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## **‘Measuring Victory: Assessing the Outcomes of *Konfrontasi*, 1963-66’**

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**Abstract:** *From 1963-66 Britain and Indonesia clashed in a low-intensity conflict known as the Confrontation. Orthodox perspectives have coded this conflict a tremendous British victory. Revisionist authors have demonstrated the contingent and questionable nature of this conclusion. This article re-assesses the outcomes of Confrontation by using an alternative methodological framework: five key themes drawn from the wider literature on military victory. Using such a lens supports many aspects of the revisionist case, but shows also that the outcomes of Confrontation are even more complex. Confrontation in fact provides an object lesson in the difficulties in assessing categorically the outcomes of war. As such, its importance to our understanding of the problems in defining victory in war has been greatly undervalued.*

**Key words:** Confrontation; Victory; Counter-Insurgency; Southeast Asia

This article evaluates the outcomes of the undeclared war fought between Britain and Indonesia from 1963-66, a conflict known as 'confrontation' (after *Konfrontasi*, the Indonesian label for it). Confrontation was for both sides a complex and difficult campaign. If it is less well known than the Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960, it is no

less important. For Britain, Confrontation constituted the ‘the largest single operational commitment of the entire East of Suez period after 1957’<sup>1</sup> and ‘the gravest colonial crisis of the 1960s’.<sup>2</sup> For Indonesia, Confrontation both reflected and contributed to a period of profound domestic turmoil that ended with regime change and a bloodletting that killed an estimated 500,000 people.

Orthodox perspectives have seen the campaign as a triumphant British success; indeed an exemplary exercise in the disciplining of military means to political purpose. Revisionist perspectives have been much more critical, highlighting numerous British failures, several important Indonesian successes, and the role, generally, of serendipitous events in creating the illusion of British victory in what otherwise was a highly contingent result.

This article re-assesses the outcomes of Confrontation by using an alternative methodological framework: in this case five key themes drawn from the wider literature on military victory.<sup>3</sup> The concept of ‘victory’ is fundamental to effective strategy. The strategist Bernard Brodie has commented that ‘strategy is a field where truth is sought in pursuit of viable solutions’.<sup>4</sup> But the viability of a given solution depends upon our ability to determine whether or not it works; and this in turn requires a determination of how we should measure success. The enduring problems in doing this have particular contemporary relevance given the Western experience since the end of cold war: even if Western militaries seem increasingly effective on conventional battlefields, this does not appear to equate to a commensurate ability to deliver uncontested political outcomes. The literature on military victory highlights five particular difficulties that complicate any assessment of the success or failure of the use of military power: the difficulties in measuring the attainment of political

objectives; the problems of cost-benefit analysis; the question of whose perspective we privilege; the impact of perceptions; and finally the issue of time-scale.

This article comprises of two parts. The first part analyses the orthodox and revisionist perspectives on the outcomes of the Confrontation campaign. The second, re-examines the outcomes of Confrontation according to the five core issues highlighted above. As this article demonstrates, using such a lens supports many aspects of the revisionist case, but shows also that the results of Confrontation are even more complex. Confrontation in fact provides an object lesson in the difficulties in assessing categorically the outcomes of war. As such, its importance to our understanding of the problems in defining victory in war has been greatly undervalued.

### ***Konfrontasi*: the case for a British success**

Orthodox perspectives on the outcomes of Confrontation dominated assessments of the conflict until the end of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> These perspectives characterised Confrontation as a colossal British victory. The benchmarks used to reach this conclusion related to two themes: politically, Britain's attainment of its initial goals; and militarily, the comprehensive failure of Indonesian cross-border operations against Malaysia.

Politically, Confrontation took place in a number of contexts: the Cold War, with the consequent concern on the part of Britain to ensure the stability of Southeast Asia and to prevent further inroads by Communism; of rising nationalism, with the consequent pressures for de-colonisation; and of the widening gap between Britain's global commitments and its material resources. The proximate cause of Confrontation was the decision made by Britain to support the creation in 1963 of the Federation of

Malaysia, a new state that would combine the independent, but pro-British, state of Malaya with the Crown Colony of Singapore, and Britain's colonial territories in Borneo comprising Sarawak, Brunei and British North Borneo. The British government painted the idea of the federation in benign tones, arguing that the Malaysia project was the culmination of 'the wishes of the people concerned, the advantages for those peoples, both internally and externally, and the advantage for South East Asia (and so ultimately the free world).'6 The federation was finally created in September 1963. In the event, Indonesia, an archipelagic state which included the southern portion of the island of Borneo, opposed the federation, its President Achmed Sukarno arguing both that the federation was designed to perpetuate British colonial influence in the region, and that the population of the territories of northern Borneo had not been consulted adequately on whether they were actually in favour of joining.<sup>7</sup>

