisive errors included the decision not to sever the lines of communication with
Singapore, the failure to hold the airport at Berakas, and the poorly planned and led attacks
on the Brunei Town Police Station. This series of blunders ensured that reinforcement could
be sought, was able to land safely without opposition, and could establish a headquarters
from which to operate with a core of vital local knowledge available for use, not to mention
the benefits flowing from the fact that the rebels did not capture the weaponry housed at the
station. The TNKU’s most significant mistake of all, its failure to capture the Sultan, has
already been highlighted, but its unsuccessful attempt to seize the Mentri Besar should also
be remarked: he, too, had the power to call for military assistance from Great Britain, as well
as the authority to issue orders related to the maintenance of the public peace, so control of
his person was equally crucial.

Many of these errors and mistakes can be attributed to the youth, inexperience, and lack
of training of the TNKU, but, ultimately, it was poor leadership that was largely to blame.
The abortive attacks on the Brunei Town Police Station were the prime example of this: the
plan behind the initial assault was quite clearly inadequate, while the repeated frontal attacks
on the building demonstrated that strategic thinking was distinctly lacking amongst the
rebels. The events in Bangar were another example, the rebels there lacking any kind of
discipline or restraint in their conduct, which may have been averted by better leadership. Of
course, the most obvious instance of this failure of leadership was Azahari’s absence from
Brunei when the revolt began, abandoning his people when they needed him the most, which
was only exacerbated when it became clear that the rebellion had failed and Azahari had
remained in safety in Manila whilst his people had suffered and died for his cause and at his
behest.
Another major cause of the rebellion’s failure was the decision made by Indonesia not to provide material support to the TNKU. The provision of any kind of assistance, whether something as minimal as supplies and weaponry or a greater commitment like trained and equipped personnel, could have proved to be the difference for the TNKU, especially once it was faced with the far superior British Army. Quite apart from this purely military aspect, the international implications if Indonesia chose to support the revolt so openly and strongly would have been extensive, perhaps encouraging other non-aligned nations to back the rebels publicly, and certainly attracting greater attention at the United Nations. Of course, the presence of Indonesian troops would have caused Britain to send more personnel of its own to Brunei and Sarawak and would thus likely have led to a situation that had escalated far beyond the boundaries of a simple rebellion.

The involvement of the United Nations was discussed at length, specifically focussing on how such attention may conceivably have prolonged the life of the revolt. It is extremely unlikely that any formal action could have been organised whilst the rebellion was still happening, though Indonesia’s efforts to build support from other delegations might have led to greater international pressure on Britain regarding its intervention in Brunei, which may have caused British troops to reduce their operational tempo and thus create an opportunity for the rebels to counter-attack or, at the very least, regroup and perhaps organise a more effective retreat. Then, Azahari may have been permitted to present his case to the Committee of Twenty-Four sometime in early 1963, attracting greater attention to the TNKU’s cause and, depending on the decision of the Committee and the content of any resolution they might make, mayhap even led to a plebiscite on Brunei’s entry into Malaysia or effective international pressure for the Brunei government to introduce direct elections to the Legislative Council sooner. These admittedly speculative scenarios might very well have been derailed by counter-actions taken by Britain, Malaya, and their allies, but they would, at the very least, have led to greater scrutiny on both the British and Bruneian governments.

Efforts were also made in the wake of the revolt to reform the way that the government functioned, the necessity of which was self-evident if the administration’s relationship with
its people was to be restored and improved. The role that government dysfunction had played in causing the rebellion has already been discussed above, demonstrating why administrative reform was such an early priority once the revolt was substantially over and why it was so important that expatriate officers be prominently involved in the process. Equally, publicity of the measures implemented and improvements made was crucial to ensure that the public knew of the government’s efforts so that the process could be as effective as possible.

The Brunei Rebellion was a seminal event in the history of the Sultanate, directly altering the course upon which it appeared set and, indeed, introducing the possibility of a new future: independence on its own with continued British protection and without democracy. Naturally, subsequent events also had their effect, but it was the revolt that began the turn away from a democratic system along the lines that Great Britain had originally envisaged and allowed the traditional élite to maintain its hold on power whilst its nationalist rivals languished in detention or exile. The memory of what had happened when democracy had last been permitted in Brunei also allowed the traditional élite to restrict the activities of subsequent political parties and aspiring politicians to such a degree that they were effectively and efficiently sidelined, until the elected component of the Legislative Council was entirely removed in 1970; it has not yet been reinstated.

An even more direct consequence of the rebellion was the presence of British troops in Brunei, which led to an agreement to station Gurkhas in the Sultanate permanently that continues to this day, a vital ingredient in the maintenance of Brunei’s independence and internal security. Secondly, the link between the revolt and the Sultan’s decision to reject membership in the Federation of Malaysia can only be inferred: one assumes that such a powerful show of negative feeling towards the concept caused the people’s views on the matter to be given weight, at the very least, while the new security situation that obtained in the wake of the rebellion allowed Brunei to continue as a self-governing British protectorate. This security environment was another of the most obvious consequences of the revolt, triggering Konfrontasi and embroiling Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak, North Borneo,
Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand in conflict with Indonesia and, in a diplomatic sense, the Philippines.

These consequences all occurred on a grand scale at the national and international level; for those who were most affected by the rebellion, the peoples of the Brunei Bay area, its effects were equally, if not more, profound. Lives had been lost, injuries sustained, including some that were both permanent and debilitating, buildings and property destroyed, damaged, or taken, friends and family had been detained or had fled to Kalimantan: the destruction and chaos wrought by the revolt was seemingly unending. The psychological scars, too, ran deep, as the widespread sensitivity in Brunei about the rebellion even five decades later shows. These human impacts should always be recognised as the most deeply felt legacy of any historical event and thus never be overlooked in the focus on the larger scale that is usually necessary; the suffering and loss of the individual is present every time in the course of such events and must always be remembered, acknowledged, and honoured. This is why this thesis ends here, in order to elevate these individual impacts to their proper place as the most significant aspect of the Brunei Rebellion, as well as its most enduring and painful legacy.
Appendices
## APPENDIX I

### Timeline of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905/6</td>
<td>The Supplementary Agreement, 1905/6 was signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-11</td>
<td>Loans totalling $439,750 were obtained from the FMS to make Brunei solvent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>The Resident was forced to invoke the advice clause when Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam opposed the Second Land Enactment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1912</td>
<td>First western-style school established in Brunei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1916</td>
<td>First Chinese school opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Two places were made available at Labuan’s English school for Bruneian children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 1929</td>
<td>Oil was discovered in the Belait District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Brunei’s first English-language school was established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Brunei’s oil was first exported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>The Brunei government’s loans were finally fully repaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1936</td>
<td>Jamalul Kiram II, the Sultan of Sulu, died without a recognised heir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>A Brunei branch of the <em>Sahabat Pena</em> was established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1939</td>
<td>The High Court of North Borneo decided which of the Sulu heirs were to receive the cession payments due from the BNBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16 December, 1941  Japanese troops landed at Kuala Belait

April, 1942  Brunei High School was opened by the Japanese authorities

Late 1943  The Japanese headquarters were transferred from Kuching to the Sapong Rubber Estate

10 June, 1945  The 9th Australian Division began the liberation of Japanese-controlled Borneo

15 August, 1945  Japan formally surrendered

Mid-1946  Artisans on the oilfields undertook Brunei’s first industrial strike

April, 1946  The Barisan Pemuda was founded

July, 1946  Sarawak and North Borneo were ceded to Great Britain as colonies

1 May, 1948  The Governor of Sarawak became ex officio High Commissioner for Brunei

1949  Government royalties from Brunei Shell increased

1950  Company income tax was introduced

6 June, 1950  Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III ascended the throne

1951  The Brunei government opened its first English medium school

September, 1951  The Sultan of Brunei staked a claim to Limbang and Labuan in a newspaper interview

October, 1952  Azahari returned to Brunei from Indonesia

1953  The First Five-Year Development Plan commenced
23 January, 1953  The BRUFICO demonstration

30 January, 1953  Azahari and his co-accused were charged in court

4 March, 1953  The High Court heard the appeal of Azahari and his colleagues

April, 1953  The State Treasurer (Incorporation) Enactment was defeated in the State Council

May, 1953  The Sultan announced his intention to promulgate Brunei’s first written constitution

August, 1953  Seven people were arrested in connection with the Gerakan di bawah Tanah

September, 1954  District Advisory Councils were established

December, 1955  Azahari attended the general assemblies of UMNO and the PRM

1956  Brunei’s first dedicated teacher training institute, the Maktab Perguruan Melayu Brunei, opened

The peak year of the onshore oil boom

22 January, 1956  The PRB was founded

15 August, 1956  The PRB was officially registered

October, 1956  A PRB delegation met an Indonesian diplomat based in Singapore

31 August, 1957  The Federation of Malaya became independent

Late September 1957  The Merdeka Mission went to London

7 February, 1958  The Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak broadcast their closer association speeches
September, 1958  HM Salleh resigned from the PRB

Late 1958  Brunei Shell began to retrench staff

October, 1958  The Sultan effectively vetoed Brunei’s participation in the northern Borneo federation

November, 1958  The Brunei government loaned $100 million to the Federation of Malaya

March, 1959  The Indonesian Consul General attended a dinner given by Azahari in Singapore

29 September, 1959  The Constitution and other key agreements were promulgated

May, 1960  The BULF was founded

June, 1960  The Prime Minister of Malaya revealed the existence of an understanding between himself and the Sultan that Brunei would soon join Malaya

August, 1960  The BNO was registered

November–December, 1960  The Brunei government formally invited its people to submit views on the proposed Nationality Enactment

March, 1961  The BULF threatened a general strike over wage payments in the PWD

April, 1961  The Officers’ Affair began

May, 1961  The moderate and militant factions of the PRB split

27 May, 1961  The Prime Minister of Malaya proposed the formation of the Federation of Malaysia
31 May, 1961 The Brunei Malay Regiment was established

12 June, 1961 The State Forest Officer was assaulted

14 June, 1961 Ten senior Malayan officers in the service of the Brunei government resigned

17 June, 1961 The PRB and the BULF held a joint rally in Brunei Town protesting against the delay in the District Council elections

9 July, 1961 The United Front against the establishment of Malaysia was publicly unveiled

Mid-July, 1961 The Singapore government went into minority mode

24 July, 1961 The PRB gave the Brunei government an ultimatum demanding action on the election issue

Late July, 1961 The Brunei government announced that the District Council elections would be postponed by a year

c.August, 1961 The TNKU was probably established at about this time

6 August, 1961 The PRB held a protest against the postponement of the elections

24 August, 1961 The first meeting of the MSCC

September, 1961 HM Salleh was appointed the State Welfare Officer

The BUP was founded

October, 1961 The majority of the PRB’s committee members visited Indonesia

November, 1961 The Indonesian Foreign Minister told the General Assembly of the UN that his country had no objection to the Malaysia proposal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December, 1961</td>
<td>Upon his return to Brunei, Azahari ordered that recruitment of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>volunteers for military training in Indonesia should commence</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 December, 1961</td>
<td>The Sultan described the Malaysia proposal as “very attractive” to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Legislative Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late December, 1961</td>
<td>The PKI’s Central Committee passed a resolution opposing the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 December, 1961</td>
<td><em>The Philippines Free Press</em> published an article claiming Philippine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sovereignty over North Borneo</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962–1963</td>
<td>The Brunei government re-negotiated its agreements with Brunei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shell</td>
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<tr>
<td>January, 1962</td>
<td>Azahari was appointed to the Brunei-Malaysia Commission and as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>an unofficial member of the Legislative Council</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The first group of TNKU cadres left for Kalimantan</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 January, 1962</td>
<td>The William Jacks strike began</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 January–</td>
<td>Hearings of the Brunei-Malaysia Commission were held throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 February, 1962</td>
<td>the State</td>
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<tr>
<td>February, 1962</td>
<td>The Brunei Government’s first steps were taken on its campaign for</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the return of Limbang</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The crisis in the Medical Department recurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicasio Osmeña invited Azahari to Manila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 February, 1962</td>
<td>The Governor of Sarawak received a petition requesting that Limbang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be returned to Brunei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Late March, 1962  The Sultan’s advisory council approved the Malaysia proposal in principle

April, 1962  The Legislative Council’s first meeting of the year

The second group of TNKU cadres left for Kalimantan

Early April, 1962  The Malayan Prime Minister met with Azahari

Mid-April, 1962  The BULF was disbanded

May, 1962  The Sultan went on the haj

The British government sent an aide-memoire to the Philippines asserting that it would vigorously resist a claim to North Borneo

Early May, 1962  Azahari resigned from the Legislative Council

The Sarawak government released a statement on the Limbang matter

Mid-May, 1962  A demonstration was held in Limbang requesting that Limbang be returned to Brunei

26 May, 1962  The Borneo Bulletin published a report revealing the existence of the TNKU

June, 1962  The Angkatan Anak Ra’ayat Sabah submitted an application for registration

The President of Indonesia was alleged to have personally given Azahari $10,000 whilst on a trip to Japan

June/July, 1962  British intelligence indicated that the Indonesian government gave the PRB $500,000
2 June, 1962  The Sultan returned from Saudi Arabia

21 June, 1962  The Cobbold Report was handed to the governments of Great Britain and Malaya

July, 1962  The governments of Great Britain and Malaya formally agreed to the formation of the Federation of Malaysia on 31 August, 1963

ST Divers conducted a review of public administration in Brunei

Early July, 1962  The Pengiran Pemancha led an unofficial delegation to Kuala Lumpur to clarify issues surrounding the Malaysia proposal

18 July, 1962  The Sultan announced to the Legislative Council that his government approved the Malaysia proposal in principle

20 July, 1962  The Legislative Council dissolved prior to the elections

28 July, 1962  The Director of Information broadcast a security warning on Radio Brunei

c. August, 1962  Rumours of people disappearing from kampongs for military training in the jungle circulated from around this time

Early August, 1962  The PRB released its election manifesto

4 August, 1962  Independent candidate Ghazali Umar published his election manifesto

6 August, 1962  Azahari returned to Brunei after a period of self-imposed exile in Malaya subsequent to his resignation from the Legislative Council

11 August, 1962  The PRB was accused of being organised on communist lines during the election campaign
Mid-August, 1962  Azahari and some colleagues met with Malaya’s Deputy Prime Minister to explore the Malaysia proposal

15 August, 1962  Indonesia and the Netherlands reached an agreement on the West Papua issue

Late August, 1962  The Brunei government created a committee to examine the Malaysia proposal

28 August, 1962  The High Commissioner for Brunei pleaded on the Sultan’s behalf for the return of Limbang to Brunei

Azahari spoke at a PRB election rally

30 August, 1962  The District Council elections took place

September, 1962  A Brunei government committee defined its terms for negotiations with Malaya on the Malaysia proposal

Early September, 1962  The sole non-PRB candidate to win a seat at the elections joined the Party

Azahari publicly called the constitution undemocratic and appealed for the elected members of the District Councils to be recognised as the legal government of the state

1 September, 1962  The Singapore government held a national referendum on the question of Malaysia

10 September, 1961  The Sultan held an audience with Azahari and the elected councillors
Mid-September, 1962  The UN Committee of Seventeen granted the SUPP, the PRB, and the Pasok Momogun a hearing on their anti-Malaysia petition

The BNO and BUP participated in talks with political parties in Sarawak to form a pro-Malaysia grand alliance

25 September, 1962  The governments of Brunei and Malaya met to discuss possible terms for the entry of Brunei into Malaysia

Late September, 1962  Mooted talks between the PRB and the Malayan government were cancelled

October, 1962  The Brunei government’s legal advisor raised the Limbang issue with the Colonial Office

10 October, 1962  The first ceremonial meeting of the partly elective Legislative Council was held

Late October, 1962  Azahari accepted an invitation from the Malayan government to visit Kuala Lumpur for negotiations on the Malaysia proposal

Azahari, Zaini, and Pengiran Metussin travelled to Manila

27 October, 1962  GS Sundang of the Pasok Momogun officially withdrew his support for the anti-Malaysia petition to the UN

Early November, 1962  Azahari announced the PRB’s intention of introducing an anti-Malaysia resolution to the Legislative Council

The Resident of the Fifth Division of Sarawak heard rumours of political intrigue in Brunei

5 November, 1962  Azahari met with the Vice-President of the Philippines
12 November, 1962
North Borneo Special Branch discovered a parade ground near Sipitang

White was recalled to London for medical leave

Mid-November, 1962
Reports of young men buying certain items in the markets of Brunei started to accumulate

Late November, 1962
Two sections of the North Borneo Police Mobile Force were despatched to patrol the Sipitang region

The Brunei Government began to meet daily in secret to co-ordinate its response to the TNKU

The CINCFE ordered that the contingency plans for internal security problems in Brunei be updated

20 November, 1962
Azahari addressed students from the University of the East

British intelligence indicated that, sometime before this date, the President of Indonesia had left US$10,000 at a bank in Tokyo for Azahari

22 November, 1962
A parade ground and a TNKU uniform were uncovered in the Temburong District

The Sultan despatched a personal letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the Limbang issue

24 November, 1962
Azahari addressed the Philippine National Press Club

The PRB submitted eleven motions to be tabled at the Legislative Council
25 November, 1962  Ten TNKU members were arrested at Sundar

28 November, 1962  The Legislative Council meeting was re-scheduled to 12 December

Operation Hujan, intended to disrupt the TNKU in the Brunei Bay area, commenced

Far East Command, the newly-amalgamated headquarters of Britain’s armed forces in the region, was established

29 November, 1962  Azahari returned to his home in Johore Bahru

1 December, 1962  The Malayan Prime Minister informed the British High Commissioner to the Federation of Malaya of evidence pertaining to the TNKU’s activities in Brunei

3 December, 1962  The Speaker of the Legislative Council rejected the more controversial of the PRB’s motions

5 December, 1962  Osman Mahmud visited Azahari in Johore Bahru

The Deputy Mentri Besar began to relay information on the TNKU to the police at around this time

The Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia visited Brunei

6 December, 1962  The Colonial Office requested the views of the Governors of North Borneo and Sarawak on the potential return of Limbang to Brunei

The Resident of the Fifth Division received warning of the TNKU’s plans
7 December, 1962

The Commissioner-General reported to London on his meeting with senior officials of the Brunei Government

Azahari returned to Manila

The Resident of the Fourth Division received information from a reliable source of the TNKU’s intention to attack Miri

The Governor of Sarawak requested that preparations be put in train for military reinforcement

The Commissioner-General informed FEC of the accumulated intelligence early in the evening

Precautions were taken in Brunei Town during the evening to prepare for the possibility of trouble

The CINCFE activated Plan Ale shortly before 6pm

The District Officer of Temburong requested police reinforcements late in the evening

8 December, 1962

0115 The TNKU began to attack the Bangar Police Station

0200 The TNKU seized control of the Power House and cut the electricity in Brunei Town

0205 The attacks on the Brunei Town Police Station and the Istana Darul Hana began

0245 Kuching lost contact with Limbang Police Station

c.0300 Babungan Dua Belas was attacked

The CINCFE declared that ‘Ale Red’ was in force
0315 The TNKU captured the Seria Police Station

0400 The police at the Istana Darul Hana were reinforced

The Panaga Police Station was attacked for the first time

c.0500 The Bangar Police Station surrendered

0600 Limbang Police Station surrendered to the TNKU

0610 The Mentri Besar telegraphed a request to Kuala Lumpur for the arrest of Azahari and Zaini

0630 The TNKU used the Assistant District Officer, Belait in an attempt to induce the Panaga Police Station to surrender

0800 Senior government officials met with the Police Commissioner to discuss the situation and military reinforcement was formally requested

0930 Bubungan Dua Belas was re-captured by the Brunei Police

Late morning Laksamana and Pengiran Metussin attempted to parley with the Sultan at the Istana Darul Hana

1200 A platoon of the North Borneo Mobile Police Force arrived at Berakas

Anduki Airport was captured by the TNKU

1400 Parks was officially appointed Acting High Commissioner for Brunei

1442 A Hastings MRT aircraft departed from Changi Airport with part of D Company, 1/2GR aboard, destined for Labuan
1455 Three Blackburn Beverleys began to depart Seletar Airfield carrying C Company, 1/2GR

Evening The British Ambassador to the Philippines met with the President and Vice President to discuss the revolt and other issues

1900 The first British troops, a platoon of D Company, 1/2GR, arrived at Berakas

1930 The Panaga Police Station was again attacked

The Kuala Belait Police Station was attacked

2300 The entirety of the Initial Force had arrived by this time

Weston, in North Borneo, was captured by the TNKU

Azahari held his first press conference in Manila

The Mentri Besar activated sections of the Public Order Enactment

The North Borneo and Sarawak governments activated their security legislation in response to the rebellion

9 December, 1962

0100 C Company, 1/2GR departed Brunei Town for Seria

0200 The TNKU attacked the Secretariat again in Brunei Town

0715 D Company, 1/2GR cleared the Secretariat

0900 Brunei Town was effectively under the control of British troops from this time

The rebels at Weston surrendered to the Sarawak Police
Morning Much of A Company, 1/2GR was despatched to Lutong and Miri

Late morning The Sultan and his entourage moved to the Brunei Town Police Station

The Sultan addressed his people over Radio Brunei

Afternoon The vehicles blocking the runway at Anduki Airfield were removed

Evening The Panaga Police Station was unsuccessfully attacked for a fourth time

A Field Force platoon was despatched by launch to relieve Limbang

Brigadier Glennie was officially appointed COMBRITBOR

The SUPP broadcast its denunciation of the Rebellion over Radio Sarawak

The US State Department instructed its mission in Manila to give neither Azahari nor Zaini a visa without reference to Washington

The British Ambassador to the Philippines met with the Vice President to convey a message from the Foreign Office

10 December, 1962 0700 The Kuala Belait Police Station surrendered

c.1315 Anduki Airport was re-captured

1400 Stable communications between Brunei and Singapore were finally established
Panaga Police Station was relieved

The High Commissioner for Brunei returned from London

The Commissioner-General visited Brunei

The PRB was formally prohibited

The Sultan and his officials were able to re-enter the Secretariat, effectively re-starting the Brunei government

The TNKU conducted a wide-scale search of Kuala Belait

Two TNKU agents were arrested at Kuala Lawas

The Malayan delegation to the UN reported that the Under Secretary-General had said that the Secretary-General would not take cognisance of Azahari’s telegrams for the time being

Antara reported on the President of Indonesia’s first public comment on the rebellion

11 December, 1962

The curfew in Brunei Town was lifted for two hours

The Istana Kota Mangalela was re-captured during the afternoon

Before sundown, the Government Offices Building in Kuala Belait was re-captured

The Sarawak government commenced its CCO arrest programme

The Legislative Council of North Borneo passed a resolution denouncing the Rebellion

FEC requested reinforcement from the Strategic Reserve in the UK
HMS *Fiskerton* and *Chawton* were despatched to Brunei Town

The commander of psychological operations arrived in Brunei

Washington reported that both Azahari and Zaini had applied for visas to visit New York

The Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines informed the Philippine Vice President of Indonesia’s support for the rebellion

The CRO cabled Commonwealth posts most concerned with the rebellion to address the rumours of Indonesian complicity

The Prime Minister made a speech to the Malayan House of Representatives about the foreign influences supporting the revolt

**12 December, 1962**

0000 L Company, 42 Commando, RM departed Brunei Town for Limbang

0602 The Resident of the Fifth Division first heard the engines of the two lighters approaching Limbang

0620 The hostages in Limbang Hospital were rescued

0730 Four fighter jets began to conduct dummy attacks over Seria

1115 The operation to re-capture Seria Police Station began

1800 Government forces arrived at Niah

**Evening** TNKU remnants unsuccessfully attacked Limbang

The Sultan promulgated a Proclamation of Emergency and issued the Emergency Orders, 1962
Uniforms similar to the TNKU’s were discovered near Tawau

The curfew in Brunei Town was lifted for six hours

The Jerudong Gaol was re-captured

Kuala Belait Police Station was re-captured

Troops were deployed by air to Lawas

Sarawak’s Council Negri passed a resolution condemning the revolt

The Malayan Prime Minister informed the British government that he would boycott the scheduled meeting of the ASA in Manila

The PKI was reported by USA intelligence to have issued a call for volunteers to aid the TNKU

13 December, 1962 0930 Bekenu was re-captured

Pekan Tutong was re-captured

Sibuti was re-captured

Hermenegildo Atienza, an associate of Azahari’s in Manila, was reported to have told staff from the Australian Embassy that the Philippines had refused to provide material aid to the TNKU

The Commonwealth representatives to the UN held a meeting to discuss the situation in Brunei

The PKI issued a statement denying that it was actively supporting the revolt
The Malayan government formally invoked Article VI of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement in relation to the rebellion.