Indonesian opposition was expressed through a campaign of *Konfrontasi*: a mixture of political, economic, and military activity intended to be sufficiently robust to undermine the Malaysia project but also sufficiently restrained that it would not create the conditions for an escalation of the crisis into a major conventional war. This approach replicated the strategy applied successfully by Indonesia against Dutch West New Guinea in 1962. Militarily, the core of the Confrontation campaign comprised of an extended series of Indonesian cross-border raids from Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) into East Malaysia (comprising Sarawak and Sabah provinces, the latter the re-named colony of British North Borneo). These cross-border raids were augmented by subversion, terrorism, and military posturing that extended in 1964 into West Malaysia (Malaya and Singapore). British involvement in Confrontation in support of Malaysia was explained by United Kingdom policy-makers as the result of a response

to the request of a Commonwealth ally, under the terms of treaty obligations associated with the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement (AMDA) of 1963, in the face of unwarranted aggression from a larger neighbour. Britain's stated objectives were to support Malaysia until such time as Malaysia and Indonesia could reach a political resolution to the conflict. In Parliament, government ministers argued that Britain's primary concern was the welfare of the inhabitants of Sarawak and Sabah and Singapore, and to ensure that they were placed 'in a constitutional framework which will give them the opportunity of the greatest measure of political stability, collective security and economic expansion when they become independent.'<sup>8</sup>

The campaign was not without its difficulties. In particular, growing tensions between Malaya and Singapore led the latter to secede (or to be expelled, depending upon how one sees it) from Malaysia in August 1965. Nevertheless, the campaign seemed to develop in ways favourable to Britain. As the conflict became more protracted, President Sukarno moved further leftwards and tensions grew between the Indonesian army (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, or TNI) and the Indonesian Communist Party (the *Partai Komunis Indonesia*, or PKI). These tensions exploded into a coup attempt on the 30 September 1965; this began a process that saw the rise to power of a pro-Western TNI government under General Suharto.

Confrontation came to an end through the ratification on 11 August 1966 of a peace settlement between Indonesia and Malaysia. In relation to the United Kingdom's overarching goals, this peace treaty was an apparent triumph: Indonesia recognised Malaysia, ceased its campaign of *Konfrontasi*, and agreed to accept the outcome of scheduled elections in East Malaysia in 1967 as a sufficient test on the part of the people of Borneo of their desire to be part of Malaysia. For Britain, the campaign was 'a victory, a compensation for the humiliation of Aden, which was

being played out as ‘Confrontation’ ended and still had a year to go.’<sup>9</sup> Traditional interpretations have therefore viewed the British performance as exemplary. Militarily, the outcomes were heavily in Britain’s favour despite British and Commonwealth troops being outnumbered significantly on the ground. At Confrontation’s conclusion, 1600 Indonesian troops had been killed, wounded or captured, as against only 300 Commonwealth casualties.<sup>10</sup> Politically, Britain appeared to obtain all that it wanted. Indonesia established normal relations with Malaysia, accepting it as an independent state. A process of regime change within Indonesia resulted in the effective removal of the virulently anti-Western Sukarno and his replacement with a government under General Suharto. This new regime pursued a pro-West policy and set about destroying the Indonesian communist party.

Assessing the results, Sir Denis Healey, the British Minister of Defence from October 1964, labelled the Confrontation campaign as ‘one of the most efficient uses of military force in the history of the world.’<sup>11</sup> General Sir Walter Walker, Director of Borneo Operations (in effect, the joint military commander) until March 1965, characterised Confrontation as a ‘decisive victory’.<sup>12</sup> Politically, ending Confrontation reflected, in the words of one British official at the time ‘The greatest success of British diplomacy in East Asia in recent years.’<sup>13</sup> This view remained afterwards firmly entrenched in the limited literature on Confrontation, with commentators characterising the British performance in Confrontation as a total victory<sup>14</sup> and the best-conducted British campaign since the end of the Second World War.<sup>15</sup> The British performance was assessed as having been ‘one of the most efficient ever conducted in a jungle environment’.<sup>16</sup>