14 December, 1962
Muara was re-captured early in the morning

Banger was re-captured

40 Commando, RM despatched to Kuching

The Sultan made an address over Radio Brunei

The Sultan held a general press conference in the afternoon

Azahari made an appeal for volunteers from all freedom-loving peoples

The Philippines’ intelligence services informed the British Embassy in Manila that Azahari and Osmeña had been working closely with the Indonesian Embassy

15 December, 1962
Kampong Ayer was searched for rebels by the police with RN assistance

Major General Walter Walker was appointed COMBRITBOR

The Sultan of Sulu was reported to have granted to Azahari the governmental powers over North Borneo ceded to Baron de Overbeck in 1878

16 December, 1962
A large group of rebels attempted to re-enter Pekan Tutong

Production resumed at the oilfields

17 December, 1962
Information regarding the formation of a pro-rebel organisation in the Tawau area was uncovered
B Company, 1/2GR arrived at Tawau at dawn

The US’ Permanent Representative to the UN was reported to have been instructed to do his best to prevent action in the Committee of Seventeen on the Brunei affair

The National Committee for Solidarity with the North Kalimantan Revolution was established in Jakarta

**18 December, 1962**

The Deputy High Commissioner for Brunei arrived in Brunei Town

The President of the Philippines publicly announced his intention to refuse Azahari’s request for formal recognition of the NKKU

Indonesia’s Permanent Representative to the UN raised the matter of Brunei in the Trusteeship Council

**19 December, 1962**

The Emergency (Suspension of Constitution) Order, 1962 was promulgated

The Sultan addressed his people over Radio Brunei

Six police thought to be the last hostages held by the TNKU were released at Badas by a group of Iban volunteers

Force HQ in Brunei Town announced that operations were entering the final phase

The President of Indonesia publicly declared his full support for the rebellion in a speech at Surabaya

**20 December, 1962**

Azahari was reported to have stated his intention of returning to Borneo in the next week to personally lead the revolt
Indonesia’s UN delegation was reported to be distributing an *aide-memoire* in an effort to garner support for an early meeting of the Committee of Twenty-Four.

The Counsellor at the British Embassy in Jakarta delivered an *aide-memoire* on Indonesia’s increasingly public support for the TNKU to the Acting Second Deputy Foreign Minister.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 December, 1962</td>
<td>A broadcast over Radio Brunei announced that the Constitution had been suspended</td>
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<td>High officials of the Philippine Government agreed to have no formal contact with Azahari or Zaini</td>
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<td>23 December, 1962</td>
<td>The <em>Barisan Sosialis</em> held a mass rally in support of the rebellion</td>
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<td>24 December, 1962</td>
<td>The British Ambassador to Indonesia delivered his Foreign Minister’s personal message on the rebellion</td>
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<td>to the Indonesian Foreign Minister</td>
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<td>25 December, 1962</td>
<td>A group of 30 rebels, including Yassin Affandy, escaped capture in Temburong</td>
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<td>26 December, 1962</td>
<td>A houseboat and a launch were cut adrift in Kuala Belait, presumably by rebels still on the run</td>
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<td>Mohamed Mahmud, one of Azahari’s brothers, was arrested</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The US Ambassador to Indonesia met with the Indonesian President to discuss the Brunei issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 December, 1962</td>
<td>The Malayan and Australian Ambassadors to Indonesia both met with the Foreign Minister to discuss the Brunei affair</td>
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28 December, 1962  The Governor of North Borneo provided his views on the Limbang question to the Colonial Office

Achmad Fadillah was appointed the NKKU’s Permanent Representative to Indonesia

30 December, 1962  1/2GR captured 15 people in Lamunin, including 8 who were on Special Branch’s wanted list

31 December, 1962  Operations on the Pandaruan Road resulted in the arrest of 71 suspected rebels

The Governor of Sarawak provided his views on the Limbang question to the Colonial Office

The High Commissioner for Brunei offered his resignation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies

Early January, 1963  The SUPP announced its decision to withdraw from the joint memorandum to the UN

The crash development programme and relief scheme both began

1 January, 1963  The Deputy Mentri Besar was despatched to Kuala Lumpur to conduct exploratory talks on the Malaysia proposal

3 January, 1963  The Indonesian Navy was reported to have instructed its vessels to increase their vigilance in light of events in the Borneo territories

4 January, 1963  A volunteer force was reported to have assembled at Bataan intending to depart for northern Borneo to support the rebellion
The Indonesian Foreign Ministry rejected Britain’s aide-memoire that had previously been delivered to the Acting Second Deputy Foreign Minister.

8 January, 1963

It was reported that the Indonesian Air Force intended to conduct air patrols in border areas of Borneo to prevent any incursions into Indonesian territory.

11 January, 1963

Zaini announced the composition of the NKKU’s “War Cabinet.”

The British Foreign Minister met the Indonesian Ambassador to Great Britain to discuss recent developments.

12 January, 1963

It was reported that a group of Indonesian veterans had to be ordered by the ABRI to cease organising a volunteer force in support of the TNKU.

Mid-January, 1963

The rewards scheme began to operate in a formal sense.

17 January, 1963

Flood relief efforts began in earnest.

18 January, 1963

Flag marches were held in Seria, Kuala Belait, Tutong, and Brunei Town.

The Commissioner-General, in response to a question about Britain’s intentions should Indonesia involve itself in the rebellion, stated that “we had not found that appeasing dictators had served any useful purpose.”

The CINCFE received information from a Philippine source that Indonesia would attack northern Borneo within the next month.
Late January, 1963  Intelligence was received that the TNKU was again recruiting close to Brunei Town

20 January, 1963  The Indonesian Foreign Minister formally announced that a policy of *konfrontasi* would be adopted against the Malaysia proposal

24 January, 1963  The Prime Minister of Malaya passed a warning about Indonesia’s intention to commence guerrilla activity in the Borneo territories to the British High Commissioner to Kuala Lumpur

26 January, 1963  The focus went from flood relief efforts back to mopping up operations

27 January, 1963  Zaini travelled to Hong Kong

29 January, 1963  The UN Secretary-General stated that he had “been very closely watching the developments with a view to devising some formulas which might help to ease the tensions” in Brunei

31 January, 1963  Azahari and his family travelled to Jakarta

February, 1963  A soldier from the Brunei Malay Regiment was sent to the Berakas Detention Centre, while 18 of his colleagues were otherwise punished for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the Sultan

2 February, 1963  Pengiran Hitam Haji Burut, the TNKU’s leader in Tutong, was captured

4-11 February, 1963  The APSO Conference took place in Moshi, Tanganyika

5 February–3 March, 1963  The Brunei government conducted formal negotiations with Malaya on entry terms into the Malaysia Federation
13 February, 1963  The Brunei government announced a $5,000 reward for nine of the most wanted TNKU leaders

17 February, 1963  An intensive search sparked by a sighting of Yassin Affandy with eight others near Bangar began

2 March, 1963  The Voice of the Freedom Fighters of Kalimantan Utara began broadcasting from Java

4 March, 1963  The High Commissioner for Brunei met with Hapidz Laksamana, Pengiran Metussin Pengiran Lampoh, and Tengah Hasip

6 March, 1963  The Committee of Twenty-Four approved the requests of the SUPP and the Sabah Alliance for hearings on their petitions regarding the Malaysia proposal

14 March, 1963  The Secretary-General passed on the information that the President had instructed Indonesia’s delegation to the UN not to press the Malaysia issue in the Committee of Twenty-Four for the time being

22 March, 1963  Haji Garip Haji Manggol and Sha’iff Bakti Daud, two of those on the Brunei government’s most wanted list, were captured

23 March, 1963  Khairul Salleh Kerudin, TNKU commander of the Limbang District, was killed

5 April, 1963  Another intensive search operation occurred in an attempt to capture Yassin Affandy and his companions in the Brunei Bay area

12 April, 1963  The attack on Tebedu, near the border with Indonesia, occurred; this is generally cited as the opening incident of Konfrontasi

17 April, 1963  Azahari’s two brothers, Osman and Salleh Mahmud, were arrested
8 May, 1963  Britain’s UN delegation reported that the weight of other business would delay any hearing of the Malaysia issue by the Committee of Twenty-Four until the second week of June

16 May, 1963  The Sultan addressed his people over Radio Brunei in an endeavour to persuade those TNKU remaining at large to surrender

18 May, 1963  Yassin Affandy and the TNKU command group were captured

10 June, 1963  The final round of talks on Brunei’s entry terms for Malaysia commenced

13 June, 1963  The Committee of Twenty-Four postponed the hearing of the Malaysia issue to a later date

22 July, 1963  The Emergency (Suspension of Constitution) Order, 1962 was repealed

24 July, 1963  17 people were charged in the High Court in Brunei with offences connected to the rebellion; one pleaded guilty

16 September, 1963  The Federation of Malaysia came into being

21 October, 1963  The last rebel known to be at large surrendered

2 December, 1963  Azahari appeared at a rally in Pontianak

6-11 December, 1963  A combined police and military exercise was held to forestall any incidents on the first anniversary of the Brunei Rebellion

24 December, 1963  The 16 people charged in the High Court in July were discharged when the state offered no evidence in support of its charges
APPENDIX II

The Functioning of the Brunei Government

THE BRUNEI ADMINISTRATION

This paper is intended to serve as an assessment of the Civil Administration, indicating its weaknesses, ways and means by which to strengthen it and measures which could and should be taken to make it an effective arm of the Government in the State’s future growth.

2. The task in the early days of the rebellion in December was to get a seemingly paralysed administration working. At that time most of the senior officials of Government were “holed up” in the Secretariat, all departments except those headed by expatriate officers were for the most part closed (not including the Posts & Telegraph Department), staff were absent from duty and a state of confusion prevailed. As a first step, an Emergency Executive Committee was appointed and became the instrument by which the Deputy High Commissioner was enabled to advise, reorganise and set into motion those measures that were necessary to revivify the administration and ensure co-operation and co-ordination between the Civil Administration and the Security Forces. Heads of Department were suitably briefed, all leave and holidays were at the time cancelled, several new appointments were made (notably by changing District Officers) and various relief, development and administrative activities were embarked upon. At the same time the establishment of the Brunei, East Sarawak, Labuan Emergency Committee (BESLEC) and District Emergency Committees (DEC’s), as set out in the Director of Operations Instruction No. 1, assisted further to ensure more effectiveness by virtue of the fact that Civil and Service officers were able to meet regularly on joint executive bodies to tackle and resolve day to day problems as well as policy matters. The attached paper at Annexe “A” gives a clearer idea of the composition and workings of BESLEC.

3. The above steps have, in themselves, proved reasonably successful, and have helped bolster the morale of the Civil Service and the population, restore confidence generally, and
generate economic activity. Even so, they can only be regarded as short term palliatives: they
do not fulfil the long term requirements which are necessary to make the administration an
effective instrument of Government by which to ensure good advisory, development and
welfare services and bring about hope for the future.

4. It is clear that the Administration, particularly with reference to advisory services
(veterinary, agricultural), health services, public utilities (water, electricity, sanitation etc.)
and community development and welfare services, has been sadly ineffectual, and that
neglect of the needs of the population had given rise to widespread discontent and was one
of the main contributory reasons for the rebellion, especially as there was no lack of wealth
to make them possible. Administrative shortcomings and neglect, however, are inseparable
from the other root causes of the rebellion. The observations which follow, although
somewhat stark, may help to illustrate the state of affairs prevailing in Brunei.

(1) Prior to the 1959 Constitution, the affairs of Brunei and its
administration were, to all intents and purposes, the responsibility of the
Sarawak Government. It is assumed that as a whole the administration then
was reasonably adequate and that by proper direction and supervision by
Heads of Departments good agricultural, veterinary, health, public utility,
community and welfare services were maintained. Also a development plan
had been drawn up for implementation. In such circumstances suitable
redress by intervention of the Central Government would have been certain
had there been a failure or deterioration in local administration.

(2) The new constitution, although providing for eventual representative
Government, in actual effect centralized power in the Sultan and his chosen
nominees (the Mentri Besar, Deputy Mentri Besar and Deputy State
Secretary) who were appointed to high office and virtually ran the affairs of
Government including the Administration. For this task they were neither
trained nor experienced. Unlike other British territories which have obtained
Independence or Internal Self-Government, there was not a satisfactory
framework of tried and experienced administrators in the State Service to
guide and advise and to ensure that the complex machinery of Government
was properly managed and operated so as to maintain its every day role or
enable it to be geared to undertake fresh development tasks. Mr. S.T. Divers
in his report entitled “Report on Public Administration within the State of
Brunei” dated 25th July, 1962 comments on the State Secretariat as follows: -

“1. This organisation is most interesting. It is an ingenious, economical, central executive answerable to supreme authority, the Sultan, as well as being subject to authority of constitutional bodies such as the Executive Council and Legislative Council.

For a relatively small State, it is capable of providing a driving force to national development, and an efficiency in administration generally, including speed of action, which might well be envied by many other and bigger countries. Provided, and it is an important proviso, the objective of true efficiency for the State’s well-being is kept ever to the forefront, and it is not permitted to become obscured by the intrusion of urges to avoid measures essential to long term progress, although maybe not wholly popular.

2. The State Secretariat is the central executive organisation of government operating under the general directions of the Mentri Besar (Chief Minister of H.H. Sultan) and, when appointed, a Deputy Chief Minister.

The controlling officer under the Ministers is the State Secretary.”

What Divers was not able to do with only 3 weeks at his disposal was to assess the “inner” workings of the State Secretariat and see how inexperience and lack of appropriate qualifications or training, in other words “know how” could bring things to a standstill. His warning about
“true efficiency being kept to the forefront” etc. does not, therefore, strike at
the root trouble, but efficiency certainly became “obscured” for the above as
well as other reasons shown later. Also, none of his recommendations have
been acted upon although they are generally sound. When the accumulated
deterioration had eventually wrought its damaging results, recourse to the
kind of redress as envisaged in (1) above, was not any longer possible. In all
this, there is little evidence of advice having been sought or taken. New
found powers have, in fact, been jealously guarded from internal and
external incursions and at the present time there is still no sign of any
significant change in the thinking of those in power. The new constitution
did not, in the event, herald a political advance and in effect produced
absolutism or an oligarchic form of Government which went the same way
of all such systems as will be further demonstrated below.

(3) Nepotism and favouritism soon became the hallmarks of the new
Government. The entrenched aristocracy succeeded in preserving its position
no matter what the circumstances of the population as a whole. The integrity
of the Public Service Commission early fell into disrepute. This state of
affairs has inevitably undermined the Civil Service and produced damaging
effects on the Administration, its efficient working, its impartiality and good
name.

(4) In a short space of time the running and management of the
Administration seriously declined. For reasons already given, many
expatriate and technical staff left, including a number of contract officers
who had no confidence in the manner of their treatment especially on the
score of gratuities (although this has since been put right). Despite the
seriousness of the staffing shortage and the need for recruitment, as
recommended in the Divers Report, nothing has yet been done. Narrow
nationalistic tendencies and xenophobic attitudes are partly responsible; also
the misplaced belief that the local man could hold down the job regardless of the consequences. In this way departments have become structureless and emasculated. This in turn has hampered any form of development since the Development Department is itself dependent upon “servicing” by technical departments for obtaining technical advice and with the processing, progressing, and programming of schemes i.e. by the Land Office, PWD, the Agricultural Department etc. The main recommendations of the Divers Report are reproduced at Annexe “B”. A number of current staff grievances are given at Annexe “C”.

(5) Despite the wealth of the country, the population has not enjoyed any of its benefits or seen evidence of benefits to come. The Development Plan has never been seriously launched. A number of simple Development and Welfare schemes have now been proposed, as given at Annexe “D”, but these are not to be regarded as a substitute for a full scale development plan. At present, however, there is no qualified or experienced Board to direct and be responsible for the plan and individual schemes are now being tackled on a purely “ad hoc” basis. The previous Board, many of whose members are now under detention, was not satisfactory, being unwieldy and not represented by qualified or experienced persons. Meanwhile, as before, advisory and health services continue to be grossly inadequate especially in the rural areas, public utility services are poor, and development, community and welfare projects by which to improve the economic standard and everyday living conditions of the population have yet to be started up on a scale that will make any worthwhile impression. On this account discontent of the population and dissatisfaction with the performance of the Government is widespread.

(6) Representative Government was and is still being baulked. The hamstringing of popular leaders i.e. Party Rakyat and the frustrations they
have experienced at the hands of a small power group (all formerly Party Rakyat members) are one of the other reasons why non-constitutional methods of achieving redress from such circumstances was popularly supported, no matter what the ulterior or opportunist motives of some of the leaders of the rebellion. But it should be kept in mind that representative Government is not itself the solution to all these ills since without an efficient administration and other public, statutory and technical bodies (all adequately staffed) there is still little hope of real progress in those fields where the need is greatest and which alone will restore confidence in the Government and illustrate a general desire to serve public interest.

5. Based upon first-hand personal experience of the “workings” of the Administration as well as upon views reached on what were the causes of the rebellion a number of remedial measures are recommended for consideration:

(1) The Sultan, in case there is any doubt about it, should be fully “briefed” on the reasons for the rebellion (as are officially held) including the weakness of the administration and the widespread discontent with the Government’s performance. This is necessary as no one is quite sure of how things are represented to him, how much he in fact knows, and to what extent he accepts the situation or is party to it. If the Sultan is made conversant with these issues, certain remedies may well claim his support with possibly the hope of early action.

(2) The Public Service Commission must be reconstituted and should not be interfered with in the discharge of its duties. It is evident that no one believes the fiction that P.S.C. is free from direction from above. We have been advised, however ([by] Lawson) that we should not be over-optimistic about a genuine change of heart regarding appointments to Public office which are especially regarded as one of the Sultan’s prerogatives. If no progress is made in this direction then the Civil Service will never be
effectively built up. With Malaysia, presumably the Central Federal Government will have a say in appointments to Federal Departments. This is something which must be safeguarded (see Heads of Agreement). Appointments to State Departments must also be free from interference. It should be possible to appoint to the P.S.C., [sic] members who can be relied upon.

(3) The recommendations in the Divers Report should immediately be implemented as a “crash programme”. A newly constituted P.S.C. should be appraised of the urgency of this programme. The High Commissioner’s office will doubtless be able to pursue recruitment with the Colonial Office, the Technical Cooperation and Resettlement Departments, United Nations and Commonwealth countries (including Singapore and Malaya), once policy clearance on this has been obtained. Employment could be direct, on loan, or by secondment. Presumably the Federation Government should endorse such proposals since they are unlikely to take effect much before Malaysia. At the same time it will be necessary to solve the accommodation problem with all possible speed in view of the acute shortage of quarters.

(4) A development [sic] Board should be constituted and given full autonomy subject possibly to its schemes being finally approved by, say, the State Executive Council. The Board should be free to employ all necessary staff and should be allocated adequate finances to carry out development schemes. A simple ordinance along the lines of, say, Singapore’s Housing & Development Authority or the Economic Development Board should be drawn up and enacted. Membership of the Board should include persons with commercial, professional and administrative qualifications or experience as, for example:

Chairman – A person with drive, initiative and experience; not necessarily an official.
Members – A qualified senior Engineer, either Government or commercial or possibly both.
A qualified and experienced Agriculturalist.
An experienced commercial executive. (Shell or one of the business houses).
A Financial Officer (State Financial Officer ?).
The Commissioner for Development and/or his adviser.
An Organisation & Methods Consultant – (See (5) below) or an experienced Administrator or both.
A Secretary.
Others can be co-opted as required i.e. the State Medical Officer for Health Projects, the District Officer of the district concerned, the Land Officer, the State Engineer etc.

Until such a Board is set up, it is essential that a temporary Board should do all it possibly can to get simple development and welfare schemes under way, as already proposed at Annexe “D”.

(5) Apart from the shortage of technical and departmental officers as referred to at (3) above, the administration suffers acutely from [a] lack of experienced administrators, inadequate organisation, antiquated and time-consuming procedures, poor progressing and programming of work, inadequate follow up direction and supervision. The running of a complex Government machine is a skilled business and responsibilities have to be decentralised and delegated. [sic] accompanied by clear directions and instructions. At present the highest officials of the Government spend much of their time performing tasks of subordinate staff, papers tend to go round in circles (whereas co-ordinating meetings would dispose of the problems in one or two sittings) and a considerable volume of unnecessary work still goes to the highest levels. One way and another the machinery becomes bogged down
and nothing seems to get under way. The employment of Organisation and Methods Consultants to advise on how to achieve the desired ends is now a commonplace practice by Governments (i.e. Singapore) and commercial firms alike. It is therefore proposed that a suitable Organisation & Methods Consultant should be engaged immediately to advise and assist the Brunei Government with the solution of these problems. Consultants can be obtained privately – there are a number of excellent private firms – or from the United Nations or other Government agencies. As a first task it is suggested that the Organisation and Methods Consultants should specifically be required to: firstly, implement the Development Plan and interim schemes and, secondly, implement the Divers Report. Concerning implementation of the Development Plan, this envisages:

(a) a review of current development proposals whether those proposed at Annexe “D” or in the Development Plan,

(b) investigation of the present stages of progress including difficulties or reasons for hold up,

(c) progressing, processing and programming of projects,

(d) ways and means of streamlining procedures and ensuring full co-ordination and co-operation,

(e) staffing needs,

(f) workings of the Board and the desirability of establishing a new statutory authority with suitable membership, as proposed at (4) above,

(g) re-allocation of priorities, whether short-term or long-term.

As regards the Divers Report, it is envisaged that the Consultants should:

(a) study the report,
(b) evaluate the recommendations after a study of the workings of each department and consultations with the Head of Department and the Establishment Officer,

(c) put up recommendations for immediate recruitment whether long-term or short-term,

(d) give possible sources of recruitment,

(e) examine present procedures including those of the P.S.C. with a view to ensuring quick results.

Thereafter or simultaneously, if possible, the Consultants should look into the workings of the advisory departments, especially the Agricultural Department, then the PWD in view of its important role in fulfilment of development proposals and finally the Health Services. The Marine Department and the Aviation Department are also important because of their International significance.

It would be of considerable benefit to the future efficiency of the Administration if the Consultants could assist in the early recruitment of suitable staff for appointment to the Organisation & methods [sic] section of the Establishment and Organisation Department as proposed by Divers at Item 5 of the Summary of Main Recommendations (Annexe “B”). By this, the new staff would be able to understudy the Consultants and obtain firsthand training and experience.

6. The remedies prescribed in paragraph 5 are not regarded as being exhaustive; indeed they do no more than indicate ways and means by which to get the Administration into better shape and produce results. It is, of course, clear that political problems cannot be solved by administrative methods and that a solution of the above administrative problems without a solution to the central political problems will not bring about the long-term solution of either or lead to a progressive and stable future. In Brunei as elsewhere, the central political problem is the control of power. The problems are illustrated by the observations made at (2)
and (6) of paragraph 4. It is considered, therefore, that continuation of the present system would not serve Brunei’s long-term interests. Any modification in the composition and membership of existing Councils, Boards and Authorities would help to demonstrate new intentions on this subject whilst publicly made assurances by H.H. the Sultan of his intention to establish representative Government as soon as possible may help to restore confidence, although cynicism on this score will not easily be dispelled. Political opportunities under the Malaysia scheme of things may also help restore confidence if properly explained and projected. In other words, [a] State election should be held as soon as possible and not as late as two years hence. The early formation of a political party will help offset doubts, and would be of particular value if moderates of the Party Rahyat [sic] can be included. Their individual and collective endorsement of Malaysia whilst condemning violence as a means to resloving [sic] political differences will also be very helpful. Such steps should be accompanied by a genuine expression of clemency if a permanent sense of embitterment or even more serious consequences are to be avoided. A separate paper on “Clemency” has already been submitted and is under consideration.

7. The avoidance of a “souring” of the population through embitterment due to harsh treatment of detainees, the dispelling of confusion and uncertainty about the future are matters of vital importance both to the present day and future of Brunei. Once intentions have finally been decided and arms [sic] and objects are clear-cut, it seems imperative that they should be “put across” by all the demonstrable leadership which can be summoned (from H.H. the Sultan to Ketuas) and by all the skills of propaganda and publicity at our disposal. These remarks apply to intentions concerning Malaysia, clemency, formation of a new political party, reforms or modifications to existing councils, proposals for representative Government, development and welfare projects, improvements to advisory, public utility and health services, and any such step taken or measure carried out by which public morale is likely to be raised and relationships with Government improved. Clearly the present circumstances cannot be “carried over” into Malaysia.

[Note: Annexes A and B are only marginally relevant and thus are not reproduced here.]
ANNEX C

GRIEVANCES OF CONTRACT OFFICERS

Some grievances of contract officers will illustrate the lack of confidence that they have in their employers and in the Public Service Commission. From a perusal of these it would seem that various terms of service are often decided arbitrarily since it is not possible to find any principle in the action taken. The formation of a Whitley Council or similar means for the exchange [sic] of views would doubtless assist [the] relationship.

Gratuities – The agreed computation of gratuities as set out in Circular 29 of 1961 had not been adhered to and payments were not made when they fell due. This has only recently been put right.

Re-employment – The general rule is that contract officers should apply for re-employment within six months of the termination of their current contract. Very frequently, Government has only informed officers of its decision within only a few weeks or days of their expected departure. This has been a great source of worry and does not enable the officer to make plans for his future. If Government for any valid reason is unable to make up its mind, it should agree to an extension of the existing contract so that the extension period plus the outstanding period of the contract together equal six months, i.e. the notice period.