From the late 1990s onwards, the release of official documents on the conflict led to the emergence of a revisionist perspectives. Important works by Matthew Jones,

John Subritzky, and David Easter highlighted Britain's mounting difficulties during the conflict and the invalidation of many of its initial goals and assumptions.<sup>17</sup> These works added new dimensions to the analysis of the outcomes of Confrontation. It was evident, for example, that Britain did not achieve all of its objectives. Malaysia was supposed to reduce the costs of the Singapore base and allow Britain to continue its regional presence. Confrontation, however, ensured that: 'The asking price to be paid for remaining a Far Eastern power proved too high.'<sup>18</sup> Moreover, British objectives changed during Confrontation. After the 30 September coup, with Britain still initially believing that any new Indonesian regime would remain wedded to Confrontation, British aims focused instead on the need 'to control the terms and conditions of a British withdrawal and avoid being shamefully bundled out.'<sup>19</sup> Indeed, this point could be taken as indicative of Confrontation's contingent outcome. Britain actually believed that it was losing Confrontation and the coup, therefore, was seen as an opportunity to negotiate a settlement, perhaps sparing the UK from a humiliating outcome.<sup>20</sup> The revisionist perspective also touches upon Indonesian perspectives on the outcomes of the conflict. For Subritzky, for example, victory for Britain was pyrrhic and 'Insofar as British withdrawal and the end of empire in Southeast Asia, not the destruction of Malaysia per se, was his ultimate objective, the Indonesian president, Sukarno, had succeeded beyond expectation'.<sup>21</sup>

Based as they are on primary sources, the revisionist perspectives provide a compelling insight into the limitations of the orthodox literature in assessing the outcomes of Confrontation. But these excellent revisionist works were not intended to provide a systematic analysis of the quality of outcomes for Britain and Indonesia. Moreover, several more recent interpretations have continued to portray Confrontation as an exemplary British success.<sup>22</sup>



By applying more systematically themes derived from the literature on victory, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the issue of success and failure in Confrontation. Further, this complexity in itself can tell us a great deal about the concept of victory in war. Examining the literature on victory in war, five themes are prominent in explaining why success in war is difficult to measure: problems in assessing the attainment of political objectives; difficulties in cost-benefit analysis; the question of whose perspective we privilege; the impact of perceptions; and, finally, the issue of time-scale.

### **Attaining Political Objectives**

One obvious criterion for assessing the outcomes of Confrontation would seem to be the political goals of its chief protagonists. After all, war is instrumental: it is designed to achieve a purpose, so these purposes rationally would seem to be appropriate metrics against which to judge success or failure. This approach, of course, is central to orthodox perspectives on British success.

However, it is clear that declared political objectives can be a problematic benchmark against which to judge eventual outcomes. One difficulty is that political objectives often are not stated with clarity at the outset of war.<sup>23</sup> It can often also be that the stated goals have a transcendental quality to them - 'heroic self-defence,' for example - making it difficult to gauge realistically if they have actually been attained.<sup>24</sup> Alternatively, the need to sustain domestic or international support may actually require goals that are an ambiguous compromise.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, ambiguous goals may have utility for a state in terms of maintaining flexibility and in avoiding clear criteria by which failure might later be judged.<sup>26</sup> Nor, crucially, can we assume that

political goals remain constant during war.<sup>27</sup> Changing circumstances caused by such factors as battlefield outcomes, domestic political changes, or international politics will often lead belligerents to alter their objectives.<sup>28</sup>

Confrontation embodies several of these crucial difficulties. When we take a closer look at Britain's political objectives, it becomes clear that the declared intentions of the British government did not reflect many of the actual goals sought by British policy-makers. In private, the British objective at the outset of Confrontation was directed towards trying to sustain Malaysia because it would allow Britain to extend its stay in its bases at Singapore by reducing the political and financial burden.<sup>29</sup> Sustaining a British presence in Southeast Asia, but at a reduced cost and with increased legitimacy, was thus the central British goal.

Judged in relation to this undeclared objective, Confrontation produced poor results. Fighting Indonesia raised, rather than lowered, the costs of sustaining a British presence in Southeast Asia. Moreover, by 1965 serious questions were being asked in Whitehall about the viability in the long term of the Singapore bases, doubts that were reinforced when Singapore itself left the federation, unravelling much of the *raison d'etre* for the Malaysia project in the first place. By 1967, the Wilson government had announced its intention to withdraw from Singapore and downgrade Britain's presence East of Suez.