Temporary appointments – In many recent cases contract officers, instead of being offered new contracts, have been offered only temporary employment at a lower salary than they were formerly getting. It appears that the object of this is to avoid the increase in gratuity which would automatically be carried over from one contract to another contract by which the gratuity rate increases from 15% to 17½% to 20% to 22½%. This practice has in particular been applied to contract officers who have poor re-employment prospects. For them, it a case of Hobson’s Choice. The practice is, of course, completely unprincipled.

Discipline – There have been recent cases of blatant wrongful dismissal without redress. The contract officers hold that the proper machinery and procedures, as required by the P.S.C. rules, have not been followed. Although this point was not actually substantiated by the
Deputy High Commissioner, from a cursory investigation of the evidence it seemed to be probable. Certainly the disciplinary procedures have not always been followed. Whilst on the subject of discipline, there is a clear case for getting rid of officers whose performance is totally inefficient. The performance of the Agricultural Department warrants drastic disciplinary action; once more its Head is not qualified. In the Medical Department, personal relationships are very bad and there seems little hope of ever building up that Department whilst the present S.M.O. holds office. There is no doubt that the Department has seriously deteriorated through loss of staff owing to bad personal relationship with the Head of Department. The Head of the P.W.D. is entirely ineffectual. His Deputy, on the other hand although not adequately qualified is very good as an organiser and displays considerable drive and initiative. The Department is seriously depleted of staff and a number of remaining expatriates are shortly leaving which will further aggravate the situation. A complete overhaul of the Department is necessary and staff should be recruited immediately.

**Promotions** – For the reasons that have been discussed elsewhere, there is little confidence in the P.S.C. and the manner in which promotions are made. There have been a number of cases of senior and adequately qualified officers being superseded by men of less obvious merit. This practice can have serious consequences on the Civil Service.

**General** – It is clear from the Divers Report that weaknesses in man management, employer/employee relationship[s] and terms and conditions of service had been observed. Items 4 to 20 (Annex B) touch on these matters and are fully gone into in the main report.

Note: Additional copies of the Divers Report could probably be obtained from the State Secretariat.

**ANNEX D**

**SIMPLE DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES AS CRASH PROGRAMME**

1. As a matter of **National Importance**, in order to restore the morale of the ordinary kampong and rural people whose circumstances are poor and who have especially suffered because of the rebellion, it is proposed that simple development and welfare projects should
be forthwith drawn up and implemented and which are designed specifically to provide better public services, welfare and health facilities, as well as advisory services, and which ultimately will improve living conditions in rural areas.

It is considered that such measures will not only restore morale and improve living conditions, but will succeed in winning the confidence of the people in the Civic Administration.

Such schemes can only succeed if they are given priority and are treated as a CRASH PROGRAMME, which must be accompanied by vigorous planning, rapid investigation, careful co-ordination by all departments throughout, complete cooperation at all levels and finally speedy execution. Drive and initiative are the hallmarks of such a programme. The rewards can be immense in terms of public wellbeing and morale.

2. This proposal does not and is not intended to conflict with the National Development Plan which should proceed along its present path although it is necessary, nevertheless, to reconstitute the Board as many of its members are among the detainees. By and large, the proposals in the Development Plan are long term. What is envisaged in this proposal is quick results or evidence of intention within only months. In fact the schemes envisaged are similar to those which the Emergency Executive Committee put into motion in the early days of the rebellion, most of which are underway such as: -

Bridle paths … all districts
Roads … specified.

30 wells for Tutong Kampong[s], approved.

Temporary (ARCON) Schools which can later be used for Community Centres, Clinics, Information or Public Rooms.

Radios for Kampongs.

Emergency Relief.

(Note 1. The Emergency Committee also considered Development Plan projects which have since been started upon i.e. Lumapas Road, Barracks for
labourers (site investigations proceeding), quarters for staff (construction started), rural projects Belait Districts [sic] (started).

Note 2. The Development Board has separately put up long term proposals such as Muara Port, Trade School, Forest-Trail, Bus transport.)

3. More specifically it is proposed that the CRASH PROGRAMME should tackle schemes as follows:-

(a) **Visiting teams.**
Such a scheme is already underway successfully in Belait District. These teams, consisting of Health, Land Office, Forestry, Police, Agricultural, [and] Information Services staff visit kampongs over a given period (1 week) giving treatment, advice and assistance.
These programmes need to be stepped-up, implemented in all Districts, and be vigorously followed up.

(b) **Needs for Community Centres, temporary clinics [and] Information rooms.**
These are desirable in many districts and kampongs. The 50 ARCON classrooms at S.O.A.S. [Sultan Omar Ali School] will not be required for the present purpose beyond about July/August. In anticipation of this D.O.’s [District Officers] should put up their proposals which should be centrally coordinated and schemes drawn up.

(c) **Temporary roads/access roads, culverts, small bridges, drains/river clearing.**
These are not to be confused with large schemes. These are for kampongs and small communities and work is of a nature which can be carried out locally by organized local labour with technical supervision. Kampongs could be provided with simple drainage schemes, under advice of the Health and P.W.D., examples of which could be obtained if not already available.

(d) **Small water and electricity supply schemes.**
These consist of simple schemes – in the case of water by small dams with pumps etc. as in Tutong by having a scheme for kampong wells.

Rural electrification schemes can take time. In more dense areas of population generation can be provided by diesel engines. But maintenance is a real but not insuperable factor.

(e) Continued food relief and money payments according to need.

The above only serve as example[s]. Doubtless District Officers could and should be able to add to the list. These can be jointly considered. In addition to these, there are probably a small number of small schemes listed in the Development Plan which could be included in the Crash Programme such as possible [sic]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fresh Water Fish Pond</th>
<th>B. Item 11 (Page 13 of Dev. Plan)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some of these roads</td>
<td>D. “ 14”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River clearing</td>
<td>D. “ 15”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage hospital</td>
<td>E. Item 5</td>
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<td>Health Centres</td>
<td>E. “ 6” These could be made from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Clinics</td>
<td>E. “ 10” ARCON classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewage disposal</td>
<td>E. (Page 16 of Dev. Plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions to Malay School</td>
<td>F. Item 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s playgrounds</td>
<td>H. Items 1 (Page 18 of Dev. Plan) &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Organisation.

First it is necessary to appoint an effective working body which has the authority and the “know how” necessary to ensure financial approval, co-ordination, [and] vigorous execution.

It is therefore proposed that the Mentri Besar should be Chairman of a Development and Welfare Emergency Committee as follows :-

Mentri Besar
District Officers
State Financial Officer or representative
State Medical Officer or representative
State Forest Officer or representative
Commissioner of Lands
Commissioner of Development
Government Economic Adviser
State Welfare Officer.

Indeed the same Committee, in the absence of a Development Board could also consider Development Plan projects as long as this in no way impeded the speed of the CRASH PROGRAMME.

As a second step District Officers and all concerned should put up their individual programmes, giving

(a) nature of scheme
(b) description and factors
(c) locality
(d) need
(e) finance
(f) method of implementation
(g) timing etc.

Priorities and finance should then be awarded by the Committee. Subsequent meetings should be given progress reports, action taken, difficulties etc.

Co-ordination is vital to this Scheme. A person of both experience and authority, [sic] should be appointed as the Mentri Besar’s Staff Officer[,] Emergency Development and Welfare.

Such schemes, if acted upon will become evidence and proof of Government’s intentions, and will help very considerably to restore morale and win back confidence.

5. Projection.

Such schemes should be fully publicised by all possible media. If they could be launched in each District by H.H. The Sultan, the Mentri Besar and by the Committee, with suitable speeches, rallies, talks, a great step forward will have been achieved.
P. H. Meadows
Deputy High Commissioner.

(TNA, CO 1030/1469, Item 406, “The Brunei Administration”, Undated Memorandum by the Deputy High Commissioner for Brunei, c. May, 1963)
APPENDIX III

The District Council Elections

The PRB’s Election Manifesto

PARTAI RAKYAT BRUNEI, KALIMANTAN UTARA

POLITICAL MANIFESTO

August, 1962

No. 1 POLITICS

Independence:

1963 has been set as [the] target date for national Independence: Unitary States of Kalimantan Utara:

To fight for the establishment of [the] Unitary States of Kalimantan Utara (British North Borneo), independent both internally and externally, and to recognise the Sultan of Brunei as a Constitutional Head of State.

Malaysia:

With regard to Malaysia, the Peoples [sic] Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara will stick to its previous policy that is against the present concept of Malaysia as proposed by Tengku Abdul Rahman. Our opposition is based on the following.

a. National entity
b. Defence
c. Economic [sic]

Foreign Policy:

1. Neutral and active in the present world politics, that is neither siding [with] the West nor the East, but we shall have diplomatic relations with those who wish to be friendly with us.
2. Independent Brunei will remain as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.
3. Brunei will apply for membership of the United Nations as soon as national independence is proclaimed.
No. 2. ECONOMY

Sources of National Economy:

1. According to the present available statistics, production in the oil industry is declining. Therefore, attention should be focused to other sources of economy:

   a. Agriculture
   b. Forestry
   c. Fishery
   d. Other minerals

Small Industries:

The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara will find ways and means for the setting up of an Independent Economic Commission to investigate the possibility of starting small industries which are related to Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery and other minerals.

Standard of Living:

In the light of present acute standards of living of the people consisting of the labouring classes, the farmers and the fishermen in this country, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara will find ways and means of setting up an Independent Investigating Bureau to investigate reasons for the said difficulty and to find a way out.

Cooperative Societies:

As a progressive political party, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara realizes the existing economic imbalances between local [interests] and the foreign capital. Therefore, Partai Rakyat Brunei[,] Kalimantan Utara will encourage the growth of cooperative societies in Brunei.

Capital:

With regard to Brunei’s policy in foreign investment abroad, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara is of the opinion that a deep reconsideration will have to be made in the interest of [the] future economic development of this country.
**Rural Development:**

It is the prime intention and object of the People’s Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara to bring the peoples in the rural area of Brunei to enjoy the pleasures of the national wealth by introducing the following facilities:

- a. Cheap Housing
- b. Good roads and other mass communication system[s].
- c. Sufficient Water Supply.
- d. Sufficient Electricity Supply.
- f. Small shop Houses [sic] and markets.

All [of] those projects will be carried out on [a] collective basis, controlled by [the] Central Government and carried out by District Authorities.

**Education:**

In the light of weakness in the present education of the local children[,] the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara feels if [sic] necessary [to make] the introduction of changes in the present education policy [a priority] so that a new policy based on [the] national interest [will] be instituted in accordance with the trends of [the] time.

- d. [sic] In order to fill the gap of human resources in this country, and realizing the necessity of giving every body [sic] a chance to take part in the development of this country, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara will endeavour to establish the following vocational secondary [sic] schools:
  1. Agriculture Training School.
  2. Fishery College
  3. Technical School
  4. Arts and Crafts College.
Scholarship:

In the light of the small number of students receiving secondary education in this country, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara will seek ways and means of granting more scholarship[s] to them for further studies abroad without any discrimination [sic].

Teachers:

The shortage of trained teachers will be overcome by introducing more facilities for their further training. An endeavour also will be made to recruit more trained teachers.

Adult Education:

A mass adult education drive will be undertaken in order to eradicate illiteracy; so that every member of the society will be useful to the country and nation.

Labour:

Wages:

As the gap between wages and cost of living is extremely wide, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara will seek to narrow the difference by introducing new wages in accordance with individual cases, [on an] industry to industry basis.

Housing For The Labourers:

The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara is of the opinion that it is the social responsibility of all employers to house their workers in reasonably good accommodation.

Welfare and Pensions:

The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara is of the opinion that labour is the prime factor in any production and development. Therefore, the party feels it necessary to introduce the following welfare projects:

1. Reasonable pension to every worker
2. Proper medical attention including his family
3. Proper education for their children
4. Facilities to improve their education
5. Sufficient compensation for industrial accidents
6. Sufficient facilities for sports and entertainment
7. Promotions must be made on ability, talents and long services.

8. Pension scheme contributed both by the employer and employees.

Labour Legislation:

1. The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara[,] after considering the Trade Union Enactment and the Trade Disputes [Enactment,] 1961[,] found them most unsuitable with the present labour trend. Therefore, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara is of of [sic] opinion that necessary amendments will have to be made in order to justify the changes [in the industrial legislation].

2. The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara shall ask the Brunei Government to adopt and modify I.L.O. Conventions No: 84 and 95.

Social:

The People’s Welfare:

As it is the responsibility of government to look after the welfare of its citizens, the Peoples Party of Brunei is anxious to promote and protect the well being of the people of Brunei from the following angles:

1. Health and Medicinal provisions.

2. The establishment of Welfare Boards for the under-privileged children, pauper[s,] etc.

3. Will seek ways and means of building Civic Centres in all the districts [so] as to encourage youth taking active party [sic] in welfare work.

4. The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara and the general public will protect the [thus far] unmolested society against any prostitution brought about by yellow culture.

Culture and Religion:

It is the expressed desire of the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara to protect the Malay Culture as [the] National Culture in this country and that Islam [remains] as [the] official religion. In this respect, the party will endeavour to provide the following:
1. The setting up of [a] Pilgrimage Board whose main functions will be to ensure the well being of pilgrims in their journey to and from Mecca.

2. To increase the number of Religious teachers together with an endeavour to improve their knowledge and also to promote their standard of living.

3. To propagate the teaching of Islam in this country without touching any other religion.

4. The Board of Film Censorship in this country should be constituted by representatives of the various social organisations, officials from the Religious Department, and Government Officials. And there shall be only one Film Censor[ship] Board.

**Administration:**

Administration is the life of any Government and because of that the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara is of the opinion that it should be free from any political controversy, family system and favouritism.

The recruitment of officers into the Civil Service should be through free competition and based on experience and qualifications.

Being a progressive political party, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara is anti-bureaucracy. In that respect, it feels it necessary to decentralise the administration into the various district controls.

As a party fully supported by the people and the voice of the people, the Peoples Party of Brunei is of the opinion that there should be an Anti-Corruption Bureau to combat corruption in all aspects.

The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara is of the opinion that it should, and will endeavour to pave the way for mutual understanding and cooperation between the civil servants and the general public in the interest of national development.
In order to fill the administration with local officers, the Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara will seek ways and means of training the locals in accordance with his individual talents, so that they will be able to become good administrators.

Freedom:

The Peoples Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara feels that the introduction of the Public Order Enactment 1962 by the Brunei Government was contrary to the following fundamentals of democracy:

1. Freedom of speech
2. Freedom to organization
3. Freedom to sound [out] public opinion
4. Freedom to adhere to any political conviction
5. Freedom from fear.

And, in the light of the present harmony, peace and prosperity in this country and the absence of any public disorder, it is clear that the introduction of the Public Order Enactment has the sole purpose of suppressing the national movement in this country which is now fighting for national independence by constitutional means.

Conclusion:

To the people as a whole, we from the Central Executive Committee of the People’s Party of Brunei, Kalimantan Utara appeal to all to be in [a] state of peace, adhering to the principles of the party (and) [sic] to support the contents of this manifesto.

(Haji Zaini Haji Ahmad (Ed.), 1987, Partai Rakyat Brunei: The People’s Party of Brunei – Selected Documents / Dokumen Terpilih, Insan, the Institute for Social Analysis, Petaling Jaya, pp. 161-7.)

A speech made by Azahari in the week leading up to the elections

Brunei Town—Inche A.M. Azahari, leader of the Brunei Party Ra’ayat, told a rally of about 6,000 people here on Tuesday that a 25-member commission appointed by the
Sultan to examine the terms for Brunei’s entry into Malaysia did not have a mandate from the people.

He said that the commission, appointed a few days ago, had no right to represent Brunei.

Despite heavy rain, an exuberant crowd gave Inche Azahari a vociferous welcome following his recent absence from the state.

The party leader said that not one member of the Malaysian commission had the right to sit on that body.

Referring to a statement by Tun Abdul Razak (Malaya’s Deputy Premier) in Jesselton that Brunei might enter Malaysia before Sarawak and North Borneo, Inche Azahari said that if Malaysia was forced on the people of Brunei he would have no choice but to quit the party leadership.

He added that he would not hand over authority to other party leaders such as Inche Hapidz Laksamana, Inche Jassin Affandy or Inche Zaini Haji Ahmad. He would quit and would not transfer the people’s mandate that he held to anyone else.

It would be up to the people of Brunei, he said, to face the consequences, even though he, as a peace-loving citizen, would never agree to, or would like to see, the blood of the people of Brunei flow.

Referring to Tun Razak’s Jesselton statement, the party leader said that the Malayan leader had flouted the rules of decent protocol by indicating what Brunei’s action might be. This was up to the Sultan and not Tun Razak.

Inche Azahari said that even if the Malaysia concept had been accepted in principle, he hoped that the Sultan as “a wise ruler” would consult his subjects before committing the state to enter Malaysia.

Referring to the Public Order Enactment recently passed by the Legislative Council (now dissolved pending the outcome of this week’s elections), Inche Azahari said that the present administration of Brunei did not have the support of the people and this was the reason for the introduction of such a bill.
He said that the legislation had been drafted to suppress the national aspirations of the people and if he was called upon to suffer imprisonment for the sake of the people he was ready for it.

Inche Azahari told the crowd that he had been imprisoned during the days of the British administration and it could be that the present Brunei administration, in which he had many friends, could imprison him as well.

At this point, the crowd shouted: “If Azahari goes to jail, then we shall follow him.”

He said that the Party Ra’ayat would fight to the end for a federation of the three British Borneo territories.

(The Borneo Bulletin, “They Jailed Me Before – I’m Ready Again for People’s Sake: Azahari”, 1 September, 1962, p. 1)

The Results of the District Council Elections

Brunei-Muara District

Muara          Abd. Latif bin Adi (PRB)
Pulaie Salambigar  Mohamad bin Jamaluddin (PRB)
Berakas         Awang Tengah bin Hasip (PRB)
Sengkurong      Lakim bin Haji Bakar (PRB)
Tanjong Nangka  Haji Gharif bin Haji Mangol (PRB)
Kuala Brunei    Md. Zain bin Md. Tali (PRB)
Dato Gandi      Md. Yasin bin Abd. Rahman (PRB)
Padang          Pg. Hj. Yussof bin Pg. Md. Limbang (PRB) 181
                Awang Ali bin Haji Abu Bakar (Ind) 33
                (Informal Votes) 4
                (Total Votes Cast / Enrolled Voters) 218 / 251
Gadong          Jais bin Haji Karim (PRB)
Batu Satu       Mahmud bin Md. Salleh (PRB)
Kilanas         Othman bin Haji Karim (PRB)
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<td>Haji Mohamed bin Haji Bakar (PRB)</td>
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<td>Sumbiling</td>
<td>Zaini bin Haji Ahmad (PRB)</td>
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<td>Haji Hasbollah bin Haji Daud (BUP)</td>
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<td>Abd. Wahab bin O.K. Md. Safar (PRB)</td>
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<td>Mohamad Akip bin Abd. Ghani (PRB)</td>
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<td>Md. Tajin bin Awang Jaya (PRB)</td>
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<td>Iek bin Talipudin (PRB)</td>
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<td>AwangMohd. Zain bin Serudin (PRB)</td>
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<td>Lamunin</td>
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Kuala Abang
Sabtu bin Hassan (PRB) 67
Awang Abang bin Sahat (Ind) 35
(Informal Votes) 2
(Total Votes Cast / Enrolled Voters) 263 / 274

Ukong
Bakri bin Haji Md. Serudin (PRB) 130
Kimat bin Luang (Ind) 61
Bin Chin bin Bundan (Ind) 86
(Informal Votes) 1
(Total Votes Cast / Enrolled Voters) 278 / 399

Rambai
Damit bin Salleh (PRB) 68
Marican bin O.K. Andoo (Ind) 65
Pengiran Suahili bin Talip (BNO) 0
(Informal Votes) 10
(Total Votes Cast / Enrolled Voters) 143 / 173

Benutan
Md. Yusof bin Tengah (PRB) 23
Resil bin Haji Lahad (Ind) 9
(Informal Votes) 0
(Total Votes Cast / Enrolled Voters) 32 / 34

Belait District
Sungai Liang
Payong bin Buri (PRB) 196
Bundan bin Lajah (Ind) 23
(Informal Votes) 4
(Total Votes Cast / Enrolled Voters) 223 / 229

Pekan Seria
Hanafi bin Md. Daud (PRB)

Lorong Tiga
Lamzi bin Idris (PRB)

Lorong Empat-Lima
Ibrahim bin Ghani (PRB)

Marina
Pengiran Apong bin Pengiran Jamaludin (PRB)
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Ujong Jalan  
Misir bin Karuddin (PRB)  84  
Ibrahim bin Haji Ismail (Ind)  31  
(Informal Votes)  0  
(Total Votes Cast / Enrolled Voters)  115 / 123

Belaban  
Bukong bin Udan (PRB)

Amo  
Embun anak Tarang (PRB)

APPENDIX IV

Accounts of the Training of the TNKU

*Extract from The Borneo Bulletin of 26 May, 1962*

LAWAS (Sarawak). — A mysterious Indonesian-led “Borneo Liberation Army” of about 1,000 men may be hiding in the jungle near here – or may be encamped on Indonesian territory, close to the Sarawak border, ready to march into British Borneo, according to many sources in this region.

About 100 young men from the British Borneo territories, the sources state, have left their homes in the territories to join the armed force.

Natives in the border villages of Long Samado [sic] and Bah Kalalan this week reported seeing about 100 young men, all from the British area, passing through their villages.

They said that the group was led by Indonesians and that the party was heading towards the Indonesian administrative capital of Tangong Selor, near Tarakan.

The young men, according to the Natives, said that they were going to Indonesia to be trained to carry out an armed struggle to “liberate the Borneo territories.”

The Natives added that the force was composed of Malays, Muruts, Ibans and other races.

In their march, the sources said, the young men had slept in the jungle and had seldom emerged into habited areas until they had reached the villages lying close to the Indonesian border.

The Natives feared that the force, bolstered by the armed Indonesians, would wage guerilla warfare in the British Borneo jungles.

One Native source said that a member of the group of young men had told him that the force would march into Brunei territory.

**So far, no trace of the mysterious “Borneo Liberation Army” of Indonesians has been found in the Sarawak jungles around Lawas.**

One report said that a police patrol had been sent into the jungle some days ago.
Muruts in Long Samado and Bah Kalalan said this week that they had not seen any armed Indonesians in their area.

They added that Indonesian traders frequently visited their villages, but that no armed men had been spotted.

**Official sources said that there had been rumours of an armed force hiding in the jungle but that there had been no confirmation from any source.**


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**Extract from an intelligence report**

1. There is evidence that during the past seven months, up to ten groups of persons from Brunei and possibly the Fifth Division Sarawak have visited Indonesian Borneo, possibly for military training. Documents recovered from “transit camps” in the Fifth Division Sarawak and in Brunei indicate that these groups of persons had connections with Party Rakyat Brunei and with A.M. AZAHARI, President of Party Rakyat Brunei. Enquiries in North Borneo have revealed that at least one of these groups passed through North Borneo territory en route to Indonesia some time in May 1962 and returned by the same route to Brunei in mid-June 1962. Recent information from Brunei indicates that there is a group of Party Rakyat Brunei personnel now undergoing some form of training in Djakarta. Members of this group left Brunei via an overland route through Indonesian Borneo. One person now in Djakarta has appealed to AWANG HIDUP, with whom he lived formerly and also to ABDULLAH JAAFAR for financial assistance.

(TNA, CO 1030/932, Item 10B, Appendix A to North Borneo Local Intelligence Committee Report – November 1962, 28 November, 1962, para. 1)
Extract from a Savingram from the Governor of North Borneo

We have arrested eleven Sarawak natives who were returning through North Borneo from Kalimantan.

2. Preliminary interrogation of three of them reveals the following:

They are Kedayans from Merapok in Lawas District of Sarawak. In December 1961 a Brunei visited their village and formed a Youth Front of Partai Rakyat called Barisan Pemuda.

In March/April this year they were selected for training in Kalimantan. They travelled through North Borneo secretly and after 17 days reached Long Berang in Indonesia where they joined a party of 46. None from North Borneo. They stayed 11 days and had military training.

In May/June they moved to a place named Paking where they stayed two months.

While they were there an Army Lieutenant and a Police Officer questioned them and told them that as they had no travel documents they must return to Sarawak; and the District Officer gave them supplies for the return journey. But their own leader told them to remain.

Shortly afterwards in July they moved to Pulau Sapi near Malinau to a secret clearing.

In September they were again visited by an Army patrol and ordered back to Sarawak. Again their own leader told them to remain as no orders had been received from “the Top”.

Three days later an Army Captain, the Police Chief, the District Officer and an escort of ten soldiers arrived and asked why they had not returned. The Captain explained that he had no instructions to train them nor did they have any letters of authority from their leader, Azahari, with whom he seemed familiar. He again ordered them to return to Sarawak.
The following day 18 of them started back and reached the Tenom district of North Borneo on December 12th where they were arrested.

(TNA, CO 1030/1013, Item 145, Savingram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Governor of North Borneo, No. 1171, 22 December, 1962)

Extract from an unpublished White Paper

5. Two groups of men from Brunei and Sarawak are known to have travelled by overland routes to Indonesian Borneo (Kalimantan). The first group of 20 left for Kalimantan via Sarawak territory in January 1962 and a second group of 46 left in April 1962 via North Borneo territory. This group was escorted by an Indonesian named Omar bin Alibasah and two other Indonesians named Hassan bin Alibasah and Besma bin Alibasah, who took up residence in Lawas in Sarawak in 1961, posing as crocodile hunters. Sebeli bin Daud, a TNKU leader in the Lawas area who was arrested in November 1962, stated that he first heard of the TNKU from Omar bin Alibasah. (It is known that Omar bin Alibasah also acted as guide to the first party which left for Kalimantan in January 1962.) Haji Mohamed bin Haji Manggol (known in Indonesia as Haji Muhammad Mongol), Azahari’s “liaison officer” in Djakarta, who was to take the group on to Djakarta, failed to appear at the rendezvous. The group was given four days’ elementary training by a local Indonesian Assistant District Officer in Long Berang. Its members remained for several months at Paking and Pulau Sapi in the Malinau area, but in September 1962 an Indonesian Army Captain told them to go home and said he was not authorised to give them further training unless they could produce a letter of introduction from Azahari. (This information was obtained from 12 of the group who were captured in December 1962 in Sabah while on their way back from Kalimantan to Brunei and Sarawak.[])

(TNA, FO 371/169901, Item 1061/91, “Recent Developments in Anglo-Indonesian Relations including a Record of Indonesian Activities Concerning Sarawak, Sabah and Brunei, Part II: Indonesian Activities in the Former British Borneo Territories”, September, 1963, pp. 13-4)
Excerpt from *Escape from Berakas! 1962 Brunei Revolt*

Brig-Gen. Mesir had to send the first batch of TNKU recruits for training to Indonesia as soon as possible. The problem was finding someone familiar with the jungle terrain. The solution came from the jungle. While passing from one village to another, they learnt that a crocodile-hunter, Omar Mohammad Shah (Omar Bashya) from Kampong Tanah Tidong, East Kalimantan was seen in the vicinity of Lawas (Sarawak). Omar Mohammad Shah, who traded in crocodile skins, had come with three friends to hunt crocodiles in the Murut village of Sungei Terusan, about a day’s walk from Mesir’s village. Mesir stayed two nights with his Murut friend, in Sungei Terusan, Balan bin Sukan who had a lovely daughter working as a nurse in the nearest town. At the river-bank, beneath the shady trees Mesir met with Omar Mohammad Shah who slept in his perahu (wooden boat) with the spears for killing crocodiles. Omar was tall and dark, about forty-five years old. He agreed to act as guide to the 26 ‘recruits’ and Mesir paid him $8000/= including expenses for the 26 ‘anak-anak’ (children).

The 26 TNKU recruits were Daud and Ghafar bin Burut, Abdul Latif Pangis (born on 18 July 1935 in Kiarong and became a teacher in 1954), Cikgu Jaafar bin Ghafor, Sahbudin bin Haji Damit, Jumat bin Hussain, Salam bin Badar, Bahar Azahari bin Limen, Abdul Ghani bin Miasan, A. Jaludin bin Sulaiman, Jaya, Igat, Bana and Saging anak Tarang (4 Iban brothers), Azur and Boking Apol, Daing (an Iban, later, suspected of involvement in Communist activities and was shot dead by the Indonesian Army), Banyan, Silan Tong, Taku Mogul, Gaing Lasong, Baha bin Momin (later, Captain), Hamdan bin Taha, Ahmad, Abdul Karim and Paya.

It was already February 1962. It would take them 21 days to reach the East Kalimantan border. Since the Murut Tribe often killed unknown strangers in the thick jungle they were warned not to pass through Murut villages. They passed through Long Pa’sia and Pa’Matang (North Borneo), then into Indonesian Kalimantan through Terusan, Ruap, Ruan Sepakui, Long Ugang, Long Lutuk, Long Keberanggan, Long Luping, Long Semadu, Baklalan, Long Bawan, Long Kiwan, Pa’Upan, Pa’Dalan, Pa’Kapar, Pa’Orang, Long Sumbiling and
Malinau. According to Mesir, everything went well but when they reached Tarakan, Omar the crocodile-hunter vanished with the money apparently to join his wife in the village of Tanah Tidong. The 26 TNKU recruits were not only deserted but were summarily arrested by the Indonesian Army. They were detained for one month in the Army Camp in Tarakan.

Actually, a reception committee for the 26 TNKU recruits had been arranged in Jakarta. Muhammad Manggol and four others were supposed to receive the 26 TNKU recruits upon their arrival in East Kalimantan border and secretly arrange for their departure to Jakarta by plane. In Jakarta they would undergo proper military training. Mohamad Manggol had been given a certain amount of money, a .9mm. military revolver and a few rounds of ammunition. In July 1962 he was given $17000. Then, when he returned to Brunei he was given another $5000. Haji Yusuf Tamit who was Treasurer of Underground Movement gave the money to Yusuf Abdul who then handed it to Manggol, as witnessed by Mesir. He was admonished not to shoot it \textbf{[the revolver]} unless it was very important because this was a secret mission, not known even to Gen. Suharyo, C-in-C of East Kalimantan . . . But Muhammad Manggol caused a stir. When he arrived in East Kalimantan and found his way to the border he acted suspiciously and started cracking a few pistol shots aimlessly so the locals reported to Gen. Suharyo who then sent a few soldiers to arrest him. Muhammad Manggol was detained for a few months.

This Indonesian undertaking of military training of TNKU recruits obviously had not received the green light from Sukarno otherwise Gen. Suharyo would not have arrested Mohamad Manggol. It was a secret among a few generals. Even if Gen. Nasution had received the green light from Sukarno they would not have considered the undertaking as Interference in the Internal Affairs of a neighbouring country. Sukarno could not care two hoots for such UN-sponsored principles. He had made himself loud and clear as to the direction of his sympathies at both Afro-Asian Conference in 1955 (Government-to-Government Level) and 1960 (People-to-People Level) in Bandung, Java. Sukarno acted on the basis of Elimination of Colonialism as declared in 1945. Azahari saluted Sukarno for this.
Thus, the TNKU training program was disrupted. The 26 TNKU recruits were released only after Azahari’s arrival and intervention in Jakarta. The 26 were sent back to Long Barang. From there they trekked to Kampong Merapok, Lawas in Limbang District (Sarawak). From here, group leader Daud bin Burut headed for Brunei and promptly reported to Yasin Affandy. Mesir Karuddin followed Yasin Affandy’s instructions which came from Azahari, and told Daud not to come back to Brunei. They were ordered to proceed to Indonesia again but the recruits refused to budge from Kampong Merapok. Azahari himself then went to Kampong Merapok and personally ordered the 26 to go back to Indonesia, this time with 20 additional recruits from Temburong, and Kilanas.

Some of the additional 20 were Hasan and Abdul Kadir bin Jais (brothers), Sulaiman bin Ahmad, Sulaiman bin Timbang, Talib bin Jamudin, Jumat, Hasyam, Kula, Manggul, Badar bin Dangang, Abdul Gani bin Metussin, Asur, Jamahat bin Haji Mahmud, Puan, Sidek bin Yahya, Duap bin Pengiran Bakar, Moksin bin Abdul Atai and Sirat bin Tahir. The three Indonesian reccees were Umar Ali Basya, Hassan and Ugoi. According to Latif Pangis the 46 headed for Indonesia and finally stopped at Long Kemanci. Here, they were met by Captain Bambang Sekiju, the District Commandant (Panglima Daerah) of Balikpapan. The 46 requested Captain Bambang Sekiju for political asylum, to be sent to Irian Barat (West Irian) or to be shot rather than be sent back to Brunei as they had not attained their objectives. All their three requests were refused. Finally, the 46 went into hiding in Long Kemanci for 5 months. They had to live throughout the drought under terrible conditions. In the end, Bakar bin Ghafar, Cikgu Latif Pangis, Ghani Hasan and Jamaludin were forced to go back to Brunei. As soon as they arrived in Brunei in December 1962 they were detained.

According to Abdul Gani Metussin who was in the second batch of TNKU recruits, “In April 1962 we were sent off from Ranting Parit, then to Kilanas and there onto a perahu which brought us to Merapok. At Merapok we met with the first batch of TNKU recruits. Merapok is on the Sabah-Sarawak border. After 5 hours on a speedboat we left the open sea and entered into Sungei Merapok at 0600 hours. We stayed overnight in a camp at Merapok, prepared earlier by the first batch. On the second night we packed the rations given by PRB
which consisted of rice, salted fish, sugar, medicines and torchlights and left Merapok. It took us one month to traverse thick jungles on the Sabah-Sarawak border before we reached Indonesian territory in the night, where we spent the night in the jungle in secret.

Before reaching Indonesian territory we passed through Kampung Tagal Melikan, a village of the Tagal tribe. Our head of group asked the Tagal villagers the direction towards Indonesian territory but we were met with hostile silence. The villagers regarded us as town dwellers and illegal visitors. There was a primary school but even there the teachers and school children remained silent. The village husbands and youths hid in their houses. They wanted to blowpipe (menyumpit) us. If we had misbehaved they would have used the blowpipe with its poisoned darts against us. They were wearing ordinary, modern clothes. It was morning, between 0500 – 0600 hours. One old man was feeding his chickens and pigs and he also refused to answer our question. At last, one handicapped man who was crawling on his hands and knees showed us the way to Pa’sia. We gave him $5. Manggol (no relation of Mohammad and Garip Manggol) and Omar Bashya were good at hypnotizing people (memukau), otherwise the Tagal villagers would have been much more hostile.

After a day’s walk we reached Pa’sia at 1800 hours. We continued walking without a rest. If we had put up in Pa'sia we might have been pursued by the Tagals as they probably knew we were from Brunei. The Brunei Police had informed the people of the Interior in Sarawak and Sabah to tell the whereabouts of the TNKU group. So, we had to head fast for Indonesia and try to step into Indonesian territory soonest possible. We put up the night in a kawasan (space).

The next day we reached Long Tepadang at 1400 hours. We stayed at the house of the Penghulu of Suku (Tribe) Murut. In Indonesian, Suku is Putok. But the Penghulu was not at home when we arrived. As there were many of us and the house was not big our group had to split. Ten of us stayed in the house – Jaya, Igat and Jaya Tarang, Bana, Bukiing Ipol, Ilan Tong, Bonoan Tadam, Riang, and Lawe and myself. Teko Mogol, Omar Bashya, Ugoi (Omar Bashya’s nephew) and the rest went into the jungle. When Penghulu Baru reached home from work, probably from the padi (rice) fields, he was very angry upon seeing the TNKU
group. He asked, ‘Ini dari mana? (From where?)’. We replied, ‘We’re from Sabah.’

Penghulu Baru was not taken in, ‘... (I know that all of you are from Brunei, PRB people. We received a letter of instruction from Lawas Police Station to take action if you people were seen or stopped over at any district in Indonesia. The letter says: We ask the inhabitants and village headmen to cooperate by giving reports, even arrest these people. Surrender them to the nearest Sarawak Police).’ I saw that letter with the chop of Sarawak Police, placed near the door. The Inspector of Lawas Police Station was a Murut called Tuan Raut. The Penghulu refused to listen to us so we had to call Omar Bashya. When Omar Bashya came he discussed with the Penghulu. And only then, Penghulu Baru did not dare take any action against us. Then the Penghulu entertained us and allowed us to stay in his house. He called in his anak-anak buah (nephews and nieces) to give us food – rice, vegetables and chicken eggs. It was a longhouse where 5 families lived. We were there only one night.

The following morning we walked from Long Tepadang towards Long Ladam (a Murut name) in a larger district. There was a primary school. The Penghulu of Long Ladam village was nice to us but maybe he did’nt get that letter of instruction. We stayed there for 3 nights in 3 different houses, including the Penghulu’s. From Long Ladam we walked to Long Kalipal and spent a night in the houses of villagers. In the morning we went to Long Temaroh, followed by a day’s walk to Nan Sarang. From there, another day’s walk to Long Berang which came under a district (chamat). At Long Berang we stayed a month in the house of Pendita Akal, a Christian priest. We did’nt talk much and we were just regarded as guests. We always maintained that we were from Sabah and Sarawak but some of the others said we were from Brunei. When we first arrived there the Indonesian equivalent of D.O., the Pechamat, the Christian Mully Aking was not there as he had gone to a meeting of D.O.s in Terakan [Tarakan]. Mully Aking was tall, thin and hunched but handsome, sociable and gentle, still in his 40s. So, we asked for permission from the Assistant D.O. named Simutang who allowed us to stay. We stayed there because in Long Berang we received a letter from PRB HQ in Brunei. The letter said that we could meet there with the representative from the Centre (Pusat) in Jakarta. The D.O. whom we referred to as Pechamat came to Long Berang.
He arrived from Terakan and told us that he had received some news from the Military Commandant in Terakan. It seemed that Mohammad Manggol couldn’t make it to Long Berang and had asked us to go to Long Kemanchi.

But after we arrived in Long Kemanchi, Muhammad Manggol was nowhere to be seen. The only indication that he had been there at all was a packet of salted fish (ikan masin) hanged by Muhammad Manggol on the branch of a tree, near the river Sungei Long Kemanchi. You see, we had brought rations as well as 2 guides from Long Berang, as instructed by Pechamat Mully Aking. The Military in Terakan informed the Military in Malinau to tell the guides where to find the packet of salted fish. On the only one night that we slept in Long Kemanchi there was a sudden heavy rain. There was no time to set up camp so we slept on the banks of the river which was 60 feet long. Most of us, including me, became feverish and had diarrhoea but we had no medicines. There was still no sign of Muhammad Manggol (who was supposed to bring us to Jakarta for military training) so we were forced to find the perahu, the boats of the Punan people, to go to Malinau. There was only one perahu so Omar Bashya went alone. At Malinau, Omar Bashya met with the military commandant and enquired the whereabouts of Muhammad Manggol as the ‘rombongan anak-anak Brunei’ (group of Brunei children) had already arrived in Long Kemanchi. Omar Bashya came back with the military commandant and several boats and we were transferred from Long Kemanchi to Paking.

It was called Kampung Paking as it was a village of Punan people. In Paking we finished our rations and supplies so for one week we didn’t eat anything as we stayed in the houses of the Punan people. The Punan people ate various plants, bananas, tapioca and animals which they hunted and did not have enough to offer us. I forgot, from Long Kemanchi we went to Kuala Jempulon (Jempulan), then to Paking. The military commandant said we were to stay temporarily there. We depended on the supplies we had brought from Long Berang. After the one week of hunger in Paking, a representative of the Military, Bodol who was rounded and still in his 40s brought food, rice, salt and sugar for us which lasted a week. We had only rice and water [what some Malay villagers call nasi itek or duck’s rice] then followed by
another week of hunger and then another delivery of food. We were then transferred to the island of Pulau Sapi in Long Kemanchi, inhabited by the Murut Tribe.

We stayed in Pulau Sapi for 2 months. While there we had 3 visits from Panglima (Military Commandant) Captain Bambang Sekiju who resided and came from Ibu Patin (equivalent of Governor, maybe) in Belungan. Captain Sekiju asked us anak-anak Brunei where we wanted to go. So, our group leader, Gafar bin Gapor briefed Captain Sekiju. He said, ‘We came here for our struggle to liberate Brunei.’ We had been promised that we’d meet Mohammad Manggol in the other 2 places and now we were forced to wait over a month for Muhammad Manggol on Pulau Sapi. On his second visit, Captain Sekiju was very angry. He barked, ‘You come here for your struggle. Why has’nt your Head of Centre, Muhammad Manggol come? Indonesia struggled earlier than you but we did’nt go abroad for training. Tenaga kita untuk merlawan Belanda menggunakan senjata bambu runching (Our capability in fighting the Dutch only relied on sharpened bamboo/bamboo spears as weapon)! Why are the Brunei people not following the footsteps of Indonesia in their struggle and military training?’ Gafar Gapor could’nt say anything and merely replied that these were the wishes of our leaders. Then, on his third visit Captain Sekiju urged us to go back to Brunei, to arrange for a representative to meet our leaders in Brunei in order to get the real, actual mandate. We then planned to elect 3 persons from 3 tribes: Murut, Iban and Melayu (Malay) thus it was myself, Daing Uding and Asim respectively. I was not in the house when Captain Sekiju visited us so I don’t really remember how he looked like. We were given rations and then we went back to Jempulan and onto Long Bawan in a boat brought by Bodol, where we put up for 2 nights. We then headed for Long Bawan.

At Long Bawan we met Pechamat Agong. We discussed, we asked for advice as to how to get to Baklalan in a Sarawak district. The 4 nights we were there we stayed at Kampung Bidok Kinangan on the Indonesian-Sarawak border. Incidentally, on 17 August; I remember someone from Baklalan who was going to Long Bawan to do some trading, he bought buffaloes and goats (kerbau and kamping) which he then sold in Lawas, Sarawak – his name was Tagal Anak Parang. He was in his 40s, fair, with an elongated face and medium, small
Tagal was looking for someone to herd his buffaloes and goats, bought in Baklalan, up to Lawas. Actually, he didn’t know we were from Brunei. We told him that we were from Indonesia looking for work and jobs in Lawas. He agreed and brought us along together with his child, a 12 year old boy. It took a whole day of walking from Bidok Kinangan to Baklalan. On our journey, much to our delight one goat became weak and could no longer walk so we gladly slaughtered and roasted it. Between the 5 of us we ate the whole goat. That night we stayed at the longhouse of the Ketua Kampong of Kampong Baklalan. When we arrived the whole family was worried (churiga) as they knew we were from Brunei. One of them said, ‘Don’t arrest them tonight.’ Tagal said, ‘Although they are from Brunei, let them get to Lawas first. In Lawas I’ll report to the police. I need them to be with my 2 buffaloes and 6 goats.’ His nephews wanted to arrest us as they knew from our gestures and mannerisms that we were from Brunei. Luckily, one Murut man told me, as I am a Murut, about this secret conversation. So the 3 of us, Daing Uding, Asim and myself discussed that night. We wanted to run away, to leave the place. We decided to escape when our hosts were fast asleep in the longhouse and fortunately there was heavy rain that night. At 0200 hours we crept away from the hard floor and headed back to Long Bawan.

We felt relieved when we stepped inside Indonesian territory again and continued towards Long Bawan where we stayed in Pechamat Agong’s house. There, we asked for advice as we couldn’t continue with our journey to Lawas. Pechamat Agong agreed and advised us to just go back to Malinau and report to the military commandant in Malinau. From Long Bawan we set out for Long Berang. Fortunately, in Long Bawan we found that our comrades who stayed behind in Pulau Sapi had arrived. Their objective was to go back to Brunei and Sarawak. I asked them, ‘Kenapa balek chepat-chepat ini? (Why are you going back so soon?)’ Latif Pangis replied, ‘... (We can’t stand not eating. We wait and still there are no developments from the Centre. It’s better to go back).’ It was still August. Those who went back to Brunei were Latif Pangis, Manggol, Paya, Jaludin, Gani Miasan and Sirat. Twenty of them were still left behind on Pulau Sapi.
Daing and I stayed behind for a month in Long Berang as Asim too followed them back to Brunei. After a month we went to Pulau Sapi and straight to Malinau and gave a report to the Military Commandant of Malinau. I told him that we had failed in our objective as we were almost arrested in Long Bawan. He accepted my report, then I was instructed to go back and join my comrades on Pulau Sapi. Twenty-two of us stayed on Pulau Sapi for another 5 months. We did’nt receive any aid and relied on our own efforts. We stayed in the huts of villagers as anak angkat (foster/step children). We cut grass, planted padi in rice fields, cleared banana trees and they gave us food in exchange. They were Muruts. We went into the jungle to look for rattan (rotan) and sold them to Pak Chik (Uncle) Bodol. One bundle or gulong of rotan comprised 30 strands, 3 metres long and fetched 250 rupiah (Indonesian currency). Some of us gathered 1 or 2 gulongs and some only half a gulong. I usually managed to gather 2 gulongs. We cut down old banana trees. We also bought bunches (tandan) of bananas at 10 rupiah each. As one tandan consisted of 10 handfuls (sisir) of banana we sold a sisir each for 5 rupiah at Malinau, thus making a profit of 40 rupiah. We used the trunks of old banana trees to make rafts. We were often harassed by the military staff as they asked us for our nice clothes in exchange for their uniforms, so we took their uniforms. At the end of 5 months we were bereft of our clothes. In order to visit the houses of other Muslims on Hari Raya day we had to take turns wearing the same pair of trousers. The first of us would come back after a morning call, change into a sarong and pass the trousers to the second person who went visiting in the afternoon and the same routine for the third comrade who went visiting in the evening. The other two would stay at home clad in sarong. We continued with such existence on Pulau Sapi until there were instructions and summons from the Centre in Jakarta.”

Meanwhile, back in Brunei TNKU recruits were trained in the late nights at the small camps of Temburong, Kuala Belait and even Brunei Town itself, right under the British nose. Captain Baha Mumin and Jaya were already trained in Indonesia earlier that year while Metussin was trained in Limbang. The TNKU officers appointed as Brigadier-Generals were Jais Haji Karim, Sheikh Osman bin Sheikh Mahmud, Zulkifli Abdullah and Mesir who was
earmarked to be Panglima (Commander). These three [sic] were to cover the area of Kuala Belait. Momin bin Ahmad was assigned to Seria, Abdul Hamid Khan was given Tutong, Haji Garib bin Haji Mangol in charge of Senkurong [sic], Haji Yusof bin Haji Tamid in charge of Muara, Abdul Latif bin Hadi and Pengiran Hitam (Black) bin Pengiran Burut were in charge of Temburong.

Two or three months before the Revolt they started buying ready-made jungle green uniforms or had them made at Chinese tailor shops in Tutong and Seria. Even if the Chinese tailors were a wee bit suspicious they dared not refuse for in Brunei the Malays would simply slap any Chinese who was rude to them. Some two weeks prior to the Revolt, the authorities were beginning to hear of PRB’s visits to the Chinese tailors. To complement the uniforms they piled up a stock of primitive weapons as they hoped to seize modern weapons from the police stations. Within two days pisaus (knives) and daggers were swept off the shelves of most hardware shops. There were now at least twenty dozen knives besides home-made parangs (iron choppers, some with curved ends) and axes, the former from the TNKU recruits who were rubber tappers, fishermen or rice farmers. Awang Yusof bin Awang Murshidi was only 12 years old at that time. While he was catching Merbok birds with his brother-in-law, Cikgu Haji Ibrahim, he observed the training sessions of TNKU recruits. The batch of thirty including Yusof’s father, Awang Murshidi bin Awang Tamin had their training sessions in the clearing in the woods two miles from their village, Kampung Tentayu in Limbang District. Some of the men came from Kampung Limpaku, Kampung Pinang and Kampung Bulantok. The training session took place between 1600 – 1800 hours after they had finished the day’s work in the padi fields. They had drilling and shooting practice with shotguns under their instructor, Cikgu Abdul Rahim. Altogether there were about seven training sessions. One day before the Revolt the thirty TNKU men had a bath of heated oil, slashed themselves with parangs and threw spears at each other to test their acquired powers of invincibility (ilmu kebal).

*Note:* Minor corrections to and clarifications of the text are bolded.
APPENDIX V

The TNKU’s Proclamation of Independence

PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

8 DECEMBER, 1962.

(Translation from the official original in Malay)

WHEREAS, in common with other subjected peoples of Africa and Asia, the People of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo immediately after the end of the last war clamoured for the restoration of their inalienable rights to National Freedom so long denied to them by the Colonial Powers;

WHEREAS, our determined, yet peaceful struggle for Independence was resisted by the British Colonial authorities by various tyrannical means including the banning of nationalist organizations and arresting their leaders;

WHEREAS, undaunted by this [sic] stern repressive measures, the leaders of the liberation movement organised the Party Rakyat in 1956 and from that time on this patriotic party was able to unify all the people of Brunei as well as extend its influence in Sarawak and North Borneo;

WHEREAS, the Party Rakyat in pursuance of its avowed policy of obtaining the Independence of Kalimantan Utara through peaceful and constitutional means, in January 1957 sent a Memorandum to the Colonial Secretary asking for reasonable political reforms; and this Memorandum was followed by an official delegation which held lengthy discussion[s] with the said Colonial Secretary[,] all to no avail;

WHEREAS, the Party Rakyat in spite of the growing discontentment among the people, continued to peacefully agitate for political reforms and independence until the British granted to the people of Brunei on September 29, 1959 a semi democratic constitution which guaranteed elections within [sic] two years from the date of its promulgation;
WHEREAS, when the date of the promised election came nearer, the British authorities in Brunei suddenly announced that the elections cannot be held as scheduled “due to certain unforeseen circumstances”.

WHEREAS, in the face of this treachery, the Party Rakyat continued to voice their protest by means of orderly, popular demonstrations until it succeeded in having the election held on July 21, 1962 [sic];

WHEREAS, in the election, the People of Brunei expressed their unconditional support and allegiance to the Party Rakyat by electing their official candidates to 54 of the 55 seats in the District Council and to all the 16 elective seats in the Legislative Council;

WHEREAS, when this first elected legislative Council [sic] was about to meet last December [sic] 5, the Party Rakyat presented to... [sic] the government three major motions for inclusion in the agenda, namely: (1) a motion rejecting the concepts of the Federation of Malaysia; (2) a motion asking the British Government to restore the sovereignty of the Sultanate of Brunei over her former territories of Sarawak and North Borneo; and (3) a motion urging the British Government to federate the three territories of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo under the Unitary State of Kalimantan Utara with Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin as its constitutional and parliamentary Head of State and the granting of complete and absolute Independence to this new State not late [sic] than 1963;

WHEREAS, the British authorities[,] knowing that these motions will be carried out because the Party is in control of all the elected seats in the assembly, exerted through a seconded Malayan Attorney General, political pressure on the Speaker of the Brunei Legislative Assembly, who is appointed by the Sultan with the consent of the British authorities, and compelled the said Speaker to reject the inclusion of these important motions from the Agenda;

WHEREAS, not content with this rejection, the British authorities twice postponed the proposed meeting of the Assembly, first sitting [sic, citing] the date on December 13\textsuperscript{th} and then on December 19\textsuperscript{th};
WHEREAS, in the meanwhile the Party Rakyat received reliable reports that the British and Malayan governments have decided to proclaim the Federation of Malaysia before the end of this year[,] even against the wishes of the citizens of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo;

WHEREAS, the forced incorporation of our territories and people into the artificial Federation of Malaysia would be tantamount to replacing the rusty iron chains of British bondage that shackles our people with the new steel chains manufactured by the neo-colonialists, a mere matter of changing masters for the slaves;

WHEREAS, the callous and inhuman disposition [sic, imposition] on countries and whole nations by the colonial powers is in direct contravention of the principle of self-determination as set forth in the United Nations Declaration of December 14, 1960, which specifically provides in its paragraph 5, as follows: “Immediate steps shall be taken in Trust and Non-Self Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservation, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom[”];

WHEREAS, In [sic] face of this imminent threat to our people’s liberty and to our national security, and before we are sold into a darker and more terrifying bondage, the people of Kalimantan Utara have decided to exercise their inherent and undeniable rights to freedom and self-preservation.

THEREFORE, the acknowledged leaders of the people of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo, meeting in the name of Liberty, Justice and Humanity, have this day, December 8, 1962, solemnly [sic] proclaimed the absolute and complete Independence of Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara with Sultan Umar Ali Saifuddin as the Constitutional and Parliamentary Head of State, hereby sincerely enjoy [sic, enjoin] all freedom-loving nations to extend to our New State their recognition and assistance in the name of International friendship and the Universal brotherhood of men.
APPENDIX VI

Accounts of the Rebellion

An Account of Events in Brunei Town and Pekan Tutong by 1/2GR

EVENTS 8 AND 9 DECEMBER 1962

BRUNEI AND TUTONG

1. Background 8 December 1962

At 0500 hours on 8 December 1962 1/2 GR received a Warning Order to have a small Force Headquarters and two Companies (referred to as Initial Force) ready to move to BRUNEI for Internal Security duties by 1600 hours. At 0930 hours the force was ordered to be ready to move as soon as possible, and by midday the whole Battalion was ordered to move as aircraft became available. Force Headquarters and one Company reported to SELETAR by 1230 hours, and the first chalk from there took off at 1500 hours 15 minutes after the follow up troops of the Initial Force had left CHANGI. The Main Body left during the evening and night 8/9 December.

2. The directives given to the Initial Force and Battalion Commander, [sic] made them responsible for assisting the Civil Administration in the maintenance and restoration of law and order in BRUNEI (and in the latter case SARAWAK also), working under the direction of the Commissioner of Police BRUNEI (and in the latter case KUCHING). Attention was drawn to the pamphlet “Keeping the Peace”.

3. In the original Intelligence Brief it was stated that the BRUNEI Police Station had been attacked by a crowd of 100 at first light on 8 December. After the Initial Force had left a further Intelligence Brief revealed that there had been 1 Police and six rebel casualties.

4. Arrival BRUNEI 8 December

The first troops to arrive were a platoon of D Company from CHANGI (see paragraph 1) who touched down at the [Berakas] airfield from LABUAN at 1900 hours.
They reached the Police Station some 30 minutes before the Force and C Company Commanders with two more platoons. BRUNEI Town was quiet.

5. **Briefing**

The Force Commander was briefed by the Commissioner of Police and Deputy High Commissioner as follows:-

a. The Police Station had been attacked at 0200 hours on 8 December by approximately 300 armed men after an electricity cut.

b. There had also been attacks on the ISTANA and the MENTRI BESAR’s house.

c. All attacks had been repelled.

d. At first light the Police recaptured the Power Station and undertook mopping up operations, enemy casualty [sic] 11 killed, 24 wounded recovered.

e. The following areas were now defended by Police:-

   (1) The Airfield
   (2) The Police Station ) Town Area
   (3) The ISTANA
   (4) PANAGA and KUALA BELAIT Police Stations

f. A report had been received that an enemy force was moving to attack BRUNEI Town from LIMBANG by river, estimated time of arrival within 90 minutes.

g. Curfew was in force in BRUNEI Town.

6. **Tasks**

The tasks given to and agreed by the Force Commander were:

a. Recapture the SERIA oilfield area, relieving PANAGA Police Station.

b. Secure BRUNEI Town.

c. Restore law and order in the State.
7. By 2300 hours the Force Commander had under his command C Company Headquarters and two platoons, and two platoons of D Company who had arrived in small packets from the Airport in the dark.

8. **BRUNEI TOWN – Initial Action 8 December**

Mobile reconnaissance patrols were sent out into BRUNEI Town to enforce the curfew, one platoon of D Company was sent to the ISTANA, the other was deployed in defence positions within the Police Compound and C Company Headquarters and platoons were kept as mobile reserves.

9. At about 0030 on 9 December information was received that the rebels were to attack PANAGA Police Station, using Europeans as hostages. As reinforcements were expected within 2 hours C Company was sent off in requisitioned transport at 0100 hours with orders to:

   a. Shoot their way through SENKURONG [sic] and TUTONG (both said to be occupied by small rebel forces)
   
   b. Take ANDUKI Airstrip at first light
   
   c. Relieve PANAGA Police Station.

10. **C COMPANY – TUTONG 9 December**

At 0100 hours C Company moved off in 4 Public Work[s] Department vehicles with a Land Rover and trailer in the middle. They passed a road block and the enemy held SENKURONG Police Station without incident. A party of rebels dropped their weapons and raised their hands a little further on and were bypassed. A further road block was encountered and two rebels who raised their weapons were killed in passing. On reaching TUTONG Police Station enemy fire was opened on the convoy, and returned. The convoy sped on, and whilst passing two blocks of two-storey tenements (shop buildings overlooking the main road) were subjected to very heavy enemy fire from above, which was returned with equal vigour. The Land Rover driver was hit and crashed into a monsoon drain. The remainder of the Company, not knowing this, kept its way on. Company Headquarters took up a defensive position in the verandah of the enemy occupied building and having
recovered the wireless set, carried the two wounded men to an open fishmarket further down the road as a second defensive position, in the meantime having captured one armed rebel. Attempts by rebel and C Company patrols to find them during the night failed and Company Headquarters was relieved at first light.

TUTONG was taken that morning against little opposition, rebels digging in on the high ground above the Police Station fleeing on the first sight of troops in the distance. Two badly wounded rebels were found, who both have since died, and later captured rebels confirmed that 7 were killed and between 14 - 28 wounded.

11. Force Headquarters – BRUNEI 9 December

At about 0200 hours a man was reported to be crawling up a monsoon drain near the Government Building and a patrol was sent out to investigate. Up until this time everything had been quiet in BRUNEI Town. A few minutes later heavy fire broke out from the Government Building and the Post Office area. Fire was immediately returned by the patrol and police and troops in the police station, and half the platoon remaining in the Police Station moved quickly to the NORTH EAST side of the Police Compound perimeter. In doing this 1 Officer and 4 [other ranks] were wounded. Shortly afterwards a man returned [sic] from the patrol to give a location report, and the Force Commander and three men evacuated it by Land Rover. The patrol had been fired on at about 25 yards['] range from [the] Government Building, and casualties were 2 Officers and 4 [other ranks] wounded, of which 1 Officer and 1 Lance Corporal later died. Enemy casualties are as yet unknown except that a lot of blood was found later on the verandahs in the Government Building. (see paragraph 13), [sic]

12. D Company – Arrival and Action 9 December

In the meantime D Company Headquarters and two platoons had arrived. D Company Headquarters with one platoon reached the EAST end of the Government Building during the fire fight, and stopped in order not to come under fire from [its] own troops in what they presumed was the Police Station. Having established communications with Force Headquarters D Company made known its location by flashing the headlights of the leading
vehicle. No town maps were held by the Initial[,] or Main, Force. D Company was ordered to clear the Government Building from the EAST, at this time the position of the patrol from the Police Station not being known. The platoon had just started doing this when it was fired on from behind, and turned round to deal with the new threat. At the same time a patrol in jungle green was seen some 200 yards NORTH crossing the road along which D Company had come. With the possibility that it might be the patrol from the Police Station it was not engaged. D Company was then ordered to remain in its present positions till first light, about an hour later, and then to clear the town. At first light they did this – by first clearing the buildings EAST towards the river and then SOUTH towards the BRUNEI HOTEL. 14 prisoners taken in this part of the action turned out to be police and were later released. At the same time the remaining D Company platoon arrived from the Airport and was ordered to clear the Government Building. This part of the action was completed by 0715 hours (with 4 prisoners taken). By 0900 hours the whole action was completed, the following buildings having been cleared and sentries posted on the rooftops and top floors:

- Chartered Bank
- Government Building, covering Radio BRUNEI
- Post Office
- Telecoms Centre
- Power Station
- River Front
- Brunei Hotel.

13. Enemy killed during the night 8/9 December in BRUNEI Town by police/military action has been assessed by Special Branch to be 24 minimum.

14. **Action BRUNEI 9 December**

   Battalion Headquarters and the remainder of the Battalion, less A Company which had flown straight to Miri[,] arrived throughout the day, starting at 0900 hours. The Initial Force Commander, with the Acting and Deputy High Commissioners [sic], brought the SULTAN from the ISTANA to the Police Station where he stayed before moving to the
Government Buildings on 10 December. C Company was ordered to return to BRUNEI Town, the defence thereof now being priority 1, and arrived at 1500 hours with 106 prisoners and suspects. B Company was deployed in the NORTHERN part of the town, including EDINBURGH Bridge, and C Company in the SOUTHERN part with rooftop sentries on the dominating buildings, thus controlling the whole area including the water front and the bridge leading to the Residency. The defence of BRUNEI Town was complete and law and order restored.

15. The enemy, estimated to be 300-500 strong, did not again attack the town in force though several small attempts to do so were severely dealt with during the night 9/10 December.

(TNA, WO 305/2519, Annex D to Part III to Joint Periodic Intelligence Report No. 3: Covering period up to 2359 hours on Saturday, 19 January 1963, 21 January, 1963)

A report on the inquest into the death of Mr. Clifford Joseph

Kuala Belait

AN open verdict was returned by the State Coroner Inche Jaya bin Awang Latiff in court here on Tuesday at the end of a two-day inquest on Shell Civil Aviation employee Mr. Clifford Joseph, 36, who was killed at Panaga at the height of the Brunei rebellion on Dec. 8, last year.

Clifford Joseph was one of 46 hostages used by the rebels as a ‘human shield’ in an attack on Panaga Police headquarters that night after a previous attack from 4 am had been beaten off and an earlier attempt to obtain its surrender with hostages had failed.

In announcing his verdict Inche Jaya said that the rebels were ‘indirectly responsible’ for Joseph’s death.

NO BLAME

Inche Jaya absolved the police of any blame for Clifford Joseph’s death. He commended Dr. Allan Maclean of Shell’s medical services “for being active in his professional duties in spite of the danger he was in.”
Dr. Maclean, one of the hostages, had attended to the wounded while the firing was going on.

The Coroner also expressed the court’s sympathy for the family of Clifford Joseph.

Inche Jaya found that Clifford Joseph “died as the result of a bullet wound on his chest caused by person or persons unknown.”

A total of 32 witnesses were subpoenaed [sic], but only nine were called by the court. They were hostages who were by Joseph’s side when he was shot or had attended to him and later buried his body.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Mr. Ram Kishan conducted the inquest.

First witness called was Mr. C.M.W. Fern, officer in charge of Brunei Shell’s Transport Section during the rebellion who detailed [the] events of the morning of Dec. 8, that led to the round up of about 50 Shell and government staffers, men and women, by rebels who took them to Seria police station and imprisoned them there.

At about 6.30 that evening, said Mr. Fern, a rebel leader, wearing a khaki uniform and armed with a revolver, directed all male captives to a room where their hands were tied behind their backs and they were then led to waiting trucks. Clifford Joseph was one of those tied and led out to a truck.

In the trucks, said Mr. Fern, the rebels said that anyone attempting to escape would be shot.

On arrival between Lorong 11 and Lorong 13 near the Panaga Police headquarters, they were made to alight and told to form in columns of three and march towards Panaga Police Station.” [sic]

MACHINE GUN

He went on:

“I was in the fourth row from [the] front. Clifford Joseph was in the second row, left hand column facing Panaga.

“As we arrived near the bus stand near the Panaga Police station [sic], I heard machine gun fire from Panaga police station and there was a slight commotion among the hostages.
“The hostages in front were prodded by the rebel escort and told to keep marching. As we passed the bus stop there was a second burst of machine gun fire followed by shooting from front and rear.

“Immediately after the second burst of fire all the remaining hostages dived into a ditch nearby. While this was taking place, I noticed someone turn round and drop, and two voices claiming to have been shot.

“While lying in the drain, and while the shooting was in progress[,] we tried to find out who was missing and several names were mentioned.

ROLL CALL

“We called out names and they answered. Then we noticed that Clifford Joseph was missing.

“While in the drain, Dr. Maclean one of the hostages was busy attending to [the] wounded. He then wanted a look at Clifford Joseph, whose body was lying on the road.

“A rebel, Mr. Roy Clark[,] and I crawled on to the embankment and brought Clifford Joseph’s body for Dr. Maclean to examine. Dr. Maclean opened [Mr.] Joseph’s shirt, wiped a wound on his chest, examined his pulse and said he was dead.”

Questioned by the Coroner Mr. Fern said that Clifford Joseph’s body was lying with head towards Panaga and feet towards Seria.

Captain Philip Sipek, a helicopter pilot attached to the World Wide Helicopters in Seria[,] said that he was driving to work from Panaga towards Anduki airfield when he was stopped by armed men and taken to Seria Police station, where he remained till that evening.

At about 6 p.m. with other captives he was taken in the direction of Panaga police station in trucks. Their hands were tied behind them. They alighted from the trucks near the bus stop a few hundred yards from the police station.

Telling of the hostages’[’] march towards Panaga Police station he said : “As we walked we were fired on. Bullets bounced off the road. I jumped into the ditch with the others. As I jumped into the drain I saw someone being hit. I can’t say who, but thinking back, I think it was Clifford Joseph.”
HOSTAGE

Seria’s assistant district officer Pengiran Syed Shahminan bin Pengiran Haji Syed Mashor described how rebels arrested him in his home at 4 a.m. on Dec. 8. They took him[,] and two friends who were with him, to Seria Police Station.

**Pengiran Syed Shahminan then described how the rebels used him and his friends as hostages in a first attempt to obtain the surrender of Panaga police station.**

“At about 6.30 a.m. on Dec. 8, I and a friend with me were taken by two rebels, Haji Salim and Ibrahim Ghani, to Panaga police station. There we were asked to appeal to the district officer, Pengiran Abdul Rahman and the O.C.P.D. [Officer Commanding Police District], Inche Ibrahim, to surrender. They refused and our rebel escort took us back to Seria.”

Pengiran Syed Shahminan then described his ordeal on the march to Panaga for which the rebels had made him and a Shell security officer, Mr. Foo Seng Kow, walk at the head of the column to shout to the O.C.P.D. and District Officer through a loud hailer to surrender the police station.

**SHOUTS**

“Not long after my shouts[,] firing started from Panaga police station. There was confusion. Some of the hostages tried to take cover by lying down on the road.

“Before I went into the drain I heard someone say ‘somebody has been shot.’ There was still shooting going on. When we were told we could withdraw, I saw Clifford’s body lying dead on the road. I tried to move it but with my hands still tied behind me I was unable.”

Pengiran Syed Shahminan said the police fire was overhead and that there was return fire from the rebels.

O.C.P.D. Ibrahim Hamzah, officer in charge of the Panaga police station, told the court that on Dec. 8 at 4 a.m. the Panaga police station was attacked by rifle fire from rebels.

Police returned fire with Verey light cartridges and gas shells. Rebels retreated soon after daybreak.
At about 7 a.m. two rebels, Haji Salim and Ibrahim Ghani, brought two captives, Pengiran Shahminan and Malai Othman to the Panaga Police Station, [sic] Pengiran Shahminan and Malai Othman were hostages.

“Haji Salim and Ibrahim Ghani spoke to the District Officer and me, demanding the surrender of Panaga headquarters. We refused and they left,” said Inche Ibrahim. He went on:

“Later, soon after dark, I was at the control room on the top floor of the police station, facing Jalan Tengah. I had a clear vision of the road near the commissariat. There were seven other police personnel with me in the control room. We were armed with automatic weapons, 303 rifles and gas guns.

“At about 7.30, while I was in the room, I heard noises of people shouting and chanting, coming from the commissariat[.]"

“I called on my men to hold fire. Then I heard voices through a loud hailer calling on the D.O. to ask the police not to shoot and to surrender.

“After three or four shouts I recognized the voice of Pengiran Shahminan.

“Before the incident I had received information that rebels were using hostages as a human shield in an attack on Panaga police station.

“I told the men with me in the control room to fire a first volley above the heads of the people seen.

“My men did so and immediately the rebels returned fire. Police and rebels exchanged fire until dawn. Then the rebels retreated.

“On Dec. 10, British reinforcements arrived. Soon after that I heard that Clifford Joseph was killed during the attack on the Panaga Police station. On Dec. 14, the body was buried where it was found.

“On June 29, the body was exhumed and reburied in the Christian cemetery.”

Mr. T.J. Joseph, senior Air Traffic Controller at Shell’s Anduki airport [sic], described how rebels marched into the airport building and rounded up about 20 Shell Aviation staff and took them to Seria police station.
That evening some of the captives including himself and Clifford Joseph were loaded in trucks and taken towards the Panaga police station.

*I AM SHOT*

Describing the march towards the Panaga police station, Mr. Joseph said:

“While marching past the bus stop the rebel on my left fired three shots. These were first shots.

“As we walked on a little further, a number of bullets coming from the direction of the Panaga police station hit the road in front of us.

“At this moment, Clifford Joseph shouted, ‘Joseph, I am shot.’ and [sic] fell on the ground.

“Then a voice shouted, ‘Jump to the drain!’ and we all jumped.” said Mr. Joseph.

Inspector Zachariah bin Ibrahim officer in charge of Seria Police Station described how at 2.30 a.m. on Dec. 8, about 300 armed rebels attacked and over-ran the police station. They took 40 rifles and about 4,000 rounds of ammunition from the station, said the inspector.

**Last witness was Dr. Allan Maclean of Shell’s medical service.** Dr. Maclean said he was taken by rebels from his clinic at about 7.30 in the morning, and kept in Seria police station with about 40 or 50 others.

“At about 5.30 p.m.” said Dr. Maclean, “people appear- appeared [sic] to be more excited. I noticed people were being taken one by one and I was then ordered to be tied with my hands behind my back.

“We were taken to just past the fire station in trucks. Before we could get down from the trucks I heard some firing. We were ordered to march towards Panaga.

“Three to five minutes after we started marching [the] firing started again. At a point near the bus stop there was a general movement of jumping towards the drain. I was one of those who went into the drain. There was continuous firing. Later I heard someone say someone had been wounded. I went to see this man. He was Mr. Rea. Later, after I had attended to the wounded, someone thought that there was another man on the road. We held a roll call to ascertain who was missing and it was discovered that it was Clifford Joseph.
INSTANTLY

“I crawled towards the body but before I could do so a rebel volunteered to get the body.

“After examining him I certified he was dead. I would say Clifford Joseph died instantly. I could not ascertain whether the bullet wound was from close range, neither could I ascertain whether the bullet came from the front.” said Dr. Maclean.


The Borneo Bulletin’s account of events in Kuala Belait

KUALA BELAIT.—This little township on the edge of the great Seria oilfield was held in terror by rebels for five days and five nights.

And a bitter, three-day battle by [the] small local police force holed up in the small, wooden police station, and a large band of insurgents added tragedy to the grim drama that was being enacted.

The revolution caught the townspeople entirely by surprise. They had gone about their usual every-day business in blissful ignorance of the seriousness of the situation in daylight on Saturday, December 8.

The only outward sign of serious disruption of normal life was the barricaded police station and its closed gates, behind which the guns of the defenders peeped out.

But at sundown that night, the residents of the town were given a foretaste of the fear-ridden days that were to lie ahead.

There was an exchange of heavy fire between the police and the rebels.

And there was no sleep for the terrified residents as, all through the night, the whine of bullets and the staccato clatter of machine-gun bursts echoed through the air.

Towards dawn, the firing eased down and a few, [sic] curious residents, who had the temerity to venture outside, saw that the town was, indeed, securely in rebel hands.

There were abandoned bicycles scattered everywhere. Right in front of the police station was a large, black Public Works Department truck with windscreen shattered, front tyres flat.
This had been one of the rebels’ assault vehicles. But the attack had been repulsed by the gallant defenders.

**TERROR**

The walls of many buildings bore the scars of war – bullet holes, smashed windows. Oil and petrol stains marked road surfaces. P.W.D. tractors, as barricades, had been erected along strategic streets – by the rebels.

And, usually busy, little Kuala Belait was almost a city of the dead. Only a few, venturesome souls – usually in search of something to eat – dared emerge from behind locked doors. No shops were open.

On Sunday at about 10 a.m., large groups of uniformed men, mostly armed with shotguns and rifles, were seen from behind shuttered windows taking up positions for another attack on the police station.

Some of them clambered aboard P.W.D. tractors which, using the large front blade as a shield, lumbered towards the station.

Any innocent bystanders had, by this time, fled. In a few moments, the sound of gunfire filled the air.

This was the signal for a general imprisonment of the local population as armed, ill-clad, ill-trained rebels swung their various ways through the streets in seeming aimlessness.

There had been an announcement over the radio of a 24-hour curfew. This and the fear of being shot on sight by the trigger-happy bands of young men brought a cloak of terror over the once happy, smiling population.

Decorated with red-and-white armbands or head sashes, the rebels (some of them in captured police uniforms and helmets) were seen rushing here, there and everywhere – some in cars, some on bicycles, some on foot – without purpose, without leadership – a rabble.

There were occasional bursts of fire and, as darkness fell, these became more frequent and heavier.

On Sunday morning (December 9) the power supply failed. It remained off all day but was restored at about 9 p.m.
December 10 was another day of terror for the cowed people of the township. There was a general movement of rebel cars.

Large groups of rebels, obviously in a state of intense excitement, went from house to house demanding firearms.

Many homes were searched and shotguns and ammunition taken away.

Most of the rebels appeared to be wearing brand-new jungle-green uniforms with identifying sashes under the shoulder seams.

As the day progressed, the silence became oppressive. There was obviously something big brewing. The local residents, cowered [sic] and fear-stricken, stayed indoors.

Tuesday, December 11, must stand out in the history of this state as the quietest day ever experienced. The silence was so intense that the slightest sounds – leaves fluttering in the breeze, a cough, a sneeze, the rattling of pans in houses – could be heard clearly over long distances.

Not even dogs ventured in the streets. Kuala Belait could have been a ghost town – a deserted village reminiscent of the old Gold-Rush era in America.

Countless people stayed glued to their radio sets trying to find out what was happening. From Radio Brunei there was no news. From Radio Australia, Radio Sabah and Radio Sarawak there were cheering bulletins. It was obvious that everything was going to be all right in the end.

But the food shortage was desperate. Many families had nothing to eat. Stocks had not been laid in.

What a joyous day was Friday, December 14, when British troops, who had cleared the town on Wednesday, lifted the curfew.

Never had there been such a rush for provisions. The shops, practically deserted for so many years in the post-1959 depression days in Brunei, were almost run off their feet.

A day of hand-shaking, of excited conversation – of absolute relief. A happy day.

(The Borneo Bulletin, “Kuala Belait cowered in fear, terror as rebels held power”, 22 December, 1962, p. 10)
An Account of the Re-capture of Limbang

THE ASSAULT ON LIMBANG, SARAWAK BY ‘L’ COMPANY GROUP,

42 COMMANDO ROYAL MARINES ON 12th DECEMBER, 1962

INTRODUCTION

1. It is impossible to write a full account of events up to the time that the Company left
BRUNEI for the operation, because 42 Commando was flying into BRUNEI and arriving by
sea throughout this time.

2. The Company Commander was briefed for the operation by Commander 99
GURKHA Infantry Brigade, at BRUNEI Airport, at 0600hrs on 11 Dec 62, with instructions
to pass the brief onto the Commanding Officer 42 Commando should he arrive in time. He
(Company Commander) then had 56 men of ‘L’ Company and a section of Medium Machine
Guns at BRUNEI Airport and immediately left – in a borrowed vehicle – for Force
Headquarters in BRUNEI Town for a further briefing and to arrange motor transport and
boats for the operation.

3. About an hour later the Commanding Officer and Intelligence Officer arrived and
took over the responsibility for obtaining information for the operation, whilst the first Troop
of ‘L’ Company set about commandeering river transport and the Company Commander
took over an hotel to house the Commando, and found some motor transport to move them.

4. During the afternoon H.M. Minesweepers FISKERTON and CHAWTON came
alongside in BRUNEI Town with additional members of the Commando embarked and
started to examine and service the best of the craft which had been commandeered by the
Company during the forenoon.

5. When it became clear that little of the Commandos, except ‘L’ Company Group and
part of Support Company, would be available that day and the Commandos had been given
additional responsibilities elsewhere the Commanding Officer briefed ‘L’ Company
Commander on all available information and ordered him to carry out the LIMBANG
operation.
6. The Company Commander then made arrangements with the Captain H.M.S. FISKERTON for the manning of the only two suitable – though not as suitable as would have been desirable – craft which were serviceable. They then made the plan which was in fact carried out.

7. This report, therefore, is concerned only with the Company Commander’s view of the operation.

GROUND

8. During the forenoon the Commanding Officer and Intelligence Officer made an air recce of LIMBANG in bad weather and managed to obtain some information in addition to what was available from the 1:253,440 scale maps (on which the town appeared as a red dot!) and the air photographs, taken in 1959 and somewhat out of date, which the Intelligence Officer had managed to obtain.

INFORMATION

10. Information as to enemy dispositions and strength was virtually non-existent but it was believed that the enemy held the town in some strength. Estimates, all eventually proved wrong, varied between thirty and a hundred.

11. It was known that the rebels held the British Resident (Mr. R. H. MORRIS) and his wife and four other Europeans as hostages. This was also later found to be an under-estimation.

12. Their place of imprisonment was not known.

MISSION

13. The Company Commander was given the task of:-

   a. Rescuing the hostages, and

   b. Recapturing the town.

THE APPRECIATION

14. It was considered that the most likely place of activity was the Police Station and that this was also likely to house the rebel Headquarters.
15. It was also thought likely that if there was protracted fighting before the hostages were freed they would either be shot or used as a shield by the rebels. If on the other hand a very rapid assault could be made upon the place of captivity the rebels would be too busy fighting – or running away – to think about them.

16. The essence of the operation, if the rebels could not be persuaded to give themselves up, must, therefore, be speed, once surprise had been lost.

17. Thus it was decided, \[sic\] to land immediately opposite the Police Station with the assaulting force and to surround it at once.

18. The operation was to be carried out by ‘L’ Company (6 Troop was one section short, but this had been made up by ranks from Company HQ) with under command one section MMGs and the Commando Intelligence Sergeant.

19. Two unarmoured Z craft had been serviced by the Minesweepers and the First Lieutenants, with crews from their own ships, had taken command of them. The only protection on the open decks of these craft was some 1½ inch planking, varying in height from six to eighteen inches, and the Company’s large packs which were used as sandbags.

20. In order to minimise casualties in the initial assault the landing craft was to land Company Tactical HQ and 5 Troop only opposite the Police Station covered by the remainder of the Company and the Section MMGs from the second.

21. As soon as the Police Station had been captured the remainder of the Company were to be landed, and operations would be conducted according to information obtained. In the event of no other information being available it was intended to make for the Residency.

THE APPROACH

22. We were fortunate for this phase in having the assistance of the Director of Marine, BRUNEI, Captain MUTON. He had previously brought FISKERTON and CHAWTON up the BRUNEI River and although he did not know the LIMBANG River well, offered his services as pilot.

23. We were also fortunate in having a nearly full moon for the operation, and this was of great assistance to navigation.
24. In order to be certain of timing the assault for dawn on 12th December, it was decided that the force would sail from BRUNEI at midnight, and if necessary lie up in a side channel before entering the main LIMBANG River at 0430 hours.

25. The route from BRUNEI to the LIMBANG River lay through a complicated series of channels, between 50 and 100 yards wide, flanked by Nipa swamp. In spite of the leading craft losing one engine after an hour or so and one or two frightening but harmless arguments with the Nipa Palms, the force reached the LIMBANG River and lay up in the side channel at about 0200 hours.

26. At 0430 hours we got under way again and at about 0500 hours the lights of LIMBANG came into view some miles ahead.

27. One of the navigational difficulties had been that the strength of the current in the LIMBANG River was not known and therefore the speed we would make up river could not be calculated. As soon as LIMBANG came into view it was realised that we should arrive too early while it was still dark, and speed was reduced.

28. Shortly after five the lights in LIMBANG went out but it has still not been established whether this was done deliberately by the rebels because they had become aware of our approach, or because there was a fault in the system. It certainly did not work efficiently during the next 48hrs.

29. There did not appear to be any sign of life in the riverside KAMPONG area NORTH of the town as we approached, very slowly. In fact there was an ominous silence everywhere.

THE ASSAULT

30. As the leading craft rounded the bend leading to the Customs Wharf, the Bazaar area suddenly sprang to life. It was just light at this time and a large number of rebels (not specifically recognizable as such) were seen running in all directions but very quickly disappeared into houses and other cover.

31. The Police Station was immediately recognizable and the leading craft increased speed and made for the bank at a point about thirty yards upstream of it.
32. The Intelligence Sergeant, using a loud hailer, announced that the rebellion was over and called upon the insurgents to surrender but they replied by opening heavy fire upon both craft.

33. Enemy positions were identified in and around all the buildings in the Bazaar area, the Police Station buildings and compound and along the river front to the SOUTH, including a considerable number in the area of the Hospital.

34. During the final run in a number of casualties were suffered in both craft. Two Marines were killed and the Coxswain wounded in the leading craft, and the Company Second-in-Command and a seaman were wounded in the second.

35. Both craft continued on course and the enemy positions were engaged from both. The fire from the medium machine guns’ Section in the second was most effective against the Police Station until the leading craft had closed the bank, after which it was switched to the bazaar area.

36. Immediately the leading craft beached the Troop Commander of 5 Troop led his two leading sections ashore to attack the Police Station. Corporal Lester, according to plan, led his section across the road, through the enemy positions and to the rear of the Station, whilst Sergeant Bickford with Corporal Rawlinson and his section pressed the attack from the front. At this stage Corporal Rawlinson was wounded in the back but continued to lead his section.

37. The enemy commander, one SALLEH BIN SAMBAS, who was manning the Bren gun, was wounded and withdrew, followed by most of his force. However three rebels did remain in the Police Station, including SALLEH’s second in command, and were captured without resistance when the Station was occupied, though one of them tried to run away and was shot.

38. Almost immediately the leading sections were ashore the leading craft drifted off the bank, probably because the coxswain had been wounded, but the Captain immediately took the wheel and brought her into the bank again near the District Office about three hundred yards upstream.
39. Here the Troop Sergeant, accompanied by the Commando Intelligence Sergeant, who had decided that his loud hailer was no longer a suitable weapon, led the reserve section ashore to clear the bank towards the Police Station. Some enemy were found hiding in the bushes in this area later in the day but they did not attempt to interfere with this landing.

40. This section moved along the river bank and cleared the enemy in the area of the Hospital, of which there was a number both around the buildings and in the jungle which reached down the hill to within five yards of the back of the Hospital.

41. In this very close country the Troop Sergeant cleared beyond the Hospital to join up with the remainder of the troop whilst the Intelligence Sergeant cleared the buildings.

42. Just NORTH of the Hospital a group of determined enemy were concealed and the Troop Sergeant and two Marines were killed and another wounded before they were also killed or had fled into the jungle.

43. Through the sounds of battle the Intelligence Sergeant heard Europeans inside the Hospital singing and called out to them. The Resident and his wife and seven other hostages were found unharmed inside.

44. Shortly after this a junction was made with the two sections in the area of the Police Station. One Marine in the section behind the Station was found to have been wounded.

45. Immediately the Company Second-in-Command was wounded the Company Sergeant Major went up to the bridge of the second craft and took over the direction of the supporting fire and kept Commando Headquarters informed of progress on the rear link. During the early part of the fighting this craft was manoeuvred in the river in order to give the best supporting fire.

46. Once the two leading sections were established ashore, and whilst the leading craft was landing the remainder of 5 Troop further upstream, the second craft was beached and the Company Sergeant Major sent the reserve troops ashore, and then took the craft back into midstream to give further fire support with the medium machine guns.
47. There was a number of enemy in an ATTAP house about thirty yards up the hill behind the Hospital and these were neutralized before the craft returned downstream opposite the bazaar area.

48. Meanwhile 6 Troop cleared the Police Station, and 4 Troop moved up behind and NORTH of it past the MOSQUE to the back of the town where one of the rebels gave some difficulty by engaging them from a room full of women and children at the EASTERN end of a block of shops. However he was dislodged and the Troop entered the block.

49. From this time on most of the enemy resistance collapsed although a number of individuals held out in the town and the jungle and there was considerable movement and some sniping for a further 24 hours.

**ACTION DURING THE REMAINDER OF 12th DECEMBER**

50. Now that the position had stabilized somewhat Sergeant Bickford was able to regroup and reorganize 5 Troop, which had suffered nine casualties, and was ordered to hold the perimeter from the area of the Police Station to the ATTAP house behind the Hospital. This involved clearing a number of houses and it was during this time that the only civilian casualty occurred - an old woman was killed by a 36 grenade in her house.

51. The machine gun section was now landed to hold the SOUTHERN end of the perimeter, which was the only area which afforded a field of fire of more than about 50 yards.

52. Whilst 6 Troop held the NORTHERN end of the perimeter and gave support, 4 Troop cleared the first EAST-WEST block of shops in the bazaar area and then 6 Troop cleared the first SOUTH-NORTH block, supported by 4 Troop.

53. Immediately the second craft beached Sick Berth Attendant CLARKE made his way to the Hospital and set up a Company Aid Post. He organized the released hostages preparing dressings and set about collecting and caring for the casualties. It is interesting to note that four out of six gunshot wounds were in the legs. During the fighting in the town further casualties occurred as the result of men falling through the roof or floor of the house they were clearing.
54. As soon as the situation stabilized the Intelligence Sergeant began interrogating the released hostages and prisoners. As the result of this it transpired that further hostages were held in the Gaol and their houses in the SOUTHERN end of the town.

55. During the morning the Assault Engineers and the Mortar Troop Commander, with a Section of mortars, arrived to reinforce the Company. The Regimental Medical Officer of 1/2 GURKHA Rifles also arrived because the Commando Medical Officer had not yet reached BRUNEI.

56. The Z craft then returned to BRUNEI with the casualties who were that night flown to LABUAN before being evacuated to British Military Hospital SINGAPORE the next day.

57. As soon as the first blocks of shops in the town had been cleared 4 Troop took over the NORTHERN end of the perimeter and 6 Troop was transferred to the EASTERN side whilst the Support Company elements cleared to the SOUTHERN end of the town and released the remainder of the hostages. 5 Troop was withdrawn from the perimeter for some rest.

THE NIGHT 12th/13th DECEMBER

58. By the time this had been completed it was well on into the afternoon and it was decided that, because the first cross street made a convenient stopping place, the remainder of the town would not be cleared until the following day.

59. As will be seen from the sketch map the Jungle reached right down to the backs of some of the buildings. It was known that a number of enemy were hiding up in the fringes of the jungle and three had been flushed out, within fifteen or twenty yards of the Hospital, during the afternoon.

60. A perimeter was therefore held from the first cross street along a track through the edge of the jungle to the ATTAP house and then down to the river bank. The SOUTHERN part of the town, which had been cleared during the afternoon, was patrolled to prevent the enemy reoccupying it.

61. During the night the enemy on a number of occasions fired on our positions in the town from further to the NORTH but was not engaged because he could not be accurately
located. In the jungle on the other hand the enemy was moving about, in all probability attempting to escape, and anything which moved was fired upon. Enemy, animals, shadows, and banana plants were engaged. One enemy was killed about ten yards from the ATTAP house. There was no activity in the SOUTHERN part of town.

THE CLEARANCE OF THE BAZAAR AREA

62. The remainder of the bazaar area was cleared, by the Support Company Troop and 4 Troop, working on the WESTERN and EASTERN halves of the town respectively, during the forenoon of 13th December. The bodies of two enemy killed during the previous day’s fighting were discovered during this operation, but the enemy had gone.

63. During the afternoon ‘K’ Company and Commando Headquarters arrived in LIMBANG and the former took over the perimeter for the night.

SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION

64. The interrogation of released hostages, prisoners and a Police Constable, who had spent five days hiding in the roof of the Police Station without food or water revealed a lot of information about what happened in the town.

65. The Resident and his wife had been held in the Gaol for the first three days of the rebel occupation but had been moved to the Hospital at the demand of some of the local civilians.

66. The rebels had made no attempt to provide food for the hostages but did not prevent civilians from bringing food and cigarettes to them.

67. The hostages themselves had overheard their guards discussing their fate and knew that they were to be hanged. The police constable, from his hiding place in the roof, had heard the leaders on the evening of 11th December decide that these murders would be carried out the following morning. Had the Company arrived six hours later it would have been too late.

68. The enemy strength appears to have been in excess of three hundred. A hundred and fifty of these are known to have occupied the area of the Police Station and thirty to have
held the Hospital. It is probably [sic] therefore that the landing was actively opposed by about two hundred rebels.

69. The majority of the enemy were armed with Shot Guns and used single gauge cartridges, but they also had a light machine-gun (.303 Bren), a STERLING and fifteen rifles captured from the Police and a variety of .22 rifles, muzzle loading muskets and other pieces.

70. The light machine-gun, which is now in use by Support Company, and eight rifles were recaptured and their main magazine was found in the Police Station. Two light machine-gun magazines had been badly filled and one sterling magazine was recovered with thirty rounds in it, all of them the wrong way round.

71. Fifteen of the enemy were killed during the battle; three wounded prisoners were taken and eight unwounded. Many more have been taken or have surrendered subsequently but most of the leaders are still at large.

CONCLUSION

72. Although some casualties would probably have been avoided by a landing further downstream and an advance on foot it is not considered that the hostages lives would have been saved if this course had been adopted.


An Account of Events in Bangar

By nightfall, however, everything has changed in Temburong.

The young student back from Malaya also goes to bed early. He is worn out and can’t understand the tension that seems to hang in the air.

Uncles and cousins drop in, serious looks on their faces, hardly a welcome home to be heard.
When they leave, they hang around in groups outside. Their voices drift in to his bedroom.

At eleven, he wakes up briefly from his half-sleep.

Three of his relatives are outside, calling for his father.

He recognizes the voice of his uncle, the husband of his senior aunt and a vigorous party activist.

They seem to be demanding his father’s shotgun. His father is arguing.

“What for?” he keeps on asking.

“For protection,” the answer comes.

“And what about us?” calls his father.

“We’ll protect you!” the relatives call back.

He drowsily hears the argument continue.

Eventually, his father appears to give in and brings them out the gun and the bullets they are demanding.

“We’ll protect you!” the relatives call out again.

An hour later, it seems as if there are shots quite near. He is far too tired by then, however. He thinks he must have dreamed them. They dissolve into the sounds of the night as first he dozes and then he falls asleep.

On the other side of town, the District Officer is growing increasingly suspicious. He is also distinctly worried.

He has learned that large numbers of PRB members are assembling in the hills, armed with parangs and shotguns. He also knows that he, personally, as the government’s chief source of information, is a prime target.

By ten o’clock, he is convinced that something is going to happen.

Bangar has a curious, uneasy air of stillness. It has become very dark and silent.

Houses seem to have been vacated. Many families are stealthily moving out of the town.

It is time to act, the District Officer decides. Precautions, at least, have to be taken.

The question is, how?
There is no standing emergency procedure. All the District Officer can do is ring police headquarters in Brunei Town for help and extract a promise that a company of police will be sent soon by boat.

Until then, they tell him, he is on his own.

Unsure in this very strange situation, and extremely worried, he contacts his officers and advises them to tell everyone they see to go home, to stick together and not to go near their windows.

Then he goes out himself to alert as many houses as he is able to visit. He urges them to bar and shutter what they can.

“There’s nothing more I can do,” he tells them.

“We can only wait for the police to come.”

Fearful and anxious, the few non-party members around the town arm themselves with parangs and prepare for the worst . . .

When the police company requested by the District Officer arrives at Bangar jetty, the fighting is immediate and ferocious.

The rebels have a target.

The District Officer!

Unlike their comrades in Brunei Town, these are not amateur shooters. They have been to the training camps. The District Officer knows that any one of them will be out to spot him and settle old scores in the dark.

It is also apparent that these rebels have a different spirit than the casual party members.

The battle is for real and deadly. They have to win. To do that, they have to do more than blaze away. They have to shoot to kill.

The great, passionate words they have listened to over the radio from Jakarta, all the comradesely calls to revolutionary struggle, have been transformed into deadly bullets, cracking and hissing through the night. Out of the trees. Through the bushes. Up from the landing.

Any one of them can end a life.
This is no noble cause. Here is no martyrdom.

In the early hours of the morning, this is a meeting of terrified angry men, slashing at passing phantoms, screaming insults into the dark, firing at anything human that moves.

Soon, they are newer, even more fearful sounds. Screams of terror. Gasps of the wounded in anguish. Untold pain in the cries of the dying.

It is intimate. Personalised. The casualties are not statistics any more.

They are people everyone knows. They have worked, chatted and prayed with them.

Local policemen . . . . . men from the kampongs . . . . . neighbours and relatives . . . . .

Men like the new young Temburong officer’s uncle . . . . . shot down and killed in the first assault.

A rebel dies under the officer’s house. Badly shot and mortally wounded, he takes nearly half an hour to die.

The young officer watches him. He knows his face.

The scene is repeated all over the town.

This is not an anonymous battlefield.

This is no page in a history book.

This is no Friday night movie.

It is personal.

A tribal feud.

A vendetta.

It is fought out in horrifying close-up.

Settling Scores

By 3 a.m., the firing dies down in Bangar. The rebels are in the ascendancy. They have taken control of the town.

They are becoming aware of the enormity of what is taking place. They know there’s no going back on it now. The fierce passion of the early engagements have thrown off all civilian restraints. The training camp theory is over.

A real army now exists.
They have proved it. They are its soldiers and their work is killing.

It is also a vengeful army.

If the government is to fall, its symbols have to be destroyed and the most ready symbols are its supporters and, above all, its administration.

Especially, the District Officer.

He is the one who informed on them. He is the one who brought the police in. It was he who led the first attack on them at the landing. And it was he who killed at least one of their comrades in arms.

He is said to have fled into the interior with his gun. He has to be found and dealt with.

That will teach him who’s in charge . . .

Looking Back

And the father whose conversation that night woke one of them up in Bangar?

Savagely wounded by a parang.

And the District Officer who reported back?

Sought after, tracked down and captured by rebels . . . . taken off into the jungle . . . . and murdered.

(Mohamed Bolkiah, *Remember, Remember... The 8th of December*, Brunei Press, Bandar Seri Begawan, 2007, pp. 204-8, 222-5 & 254.)

**Tom Harrisson’s Account of His Force**

The situation when I arrived at Lutong on December 11 was that a very large section of the inland population of north west Sarawak, including all of the Kenyahs, Kayans, Kelabits and Muruts and the Ibans in the Upper Limbang and on the Bakong branch of the Baram had in some way expressed their complete readiness to take an active part in quelling the rebellion.

Secondly, that a number of British government officers who had happened to be on the spot or were at their stations immediately responded to the situation, gave the necessary
leadership, rallied and organised this feeling and by the time I got there, there was already a considerable and rapidly growing armed force at the disposal of whoever was prepared to use it.

I would like to mention first in this Mr. Nick Coysh, a Rubber Development Officer, who was at Marudi at the time and, of course, the leadership of Mr. John Fisher, the Resident, who gave the go-ahead to the whole movement.

The call to arms was at once taken up by Temenggong Oyong Lawai Jau, Penghulu Gau, Penghulu Kebing and the other Baram chiefs.

Mr Richard Morris was not in a position to do anything in the Fifth Division because he had been taken prisoner [sic] by the rebels, but, fortunately a police officer Mr. A.P.G. Prince, was in Lawas and also Mr. Mervyn Swyny, a courageous man in the Public Works Department. They together did a magnificent job in rallying this type of support in those places.

In fact, wherever there were leaders to give a positive direction to the local feeling[,] the rebellion, which was entirely in the hands of the Malays and Kedayans, did not spread outside Baram and the Lower Limbang.

Therefore, by December 12th we had the position where the military were fully engaged with the rebels in active fighting within the State of Brunei and about to be so engaged in the general area of Bekenu and Sibuti, in the Fourth Division.

The position was still obscure at Limbang, and great care was being taken in planning any operation in case it endangered the lives of the Resident, Mrs Morris and the other prisoners there. It was already clear, however, that the rebels were going to be completely squashed by the great force of British arms coming in from Singapore and elsewhere into west Borneo.

The real concern of the military then became, as far as the inland areas were concerned, to prevent the rebels escaping inland, setting up any form of guerilla [sic] organisation inland or simply causing havoc inland, or even more important escaping over the border into Indonesia from where undoubtedly a number of them had recently returned after training in the use of arms.
It was therefore decided to deploy the massive and still growing irregular forces along the whole arc between the North Borneo border on the Trusan River, right away behind Brunei, behind the Temburong District of Brunei, over the headwaters of the Limbang, again all along the border area behind Brunei in the Tutong, and Belait districts, and across the Baram down to Marudi.

An additional force of about 100 guerillas [sic] was brought down to Miri itself to assist there under the leadership of Mr William Geikie and other Miri District Councillors.

At this stage we had the Motor launch, Rainbow, on patrol between Marudi and Kuala Baram, loaded with armed Kenyahs, under Mr. William Scott of the Tanjong Lobang School and Mr. Eric Vennell of the PWD, both of whom did splendidly.

Finally there was the more complicated, immediate question of Bekenu, in the Sibuti area, further down the coast from Miri.

Therefore by about December 13 we had managed to put out effective blocks over a large part of the backstop area mentioned, assisted by additional officers, notably Mr. R.E. Clark of the Land and Survey Department, Mr. Manson Toynbee, of the Education Department and Mr. Barry Balbernue, of the Agricultural Department.

But in the case of Bekenu, where the situation was extremely obscure and where I had twice received salutes in reconnaissance aircraft overhead from people who appeared to be rebels holding the kubu, we decided that the irregulars could take a fully positive and aggressive role as well.

Here we moved some of the Marudi forces very rapidly into the Bakong River under Derrick Reddish of the Borneo Company and John Bagley of the Medical Department who, with Penghulu Baya Malang led two powerful overland groups of mixed Kayans, Kenyahs and Ibans down the Sibuti River behind Bekenu – this attack being co-ordinated with the Green Jackets, the regular army, who simultaneously attacked Bekenu from the coast up the Sibuti River.

This worked very well indeed and completely bottled in the rebels in that area. There was no question of their escaping inland – they were attacked from both sides and also additional
troops were put in by helicopter on top of them to places I designated, on December 15. That was the earliest piece of the whole of this operation to be really mopped up. Bekenu and that whole area were effectively cleared of rebels by December 18.

Now all the time the army were cleaning up and putting on the pressure in Brunei itself and the attack had gone in to Limbang. So having finished with Bekenu and quickly brought Reddish and Bagley out again, we put Reddish up in the top of the Trusan River, with other forces, mainly Kelabits and Muruts.

The role of the irregulars after this was entirely that of serving as backstop. Increasingly this had to be tied up with regular army units as the soldiers were freer of the main battle. I would stress of course that theirs was always the main role in Brunei itself and then in Limbang, but that we irregulars had to take a burden off the Army shoulders inland. In fact not one single rebel has so far escaped alive into the interior or got through our cordon as far as we know.

And there is no evidence that anybody is likely to do so in the immediate future.

I have been asked how it was possible to cover such a huge area on the map.

The answer to that is easy. Geographical knowledge of the area is important and this was one thing I was personally able to contribute because I have travelled all over the Fourth and Fifth Divisions, also all along and inside the border with Kalimantan and southern North Borneo.

In fact, although it looks tremendous on the map – owing to the terribly rugged terrain, there are very few actual routes on which any sane human being can hope to use and succeed for getting away.

Many of the irregulars were people who had been with us in SRD [Services Reconnaissance Department] during the war in 1945 and were very proud to show on this occasion their war medals.

We were able to learn very largely from that past experience with the big organised Japanese forces, in one case over 700 strong, who attempted to escape [sic] inland to Indonesia during 1945.
Using that experience and those veterans we were able to concentrate on a limited number of escape routes which, in fact, are the only practical ones available for anyone thinking of going to the border.

I would like to emphasise here that we did not arm masses of people all over the country. All that happened throughout this operation was that buckshot cartridges were given on allocation to licensed shotgun holders in areas where there was [fore]seen the possibility of the rebels escaping or the rebellion extending.

We did not arm large areas where there was no such threat, nobody had received any sort of outside weapon – revolver, rifle or anything else.

But there are two aspects to this thing of giving these cartridges – one, that they would be positively useful if any rebel did break through from Brunei; and I am quite sure that the average Kenyah, Kayan or Kelabit would and will give a very good account of himself.

Secondly, that many of these people in the interior do not normally keep any stock of these cartridges and were getting extremely worried at reports and sometimes rumours of masses of people moving about through the country. They felt they had nothing to protect their own women and children with.

Therefore, directly we supplied the cartridges the whole atmosphere changed. I have seen this in remote villages, such as up in the Ulu Akah and such places where we landed – at tiny or improvised airstrips in RAF Single Pioneers and helicopters.

The moment we issued even five cartridges per man everybody was solid from then on, not worried any more and determined to make a positive contribution.

In fact the rally of these inland people was something quite remarkable and nothing to do with politics or race – a real demonstration of their love for their own country – Sarawak.

The question has also been asked as to how we did keep track of the rebel movements. Well, that is a very easy one because, as I have said before, they could only use very limited routes.

You cannot take a bee line across the country anywhere in the interior of Sarawak – the country is much too rough. By using helicopters, and even more using Beaver and Single
Pioneer fixed-wing aircraft very close observation was able to be kept on the movement inland. In fact, as I have said, nobody did get far inland. As well as receiving salutes from the ground to the air I actually received a surrender from two men below the Medalam, in the Limbang. They held up their hands in the boat to the aircraft, dashed away downstream and were never seen again.

They were the only two people we know of who really looked as if they were ever going to penetrate the interior at all. It may well be that there will be some people getting up there. There are two or three reports in the Fifth Division. But by the time they have got far inland, into the area I am talking about, they are going to have had an awful mauling from the army, gunfire, aeroplanes and reconnaissance.

And they are not jungle people who are doing this rebellion – they are coastal Malays and coastal Kedayans who are not at home in the jungle at all. It will be a remarkably fine performance on their part if they do manage to establish any sort of activity far inland.

The helicopters of course, have only a limited use in the interior, though they played an invaluable role in the whole operation.

But one of the great values of the helicopter was in landings made in the sub-coastal areas such as along the Tutoh River and in the lower Trusan where again, the very fact of landing in a helicopter, in the middle of a village square, dishing out some ammunition and a spot of leadership, immediately changed the whole atmosphere. Giving the people some information and determination from first hand made all the difference.

Most of the villagers had completely run out of batteries and had no radios working at all, others were listening attentively to Indonesia. The picture was terribly obscure to them and a helicopter landing with a friend and some ammunition was worth half a battalion at that particular moment, psychologically.

So the further question arises – what did the irregulars shoot at and what did they capture?

The answer to that is extremely little. I am very glad to say that that is so, because our job was to stop people getting in there.
By the ordinary methods of travel all through that area, of course, within a day or so of all these people being armed, everybody knew about it over a wide area down to the coast. I feel quite sure if we had not done this, and this I know is also the view of my seniors in the army and elsewhere, if we had not done this, the rebels would have probably escaped inland.

But they were not prepared to tackle these warlike ex-head hunter types of the interior and therefore they were compelled to stay down on the coastal areas.

That made it easier for the army to deal with them though the thing is not completely dealt with yet because even the coastal country is difficult enough, God knows!

The irregulars did prevent them from spreading inland and also it was essential to given [sic] some positive leadership to those inland people to stop all sorts of silly ideas developing and even the possibility of the rebellion itself spreading from mere muddle and misunderstanding.

So the question is – where are the rebels now and what are left of them?

The general view seems to be that they now are confined on the coastal plain and the immediate sub-coastal belt. Many of them have gone back home, trying to pretend that they are just ordinary farmers and never did any harm to anybody.

If some of them do break through and start working up the rivers now, the irregulars will not be able necessarily to hold them, but what the irregulars do is act as a stop. Immediately there is a need for anything more, there’s that much motive, that much intelligence and the regular forces can immediately fly in and deal with the situation, if that is necessary.

One occasion of that kind has occurred. It was based entirely on rumour, but a serious rumour, and we took it seriously.

A unit of Gurkhas was flown into an inland place very quickly indeed, with very enterprising flying by RAF Twin Pioneers and the whole situation was dealt with in a matter of a few hours – that is the sort of future picture I would see, unless of course, something much more elaborate and something quite different develops.

That is something we are working on now and the irregulars may have a further part to play in any long term thinking about this whole area.
Some people have asked me if there any lessons Sarawak can learn from this revolt.

Well, of course, there are all sorts of lessons with the Administration and Intelligence and so on which are right above my head. But in my mild capacity as Government Ethnologist and Curator of the Sarawak Museum, there is an ethnological problem that comes out of this – that is that you cannot afford to ignore small racial groups.

The Kedayans have played a major role in this. There are only about less than 10,000 of them in Sarawak but they have not been taken into account. There are practically no responsible Kedayans in any positions. They are not represented adequately in Government and this applies equally to many other groups in the north.

The large groups have received overwhelming amount of attention not only in administration but, for instance, over the radio where only the large groups have any programmes at all.

Although the populations of people like the Kedayans, the Kenyahs, Kayans, Kelabits and Muruts are relatively small, they occupy enormous areas of this country.

Moreover they are, what is called, politically backward, or [what] I would call, happy fellows. But they can be got at and confused.

In my view, what happened at Bekenu, among the Kedayans, there, who I know quite well and who are extremely industrious farmers, is that they did get completely confused and misled.

They are guilty all the same, no one is denying that, but there is a lesson that the same sort of thing can happen widely and I do not think the argument is sufficient that this group is a small one, therefore we can ignore it.

In the modern world, one small group can break up a whole pattern just as in some ways, this revolt has done. Also we have to remember that a group may be small in Sarawak or in Brunei but it can be very big in Borneo as a whole.

The Kedayans are closely related to the Tidongs and other peoples over a very wide area of Indonesian Borneo. In just the same way, the Kayans and the Kenyahs are only a few
thousand in Sarawak, but are more than 200,000 in Kalimantan. The Kelabits are less than 2,000 in Sarawak – there are probably 100,000 over the border.

Therefore on the positive side, our leadership and propaganda in those languages and to those groups, radiates right across the border in our favour.

On the negative side, if we neglect them, propaganda in their languages and from their groups, very powerful in Kalimantan, can in fact end up by undermining the thinking of these groups inside Sarawak. Perhaps the nicest thing about this whole horrible business as far as I see it, is that apart from the Kedayans, all other inland tribes have not responded [and] in that way have shown themselves really Sarawakian and (though it is a rather out-of-date sentiment) really pro-British.

But the margin which determined that position was quite small. I am sure that it depended on [the] individual leadership of people like Mr Fisher, Coysh, Swyny and perhaps, in a different way, my wife down at Niah – if she had not been there and stuck to her guns, the whole thing might have spread down the coast as far as Bintulu. The people themselves are good-hearted and mean well, but they have got to be led.

This leadership must be positive – it must be directed by a positive policy which must have some local meaning if it is to succeed. Generalisations and negative attacks on other groups or parties mean little or nothing here.

Well, there remains the question of the irregulars in the future.

At the present moment over most of the country, they are in effect disbanded back in their own houses, looking after their own rice crops.

We felt it most essential to do nothing in this whole operation which would start producing a civil administrative problem afterwards such as the failure of the rice crop.

Now they have got a sufficient reserve of buckshot and also confidence that there is a communication system and [ability to] contact air support and regular troop support, if necessary.

There is, in effect a Home Guard extended over a very wide area of Northern Sarawak, and particularly all along our common borders. One hopes there is no future role for the
irregulars in this. That does not depend on the irregulars, the regulars, or the Sarawak Government – it depends on other people trying to do mischief to us.

I think it is very reassuring that we have got, perhaps getting on, to 1,600 people now who have been in some way, either formally or informally, sometimes in remote places, in tiny airstrips, with a few minutes’ notice, brought into this picture.

If something else does break out, these people now do look in one direction and have a very good idea of what it’s all about.

Of course, one of the great difficulties, in dealing with this sort of situation, and this must be remembered, is that we are covering an enormous tract of country.

The whole State of Brunei is just a little flea bite when you compare it with the Third, Fourth and Fifth Divisions. I have not said anything about the Third Division because I really do not know what has been going on there – I have been fully occupied in the Fourth and Fifth. But in the Third Division, I do know that there had been [a] rumour of 100 enemy in the Belaga District.

Fundamentally that seemed absurd to all of us up in Brunei and indeed it proved to be totally false.

Now in this huge country, ridiculous rumours can develop if people are prepared to give them currency. The geography is confusing and there are many languages. Communications are difficult. That is one reason why personal leadership and continuous personal contact and steadiness are important.

We must not allow people to be suddenly carried away with the sort of madness which in fact struck the Kedayans at Bekenu in this whole business of raising the flag and taking the Kubu there.

Perhaps I could mention one example of what actually happened in this way in the area I had been working over.

Over a radio set, working on an internal intercom frequency, one operator heard a story of over 100 rebels moving up the Limbang to the Kuala Medamit.
Now the Kuala Medamit is within the tidal waters and within a day or so of Limbang itself and that story was not peculiar at that moment, which was about December 16.

The situation was not yet under control. Rebels were being driven back by the army and there was no reason why they should not move up to the Kuala Medamit.

Unfortunately the operator heard this as the Kuala Medihit because atmospherics can be very bad in the interior.

Therefore with immense excitement, this was rushed through to Miri as an absolutely top urgent signal with 300 rebels, as it eventually became and as these things do, moving into the Kuala Medihit.

Now, the Kuala Medihit is really about five days’ hard boating, including shooting major rapids upriver from the Kuala Medamit. Actually the last inhabited house up the Limbang is the Kelabit house of Long Napir, in the Medihit.

As a result of this report, the only thing to do was to take it seriously – we could not ignore it. Therefore I got involved in arming the people in that area and guiding in an element of regular troops and eventually the Gurkhas who came in, went right [through] the Medihit, the whole way down to the Medamit. A great deal of energy was expended but of course not one single rebel was ever encountered anywhere in the whole area, because in fact the country is only an escape route on the map.

That is the sort of way a rumour can easily develop. Self-control in people, especially responsible people in remote places, is frightfully important here.

On the whole I think it would be safe to divide any present estimated rebel movement from the Brunei direction inland now, at once divide it by ten. On the other hand, never ignore it. It is by ignoring a situation that we have had this revolution. It is by ignoring or underestimating people like the Kedayans that the Bekenu situation, particularly, developed. Also in other ways the situation at Limbang, where the pro-Brunei Party was vastly underestimated. You can’t ignore it, you’ve got to deal with it.

REPORT ON THE EMERGENCY IN THE BARAM

On Sunday the 9th of December 1962, shortly after the Borneo Airways Twin Pioneer had left for Bario, a phone call was received from the Honourable the Resident, 4th Division, announcing that a state of Emergency [sic] existed and requesting that an army of irregulars should be raised from the Kayans and Kenyahs of the Baram.

It was too late to contact up river areas by radio so speed boats were sent up Long Lama or up the other rivers to call the people and messages were sent to the Iban houses behind Lubok Nibong.

By the evening of the ninth a home guard of 42 persons had been raised for the defence of Marudi, the Police were alerted and the Kubu and airport put under defensive positions during the hours of darkness.

A Curfew was established from 1830 hours to 0600 hours nightly until further notice and the people were informed by notices written in all languages; as well as a Landrover with the S.I.S. [Sarawak Information Service] loudspeakers broadcast the news to the end of the Kamponds, after which the same loudspeakers were installed in a speedboat and all river dwellers informed in this way.

All telephone calls anywhere were stopped except official ones about the Emergency.

After this first day of comparative calm, a semi-organized chaos ensued for the next few days as the Orang Ulu responded splendidly to the Government’s call.

It was very lucky that, when the Emergency started, Mr. Toynbee [of the Education Department] was in Marudi on his way to Bario as he took over the organisation of all the Supply side and did magnificent work.

S.A.O. [Sarawak Administrative Officer] Keuh in working with Mr. Toynbee as Quartermaster did great things in the feeding, watering and quartering of the private army. Charles M. Richards junior [sic] of the Peace Corps, was [also] put to the issuing of cartridges for a time.
It was also fortunate that Mr. Bayly, the other Group Headmaster, was here as he took over the airport radio with Mr. Abu Bakar[,] the A.T.C.A. [Air Traffic Control Assistant], and proceeded to keep a 24 hour watch.

An Operations room [sic] was established in the Police Station and someone was on duty all hours of the day and night.

Herewith appended is a list of all the Longhouses and Kampongs that sent men, the numbers thereof and the dates of their arrival. [Not included with original]

During the first week of the Emergency Dr. J. Baird and Mr. Bagley of the S.M.E.P. [Sarawak Malaria Eradication Programme] returned from a tour in the Ulu Baram and stayed in Marudi a while. Mr. Bagley start[ed] in straight away [sic] to getting some organisation into the Home Guard; after which[,] on the arrival of Mr. Reddish[,] a force, later known as “Kuda”, was laid on of 56 men from the Tutoh and Tinjar to go to the Bakong area and proceed through to help with the relief of Bekenu and Niah; the following day the 15th a support force under Capt. Haines of the Green Jackets, six regulars and a further 52 men of the Baram Army left at last light to proceed up the Nyabor, the Entulang and over into the Setap.

I would here make mention of Penghulu Baya Malang, Penghulu Balan Lejau, Penghulu Arin and J.A.A. Bujang ak. Nyuin of the Agricultural Department who were exemplary and did a wonderful job in Kuda Force.

At the end of the first week Mr. Adair and Mr. Clark both of the Lands and Surveys Department arrived in Marudi from upriver.

Mr. Adair was put in charge of all transport in the Baram with J.A.A. [Junior Agricultural Assistant] Gow Ying Leong to help him and a very fine job was done by both of them[,] notwithstanding the unco-operative attitude of some of the Chinese Launch owners who thought they would be clever and stop at Lubok Nibong so that they could not be used by the Government.

At the same time the shop keepers of Lubok Nibong decided to try and be funny, so a detachment of 50 Kayans were billeted on them, which settled that.
I must at the same time say that many of the Chinese launch owners were very helpful especially those of Linei and Long Lama and I would especially mention the Chin Choo of M.L. Kok Tong, Mr. Chan Chey Chew.

After Kuda Force was sent away it was decided to send a further force out up the Tutoh to block the way of any rebels escaping from the Ulu part of Brunei towards Indonesia; Mr. R. Clark took charge of this operation and had a force of about 320 under him, luckily at this time a small hand cranked radio set had become available and was sent away with Clark force [sic] in the Government Store boat the “Taffy” which acted as the flag-ship.

Patrols that held ambushes were sent up to four passes over from Brunei at the following places. Ulu Sungei Linei Puteh, Ulu Sungei Temasoh, Ulu Sungei Kabong and up to the Ulu Sungei Melinau; while from the Taffy herself mobile patrols were sent out up and down the river.

Ambushes were also laid on the border of Brunei behind Marudi on the track that leads to Labi and this position from the first arrival of the Green Jackets was reinforced by a few of them (Penghulu Gau and Penghulu Kebing helped greatly on this position).

A further position was held at Long Loyang in the Tinjar by making a river block there to stop any rebels escaping from the Niah area.

The total amount of money spent up to the 31st of December 1962 was $59,700/- this is approximately $3,000/- per day which is not really excessive and it is estimated that a further $6,000/- to $7,000/- will be needed before things return to normal.

Various things come out of this Emergency, the main one being the lack of Radio Communication; it is felt that to get things organized a bit quicker next time, if there should be a next time, that there must definitely be radios at Long Teru, Linaí [sic] and Beluru as well as three or four hand winding sets for sending out on expeditions (these would even be useful in peace time for Senior Government Officers on travelling who can then keep in touch with any developments at the Divisional Office).
A second point is that small stocks of petrol should be kept at strategic points for use in an Emergency; say three drums per point. (Petrol is now sold at Long Lama and Long Akah but that leaves Linei, Long Teru and Beluru needing some).

A third point is that some type of Territorial Army is needed but this is now partly being done by the Home Guard recently allowed by the Chief Secretary.

A fourth point is that when the Field Force reservists are called up in time of Emergency they could be far better employed in their own territory than guarding Police Headquarters in Miri.

A fifth point is that though in peace time the telephone connection between Marudi and Miri is not too bad, during the Emergency the system seemed to deteriorate alarmingly; it is also felt that it would be most useful if a type of private line, as used in the last war for secret conversations, could be effected.

Demobilisation started on the Sunday before Christmas and was about complete by the following Thursday after which a further 46 men were raised to help the Green Jackets as Scouts in the Tutoh and to hold positions of their own and they have so far sent in five suspects.

In closing this report I should like to mention the Chief Clerk of Marudi, Mr. Lau Kim Loke and Mr. Tan Kyn Syn the Secretary of the Baram District Council who on the 15th of December started work on the monumental task of straightening out the accounts of the Emergency and have been valiantly at it ever since.

Also the Temonggong Oyong Lawai Jau who remained in Marudi during the time of trouble and through his talks to the Orang Ulu kept them on their toes and ready to go.

Also Ex P.C. Kap who brought in the first seven suspects single handed from the Pangalayan canal; one of which later proved to be one of the leaders [seen] attacking the Kuala Belait Police Station.

Also S.A.O. Maurice Bujang who constantly make [sic] himself available for patrol work and interpreter work [for] the British Army.
Also Ex Sergeant of Police Philip Anyai, Schoolteacher of Rh. [Rumah] Malang, who came to Marudi early in the Emergency, went on Kuda Force to Bekenu and after returning[,] volunteered to return there to show “C” Company of the Green Jackets where Awang Morni and Bakar bin Haji Brahim were to be found.

Also Corporal Peter Lillin of the Sarawak Constabulary who was the only Policeman during the Emergency who kept…

Note: The remainder of this document is missing from the file.

(TNA, WO 32/21300, Item 16A, Enclosure to Letter to James Ramsden, MP from Sir John Vaughan-Morgan, MP, 2 March, 1964)

An Account of the Attack on Weston

Jesselton—Thirteen Sea-Bajaus were last week sentenced to a total of 50 years’ imprisonment by the stipendiary magistrate Mr. W.J. Silke in the magistrate’s court here for gang robbery, rioting and the unlawful possession of firearms. The fourteenth, the leader of the gang, Osman bin Ismail was committed to the High Court for trial on one charge and sentenced to 3 years’ imprisonment on two other charges.

The fourteen were connected with the incident on the night of December 7 and 8 last month when a rebellion broke out in the State of Brunei.

Prosecutor Mr W.A. Raby[,] Superintendent of Police, said that on the night of December 7, a party of about 50 persons, which included the 14 accused led by Osman bin Ismail, set out for Weston from the area of Kampong Lubuk near Sipitang.

They landed at Weston at 2 a.m. on the morning of December 8.

They had intended to take over Weston and to enable this they collected firearms from the inhabitants of Weston. The guns were handed over because of fear of the large number of the gang. The only policeman at Weston[,] Awang Tengah, was robbed of his Greener Shotgun by Osman who took it for himself. The party managed to collect 18 shotguns and rifles which were distributed among the men. The accused pleaded guilty of gang robbery.
Osman, who had led the men to take over Weston[,] was committed to the High Court for trial on one of [the] charges. All the others, except for the youngest of the group, were sentenced to three years’ imprisonment. 17-year-old Basar bin Daud[,] who was the youngest of the group, was given only a two-year sentence.

On December 8, six of the accused, Osman bin Ismail, Abdul Rahman bin Ismail, Idris bin Matassan, Lamit bin Ajak, Jepun bin Besar and Tassim bin Jaffar, were scouring the Lingkungan area in search of arms. One of the men posted as a sentry saw [a] Government Land Rover approach and he raised the alarm. Then the six lay in ambush and when the vehicle came within range the men opened fire. The Land-Rover was carrying armed policemen who immediately returned the fire. Osman[,] who was leading the group, had a .22 rifle with him then, and he shot one round into the Land Rover fortunately without injuring anybody.

Abdul Rahman, his brother who appeared to be second in command[,] was in possession of a home-made bomb which he ignited and threw into the vehicle. It landed in the midst of the policemen but one courageous policeman threw it out in the nick of time before it exploded.

The police party was forced to withdraw due to the concealed position of the ambushers.

Osman and his brother pleaded guilty to charges of rioting and the unlawful possession and use of firearms and explosives, and were given a three year sentence each. The other four were each given two years’ [sic] imprisonment to run consecutively to the other sentences.

The oldest of the group[,] 45-year-old Apong bin Ajak[,] was charged with robbing a gun from Ambrose Chin[,] a clerk at [a] timber camp at Batu Batu in the afternoon of December 8. He pleaded guilty to this charge and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment to run consecutively to [his] previous sentence of 3 years.

The accused were Osman bin Ismail, Abdul Rahman bin Ismail, Ibrahim bin Puteh, Aziz bin Besar, Idris bin Matassan, Madzin bin Matassan, Apong bin Ajak, Madzin bin Jaffar, Awang Tahir bin Idris, Bakar bin Haji Ghaffar, Lamit bin Ajak, Jepun bin Besar, Tassim bin
Besar and Basar bin Daud. The majority of the accused, all North Borneans, were from the area of Kampong Lubuk, near Sipitang. They were arrested during the period 8th December to the end of operations by the police.

Mr Raby, in his address to the Court, said that the persons brought before the Court today were all people who had Penal Code charges for having committed criminal offences which were of a very serious nature.

In passing sentence, the Stipendiary Magistrate said on the first charge: “In view of the nature and circumstances of this case, in that Osman bin Ismail was the ringleader and having convicted the accused, I am of the opinion that a greater punishment than I have power to inflict should be given. I therefore commit him to the High Court for sentence.”

With regard to the rest of the accused, Mr Silke said: “You have all attempted to bring fighting to North Borneo. I think however that you have been misled, and badly misled by your leaders, one of whom appears to be accused No. 1 in this case. You have committed serious offences both against the tranquility of this country and against the laws of this country. You must be punished both as a lesson to yourselves and as a deterrent to others who may be tempted to follow your example. In assessing sentence I take into consideration the hardship inflicted on your families by your being separated from them, that you have no previous conviction; but I also take into consideration the harm which you have caused to the people of North Borneo and it is the ordinary man, particularly on [sic] the Weston and Sipitang districts who has suffered most from your grave actions.”

(Sarawak Tribune, “Court Told of Weston Incident: Fourteen Jailed”, 9 January, 1963, p. 9)

The Floods of January 1963

FLOOD RELIEF

GENERAL

1. Five days heavy and persistent rain in the worst weather for over 30 years has resulted in the worst floods in living memory throughout the 4th and 5th Divisions of SARAWAK and BRUNEI. An average of 16 inches of rain has been recorded over the past week. On 17
January, because of the obvious distress of the local civilians, flood relief was given top priority over all else including anti-rebel operations.

SITUATION ON 18 JANUARY

2. The situation on 18 January was as follows.

a. South of MIRI BELVEDERE pilots reported that the NIAH and BEKENU areas were completely flooded, only the roof tops being visible. There appeared to be no activity [and] NO sign of life.

b. MIRI flooded but the situation did NOT appear serious.

c. ANDUKI SERIA KUALA BELAIT the floods were again NOT serious but the Queens [sic] Own Highlanders were repairing the dykes broken by the floods.

d. KUALA BELAI, [sic, Balai] Approximately 120 river folk from the neighbouring areas converged on KUALA BELAI for refuge.

e. MARUDI. The situation here was grave with approximately 1500 people without food. There was also a most urgent requirement for generators and water pumps to purify the contaminated water. On the 18th however, two ROYAL NAVY WESSEX helicopters took in 2000 lbs of rice and an RAF VALETTA took off at 1700 hrs the same evening to drop in 3700 lbs of ‘compo’ army rations by parachute. MARUDI itself is in a particularly dangerous position as it lies only twelve miles upstream from the confluence of a vast river drainage system. The situation upstream was NOT known, as bad weather precluded the use of reconnaissance aircraft.

f. LIMBANG RIVER. Along the length of the LIMBANG RIVER the situation was bad, with the river itself between 40 and 50 feet above its normal level. Houses in the area of DANAU and UKONG were completely submerged. The Royal Navy had mustered all available boats along the river and the evacuation of people from the flooded areas continued by boat and helicopter. To the SOUTH the small kampong of MEDAMIT was still safe.
and served as a haven for 300 refugees. On the 18th alone, 200 refugees were rescued by ‘D’ Company of 1/2 GURKHA RIFLES operating long boats, one small tug and two river trading vehicles brought into MEDAMIT. The long houses in the area were in danger of being swept away by the raging waters. Refugees[,] including many children in MEDAMIT, were housed in a school building. The Regimental Medical Officer of the 1/2 GURKHA RIFLES was flown in. Refugees were so weak from lack of food and exposure that it was considered inadvisable to attempt flying them out.

g. TEMBURONG RIVER AREA. There was extensive flooding in this area as well and 100 refugees were rescued by 42 COMMANDO ROYAL MARINES. Again boats were made available by the Royal Navy. On the 17th January the RAF managed, in very bad weather, to drop food to a 42 COMMANDO ROYAL MARINE patrol which had been isolated in mountainous jungle and without food for three days. On 16 January a WESSEX helicopter of 845 Sqn Royal Navy successfully winched out eight gunners and two MARINES who were marooned on an island rapidly disappearing under the flood.

h. TRUSAN AND LAWAS Areas. There was again extensive flooding in these areas resulting in the death of a soldier of 1st Bn the GREEN JACKETS, in spite of a medical officer with oxygen being flown out by helicopter to administer resuscitation.

j. [sic] KOTA BELUD. Again widespread flooding. Food for civilians being flown in from JESSELTON by a BELVEDERE helicopter and a Beverley aircraft.

SITUATION AS ON 20 JAN

3. Since 18 JAN the rain has held off just long enough to allow Security Forces to proceed with flood relief work. The flood in the lower reaches of all the rivers dropped quickly, leaving behind a trail of mud and devastation.
4. Helicopters and aircraft were used, frequently in appalling weather conditions[,] to resupply or rescue local civilians from the roofs of long houses. Collecting points were organised along the LIMBANGRRIVER [sic]. Refugees were fed and looked after by troops and Royal Navy personnel. The swift and effective action by all three services has undoubtedly resulted in the saving of many lives.

   a. Over 50,000 lbs of freight[,] principally food and urgent medical stores[,] have been airlifted to stricken areas by RN and RAF aircraft.
   b. Approximately 1000 civilians have been rescued or evacuated from the MEDAMIT and LIMBANG River areas alone.

6. [sic] The upper reaches of the BARAM were reconnoitred [sic] on 20 JAN and the situation was as follows:-

   a. SUNGEI TUTOH and SUNGEI TINGAR very badly flooded and the area generally devastated.
   b. At TINJAH ([map reference] 3734) and LONG TERU (3732) ninety percent of the huts and paddy harvest destroyed.
   c. From LONG TERU to LONG JEGEN (3529) eighty percent of the paddy harvest and ninety percent of the long houses and dwellings destroyed.

BRUNEI TOWN
7. On 14 January the main town water supply failed because one of the main pipes was fractured by a landslide, due to the heavy rain. As a result Royal Engineers have been used to supervise the necessary repair and 69 GURKHA INDEPENDENT FIELD SQUADRON constructed a water point, which has been working continuously since 15 January.

8. On 17 January the detention camp[,] holding approximately 1,200, flooded in parts to waist height. At 1700 hrs on the 17th January it was decided to move the detainees to the CHENG HUA school. By the next morning the new detention centre was completed, a perimeter fence having been erected and water and electricity laid on.
CONCLUSION

9. Although the floods have generally receeded [sic] in the lower reaches of all rivers the hinterland is still flooded. The danger to human life is now remote provided the weather improves, or at least does not worsen. However the floods have left in their wake, [sic] paddy fields swept away, many long houses destroyed and livestock drowned. The areas which appear to be worst hit are:-

a. Bekenu area.

b. MARUDI area, which is still threatened by further floods because of its geographical position.

c. LIMBANG River area.

10. Much of the harvest and food stores are a total loss. This will necessitate food relief continuing for up to a year (ie until [sic] the next crop is harvested). There is obviously a requirement for a rehabilitation scheme to rehouse the refugees. The local civilians are grateful for the way in which the three Services have given them so much assistance.


Report on the Attitudes of the People of Brunei

SOME REACTIONS OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION TO THE EMERGENCY

INTRODUCTION

1. A strictly limited amount of information is available on the attitude adopted by the civilian population of BRUNEI towards:-

a. The TNKU and the Insurrection.

b. The entry of BRUNEI into MALAYSIA

c. The BRITISH Government

d. The presence of BRITISH and other troops in BRUNEI.

This report is an attempt to present indications, however incomplete, of local reactions.
2. It is not surprising[,] in the circumstances, to find a considerable reluctance on the part of local BRUNEI inhabitants to discuss such matters, even amongst themselves. Since the uprising there has been a general and increasing atmosphere of suspicion and apprehension in all strata of BRUNEI society, that trust, placed in any quarter, may be misplaced and bring swift retribution on the head of the person concerned from PARTAI RAKYAT/TNKU, on the one hand, or the BRUNEI GOVERNMENT/POLICE/MILITARY on the other.

ATTITUDE OF THE KAMPONG BRUNEI MALAY

3. There was general widespread surprise and shock among the population at the suddenness and ferocity of the uprising and some confusion as to its objects.

4. A typical reaction has been recorded from a BRUNEI MALAY, aged about 30, married with 4 children, and employed as driver in the PWD. He is NOT a member of PARTAI RAKYAT. He earns approximately $200.00 per month, has been educated to Standard VI MALAY, and has a slight knowledge of English.

   a. The TNKU and the Insurrection

   He is outspoken in his condemnation of the TNKU, and the uprising.

   He claims loyalty to the SULTAN, and considers it tragic that an uprising against a Government authorised by the Ruler should occur, with consequent loss of life and suffering to the people.

   b. MALAYSIA

   He records no reaction to MALAYSIA, and confesses ignorance of the principles involved. He is content to be guided by the SULTAN’s wish in this matter.

   c. The BRITISH Government

   He is again unaware of the principles involved [in Brunei’s relationship with Great Britain], and makes no comment.

Comment:- This is general among BRUNEI MALAYS of his class.
d. The MILITARY

He is thankful and grateful for the presence of the military in BRUNEI to protect his family and children, but is not over-enthusiastic about their continued stay, as he envisages possible tension arising with the civilian population if the military rank and file are not controlled very closely in a small Muslim community like BRUNEI. He claims that he has no fear of GURKHAS and was relieved to see them arrive in the early stages. This relief is now somewhat tempered with respect and awe at their fearsome aspect.

ATTITUDE OF THE WELL-EDUCATED BRUNEI MALAY.

5. A more interesting reaction has been obtained from a middle-aged, well-educated, scholarly BRUNEI MALAY of some standing in the community.

a. The TNKU and the Insurrection

His reaction is strong disapproval of the PARTAI RAKYAT/TNKU, [sic] armed uprising, and he considers that this was engineered by a group of “power-seeking evil opportunists” (his own words) of limited political vision. Attempts to seize power by unconstitutional means, in his view, would never have the backing of the middle and educated classes in BRUNEI, whatever methods are employed to gain their support.

b. MALAYSIA

He shares a general lack of enthusiasm current among what can be loosely termed “BRUNEI Intellectuals” for MALAYSIA. He recognises that there is little chance of BRUNEI standing on its own, and therefore accepts the concept of BRUNEI’s entry into MALAYSIA as a long-term policy, the better and inevitable choice of the evils that present themselves for consideration. However, he strongly advocates some form of immediate constitutional reform which will allow the voice of members of the community, including minorities, to be heard, and is adamant that the system
in force immediately prior to the Insurrection allowed PARTAI RAKYAT and its advocates an unfair slice of the cake.

c. The BRITISH Government

He hopes that the British Government will exercise discretion in consideration of a new Constitution for BRUNEI. He is not clear what form this should take, but reiterates that the present conditions are manifestly inadequate.

d. The Military

He accepts the necessity for troops to be in BRUNEI, and is grateful to the British Government for the prompt action in the Emergency to quell the uprising and protect the individual and his property from harm. He accepted gracefully the need for a search to be conducted at his own home, and had this to say at the time. “If evil and foolish men do this kind of thing, searches and suchlike are necessary, and the innocent must suffer with the guilty.” He also volunteered the comment that the police and the Military had a disagreeable task to carry out in the Emergency.

GENERAL

6. a. MALAYSIA

(1) Fairly well informed opinion in BRUNEI adheres to the belief that intelligent well-educated MALAYS are, by and large, anti BRUNEI entry into MALAYSIA. A statement by TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN about two years ago to the effect that BRUNEI is too small to join the British Commonwealth on its own rankled, and still rankles, with this type of person, whether a member of the PARTAI RAKYAT or not, and although some feel that MALAYSIA is inevitable, it will come about with reluctance, if not opposition, on their part. Totally uneducated MALAYS are almost invariably anti-MALAYSIA because of incessant and expertly disseminated PARTAI RAKYAT propaganda.
A summary of the main reasons for anti-MALAYSIA feeling which have been noted are:

a. Concern at the disposal of BRUNEI’s money after entry.

b. A wish to “go it alone” and join MALAYSIA on BRUNEI’s own terms should that be desirable later.

c. Resentment at the disparaging remarks of TUNGKU [sic] ABDUL RAHMAN about BRUNEI.

d. Dissatisfaction at the incompetence of MALAYAN MALAY officers seconded to [the] BRUNEI Government in 1959.

b. Split in PARTAI RAKYAT/TNKU

(1) The attitude of TNKU rank and file towards the Insurrection, [sic] emerges from interrogations as a mixture of disappointment and anger that it failed. Promises of help from outside were not honoured, and there is a resentment, which has been slow in coming to the surface, that they were let down by their leaders. This is not a general attitude but is sufficiently widespread to merit consideration. Senior officers of the TNKU, such as JAIS bin Haji KARIM, now express contrition at their part in the uprising, but this must be viewed with suspicion as it is undoubtedly engendered by the desire for clemency.

(2) A pattern is slowly emerging from interrogations, which indicates that there was a split or definite divergence of opinion within PARTAI RAKYAT before the Insurrection. It is a fact that not all PARTAI RAKYAT were members of TNKU, and it is clear that numbers of PARTAI RAKYAT members wished to have no part in TNKU activities. In support of this contention is the mass resignation in members of a PARTAI RAKYAT Branch in Kampong TANJONG MAYER in September, 1962, noted in a letter to the Secretary of the TUTONG Branch seized during a raid. There is also a wealth of evidence from interrogations of force being used to obtain
recruits for the TNKU (a common excuse for participation) and HAFIDZ LAKSAMANA, Vice-President of PARTAI RAKYAT, had maintained, in the face of hostile interrogation, that he has had no part in TNKU activities, and has always advocated political progress in BRUNEI by constitutional means.

COMMENT

7. It is appreciated that there is a paucity of material in the foregoing on which to base an assessment. However, it is considered that the views quoted are honest, and reflect the mounting opinions of the class of persons they represent, on a fairly widespread basis in BRUNEI.


**Accounts of the Capture of the TNKU Command Group**

**The Complicated Chain of Information**

During late April and early May, Gurkha troops and the Special Branch carried out numerous patrols which ultimately resulted in the arrest of two TNKU supporters and a village headman; these arrests led in turn to the surrender of three rebels two days later. One of these rebels said that he had previously hidden in a house near the mouth of the Brunei River. Willingly, he guided a patrol from the 2/7th Gurkhas to the house but it was empty. On further interrogation, the guide stated that he knew another man who might give a lead in to the chain of Affendi’s supporters. After a long search, this second man was arrested on 14 May. Questioned for forty-eight hours, he finally gave the names of three food carriers. They were arrested on the 16th and handed over to the Special Branch. By skilful interrogation the Special Branch obtained the name of yet another food supplier and arrested him on the 17th.
This man admitted that he had taken food to a small party of rebels hidden in the swamp near Kampong Serdang, and said that he would guide the Security Forces to their camp.


**The Operation**

**THE END OF THE REBELLION**

The rebellion which has brought so much misery and sorrow to the people of BRUNEI came to an end very suddenly on Saturday morning the 18th May when, [*sic*] all the remaining leaders of the rebellion were either captured or killed.

Killed:—

- Awang Hidup bin Haji Besar
- Muntol bin Aji

Wounded and Captured: —

- Yassin Affandy
- Lalim bin Haji Sapar

Captured:—

- Mesir bin Kerudin
- Abdullah bin Ja’afar
- Sambas bin Murah and Salleh bin Sambas[,] both from the 5th Division of Sarawak.
- Abdul Rahman bin Karim

Acting on information received[,] a joint Special Branch-Military operation was launched against the rebels[,] which had been established on a marshy promontory which juts out into the River BRUNEI near Kampong SERDANG[,] which is just a few miles to the east of BRUNEI Town: [*sic*]
The force for the operation consisted of B Company of the Second Battalion[,] the Seventh Gurkha Rifles under command of Major D.J. CUTFIELD, Captain J.F.H. GREGORY of the Staffordshire Regiment, a military [sic] Intelligence Officer and Sergeant MOHAMMAD bin ABDUL MOMIN of the Special Branch. They formed up on the Island of BARU BARU which is in the BRUNEI Bay:

At about 6.30 a.m. two platoons of Gurkha Rifles embarked and moved off. One platoon disembarked at Kampong SERDANG and moved North East along the SERDANG-BESAR track. The second platoon disembarked at a deserted house East of SERDANG and the swamp area and moved South West along the track to link up with the other platoon. These two platoons strung out along the track[,] acting as a cut-off and so closing all possible escape routes from the South.

The assault group[,] consisting of Major CUTFIELD and ten men, the Intelligence Officer and the Special Branch Sergeant[,] arrived by boats at the mouth of a stream shortly after 7 a.m. At this juncture all other available boats were ordered to patrol up and down the seaward side of swamp area with the object of making as much noise as possible to cover the approach of the assault group and to act as an additional cut-off should the rebels breakout [sic] South towards the BRUNEI river [sic].

The assault group went about three hundred yards down the stream[,] which got progressively narrower until eventually the boats had to be abandoned. As the streams were too deep for wading, the assault group had to travel over the mud and the mangroves.

Although a search was carried out [over] about an hour and a half[,] the camp could not be found. So it was decided that the group would breakout northwards to the SERDANG track[,] return to SERDANG and make a second attempt. This time the assault party were split up into three boatloads and they entered the marshy area again from a different direction. As the boats approached downstream the avoidance of noise became more difficult, owing to the protruding mangroves and overhanging branches[,] which scraped the sides of the boats.
As it was thought the camp was only a few minutes away[,] the assault party got out of their boats and began slowly to wade down the narrow tributary to the right of the main stream. After travelling for about seventy five yards[,] a towel and part of a canvas shelter were seen fifteen yards away on the left bank.

The party moved cautiously forward in an attempt to find a suitable route through the bushes and mangrove which concealed the camp itself. At this juncture Captain GREGORY saw one of the rebels peering, [sic] through the trees and shouted that the rebels were escaping, whereupon Major CUTFIELD, Sergeant MOHD. and Captain GREGORY opened fire in the general direction of the camp[,] which was still invisible. The rebels were also called upon to surrender and informed that they were surrounded.

Major CUTFIELD and Sergeant MOHD[,] advancing direct and Captain GREGORY from the flank, then moved in on the camp which was surrounded by mangrove[s] and water. One man emerged with his hands up and was identified as ABDULLAH JA’AFAR, his first words in English were “It’s alright’ [sic] I won’t run away”.

In the meantime, six Gurkhas had arrived on the scene and an immediate follow up was initiated after the escaping rebels. Within ten yards of the camp two single barrelled shotguns and two packs, each containing a .38 revolver were recovered, these had obviously been dropped by the rebels in their flight.

As there were no old tracks in the area, it was appreciated, from the tell tale signs, that the rebels had split into two parties, four of them had gone North and the other four West.

A few minutes later the rebels who were heading North were seen by one of the cut-offs, Rifleman NAINABAHADUR RAI, from B Company. Initially he was unable to fire without danger to his own men, the rebels however doubled back towards him and when they were twenty five yards [away] NAINABAHADUR RAI opened fire.

His first shots killed the two leading rebels, H.B. HIDUP and MUNTOL bin AJI, he fired again[,] wounding YASSIN AFFANDY and LALIM bin HAJI SAPAR. In all[,] he fired nine rounds.
Meanwhile two members of the follow up party[,] Rifleman BALAMAN RAI dan [sic] Rifleman INDRAJIT RAI[,] chased a rebels [sic] group that had run in a Westerly direction. They eventually found them attempting to hide in the undergrowth. The rebel group realising that they were cornered surrendered at once. These were SALLEH bin SAMBAS, his father SAMBAS bin MURAH, MISIR KERUDIN and ABDUL RAHMAN bin KARIM. One man escaped but later he gave himself up. He had been employed by the rebels as a cook.

A few shotguns, pistols and ammunition were found in the camp. There was a considerable amount of food and clothing, and a large number of documents and papers. Some of these belonged to YASSIN AFFANDY. These papers and documents are being studied by the Government and it is believed they will probably give a complete picture of the REVOLT. There remains only one rebel of any importance who is still at large, OMAR TAMIN, one time member of the Central Executive Committee of the Party Rakyat.

This brilliant little combined operation has, at one blow[,] brought to an end the rebellion and the people of BRUNEI can breathe freely once more.


The Account of Nainabahadur Rai

At dawn we embarked in boats all driven by officers of the Royal Engineers, lieutenants, captains and a major. It was full daylight by the time we landed. We moved off half an hour later into the hinterland and were put into ambush positions by the platoon commander, in a circle. We were in overgrown rubber which was marshy and it was no place to take up the prone position.

By 1100 hours I was feeling hungry and needed to stretch my legs. I had left camp without cleaning my teeth and had a bad taste in my mouth. I was cleaning them with my finger when I heard firing. The enemy’s position was an island in a swamp in which was another island. I learnt that the firing was Special Branch at the enemy camp with a squad of B Company.
I stayed watching my front for a long time. I heard “Catch them” shouted three times but saw nothing. It was quiet after the firing. There was a small track where I was and I walked down it as my legs were restless to a tree to my front. I saw the undergrowth move and thought it was my men coming my way. I was afraid I’d shoot them if I had not applied my safety catch but also afraid that I would miss any enemy if I did not release my safety catch. I moved it on and off several times. The undergrowth moved again but I saw nobody.

I took cover behind the tree and saw four men. Were they rubber tappers or enemy? Then I saw one, dressed in black, who had a pistol on him and a bag of ammunition. Three others also wore black. I now knew I could kill them and at least one would fall to a couple of shots. But the four men disappeared. Then the undergrowth again moved so I had to kill them or I would die. But would I kill my own men on the other side of the enemy as our ambush was circular? I saw the four men talking but could not hear them. There was so much young rubber that I felt I’d only kill one with the first round and the others would hide. I hid my elbow behind the tree trunk so it could not be seen. I kept on changing my stance to get a better shot as they came towards me.

I saw a hat which I used as an aiming point. The four men came up the track towards me and I waited for them. Again they disappeared but soon came into view. I waited for them to come nearer still. They were in single file. From about 15 yards I fired one round and all fell. I went up to inspect the bodies and saw that my one bullet had killed three of them, the first man was hit in the stomach, the second in the chest and the third in the head. I looked at the fourth man who had no eye but also no hole at the back of his head. It was my lucky day.

I saw that the fourth man had spiked his eye out as he fell but I did not know if he was dead or not because he had no hole at the back of his head. I put my rifle to his chest and said “Hands up!” He opened his good eye and I was so startled I flinched and fired my weapon, hitting him in the left thigh.

I shouted out saying I had killed three men and had shot a fourth. The OC, in the distance, shouted “Where? where? [sic]” and I answered “Here, here.” We shouted like that for some time and eventually the OC and others came on the scene. I had blood on my trousers and
my boots. The OC asked the wounded man who he was. He did not answer for three times and then said he was Yassin Affendi. The OC shouted out in joy and slapped me on the back. He got into contact with battalion HQ and was told to keep Yassin Affendi alive at all costs. A helicopter arrived with the CO and the adjutant. Were they pleased! Two of the dead men were the general manager and the training officer [of the TNKU]. The four, three dead and one wounded, were flown out.

Indonesia’s Complicity in the Rebellion

Lord Selkirk’s Views on Indonesian Intentions

Indonesia has always wanted to get hold of the British Borneo territories. With the conclusion of the agreement with Tunku Abdul Rahman in December, 1961, in regard to the formation of Malaysia[,] it must have seemed that the Indonesian aim would be thwarted.

2. Secret reports show that Soekarno, Subandrio and Azahari agreed about that time that the Indonesians would help to train and equip an army of 1200 people. Work on this appears to have started early in 1962 and to have continued at least until September of this year. The Indonesians also helped substantially with money. For instance, in June and July of this year, the Indonesian Government gave $500,000 for the “intelligence movement in Brunei to work in the Borneo territories”. Other financial aid has been given to Azahari through the Indonesian Consul General in Singapore besides [the] money in Japan. Beyond moral encouragement by Partindo, the Indonesian veterans, the Nationalist, Communist, Muslim, Perti and Murba parties, Soekarno has now involved his Government in support of the rebels and stated that anyone who does not support the Brunei rebels is a traitor to Indonesia.

3. The actual organisation of the Revolt had at least some element of free-lance effort and probably took place before the Indonesians were ready for it. I had hoped that we could protest in the strongest terms before the Government officially committed itself. We must now endeavour to discourage Indonesian moral support from turning into armed support.

With the long open frontier between the Borneo territories it is physically impossible to know exactly what may be happening there now. With secret Indonesian support, the Guerilla [sic] war can be maintained in the jungles of Borneo almost indefinitely. In due course this will lead to incidents and we may well lose over-flying rights in Indonesian territory. It is obviously necessary that the strongest protest should be delivered both in Djakarta and in London.
4. The neutralists are, by definition, countries which do not interfere in the affairs of others and indeed we did not interfere in the revolt in Sumatra which we could have done very easily. But the only way to pull the Indonesians up short is by a display of force in which I would hope the United States 7th fleet would help by sailing in Borneo waters. At a lower level I should recommend the closing of the Consulate in Jesselton (only opened a few months ago) or as a minimum that the military intelligence officer attached to it who is so interested in Brunei should be made persona non grata. I should also recommend that Colonel Soegih Arto, the Consul General in Singapore, who has been obviously closely in touch with Azahari, should be treated in the same way. If we really cannot face the retaliation which would take place[,] then the sooner we face up to the position we are in[,] the better.

(TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 142A, Telegram to the FO from the Commissioner-General for the UK in Southeast Asia, No. 375, 20 December, 1962, paras. 1-4)

**Britain’s Evidence of Indonesian Complicity in the Revolt, Part I**

If Dr. Subandrio tries to involve you in discussion of our evidence on the two aspects of Indonesian involvement given in paragraph 2 in my telegram under reference, you may use the following.

2. During March to September, 1962, five groups of men, from 17 to 50 strong were observed making their way from Brunei and the Lawas district of Sarawak by various routes into Indonesia and Borneo [sic]. In September, the Sarawak police discovered letters from Indonesia to addressees in Brunei containing requests for money and clothing for trainees. One of the letters, addressed to Azahari, was from M. Soleiman who was described as “Head of Information Office, Malinau”. (Copies of letters and translations can be made available to you from Singapore). Interrogations in North Borneo confirm that training camps were established near Malinau . . . Further confirmation of Indonesian military training is becoming available from interrogations and three prisoners have already confirmed that they received limited military training in Indonesia and were told by an Indonesian Army Officer
that they could not be provided with further training since they had no letter of authority from Azahari.

3. We are proceeding as quickly as possible with our examination of all available evidence. It is becoming very clear, however, that this can only be obtained from detailed interrogation of the prisoners and political detainees and that it may be limited to training in Indonesia and the activities of the Consulate at Jesselton.

(TNA, DEFE 11/391, Item 152, Telegram to the Ambassador to Indonesia from the FO, No. 1101, 21 December, 1962, paras. 1-3)

Britain’s Evidence of Indonesian Complicity in the Revolt, Part 2

Following signal has been made available by BDLS [British Defence Liaison Staff]:

“1. We have now produced a paper, based on all available evidence, of the extent of Indonesian support and complicity in the Borneo territories.

2. Our conclusions are as follows:-

(a) A psychological warfare element of the Indonesian military intelligence service has been operating under a Lieutenant Colonel Suparman for not less than two years on tasks directed against Malaya and the Borneo territories. Its prime concern in the Borneo territories has been, and still is, the conduct of subversive activities to win the inhabitants over to sympathy with Indonesia with the view to eventual incorporation of the Borneo territories into Indonesia.

(b) About November, 1961, it is probable that Azahari reached agreement with high Indonesian leaders, including Soekarno and Subandrio, for a number of his followers to be given military training in Indonesia under army auspices. Certain steps were taken in an effort to make this training non-attributable by using part Indonesian volunteers as trainers and not army personnel. Cadre elements were given military training near Malinau in
East Kalimantan over a period of some months and returned [to Brunei] to train additional TNKU personnel.

(c) In addition to Azahari’s contacts with Indonesian officials, politicians and leaders of mass movements, he has been in touch with PKI leaders. There is no evidence however of their having given him direct support, although they now intend to exploit the situation created by his activities.

(d) Despite Indonesian involvement in the military training of the TNKU, Indonesian officials in Djakarta, including some who should have been ‘in the know’ were surprised by the timing of the revolt.”

(ANA, File 248/5/6, Department of Defence Minute Paper: Indonesian Support for Subversion in Borneo, Joint Intelligence Committee, 27 December, 1962)
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