However, using as a benchmark Britain's initial undeclared goal is itself problematic because British objectives changed over time. For example, by mid-1964, Britain's growing economic problems and the need to rationalise and prioritise British defence meant that it was recognised increasingly that Singapore was not a viable base even in the medium term.<sup>30</sup> At this time, however, there seemed to be two compelling objectives that were still served by Confrontation. One was to maintain

the Singapore base for as long as possible in order to maximise British influence with its key ally, the US.<sup>31</sup> The second was defeat avoidance. A political compromise with Indonesia would look internationally like a set-back for Britain – it would strengthen anti-Westernism, encourage Communism, and create the perception that Britain had reneged on its defence commitment to Malaysia, undermining Britain's relationships elsewhere with its allies.<sup>32</sup> By mid-1965 the costs of Confrontation meant that Britain had come to seek any outcome that would relieve Britain of the burden of Confrontation as long as that settlement was acceptable to Malaysia.<sup>33</sup> But in the context of the war in Vietnam and the broader struggle against Communism in Southeast Asia such an outcome was anathema to the US.<sup>34</sup> It was made clear to Britain that American economic and military help elsewhere, including financial support for Sterling, was contingent on supporting US interests in the Far East.<sup>35</sup> By December 1965, then, Britain persevered with Confrontation primarily to sustain its relationship with its allies, especially the United States.

But which of these objectives should be prioritised in assessing outcomes? Earlier objectives cannot necessarily be weighted more heavily, since there may be good reasons why they are modified or discarded. Britain was unsuccessful in achieving many of its original goals, but it did succeed in avoiding the appearance of defeat, and the consequent damage to its credibility. Moreover, persevering with Confrontation, did, in the end, service important alliance relationships as well as delivering a regional ally in the form of the pro-Western, virulently anti-Communist Indonesian regime of President Suharto.

### **Relative Costs and Gains**

A second issue raised by the literature on victory is that success or failure in war rarely is a binary outcome (i.e. where one side wins absolutely and therefore the other side loses absolutely): outcomes instead are usually relative in nature.<sup>36</sup> Success in a war therefore could instead be judged relative to the costs and benefits of fighting it; positive outcomes, for example, may be outweighed if the costs of the war are immense. But outcomes can also be considered relative to the opponent – even if a state achieves only a few of its objectives, if this is more than the other side then a conflict might still be construed as a success. It is also entirely possible, therefore, that neither side wins outright.<sup>37</sup> Thus, even if the political outcomes of Confrontation were complex, we might still judge the outcomes for Britain very favourably if they were achieved at little relative cost. Or, for example, if Britain failed to achieve most of its objectives, Confrontation might still be regarded as a success if Indonesia achieved even fewer.

In practice, however, this vital relative assessment compounds earlier analytical problems because it compares one uncertain set of benchmarks against another. How, for example, do we weigh the costs and benefits of armed conflicts especially in complex unconventional fighting in which relative casualty rates or the movements of front lines fail to give an accurate approximation of progress.<sup>38</sup> Should we weigh tangible costs and benefits (casualties, resources) against the intangible (honour, prestige, credibility, legitimacy)?<sup>39</sup> Moreover, if we assess victory in relation to the enemy, can we assume that both sides assess costs and benefits in the same way?<sup>40</sup> And are there other comparators that we should use in this cost-benefit assessment: should we measure whether a state better is better off after a war than before it; or whether the results of the war were better or worse than alternative

courses of action; or whether a state performed better than other states in similar circumstances?<sup>41</sup>

On this basis, there are to begin with historiographical difficulties in determining what Indonesia wanted from *Konfrontasi*, making relative assessment with Britain difficult. Indonesian foreign policy was dominated by a single individual - the mercurial, impulsive President Sukarno. Indonesian foreign policy objectives therefore are not easy to fathom, making comparative attainment difficult to calculate. As Rex Mortimer has argued: 'Sukarno's ultimate objectives in the confrontation of Malaysia were never clearly defined and have been the subject of controversy'.<sup>42</sup> Indonesia's key declared objective in the early stages of Confrontation was laid out at meetings in Manila in June and July 1963. Indonesia would accept Malaysia if an impartial and independent ascertainment process took place to determine whether the peoples of Sarawak and Sabah wished to be part of the federation.<sup>43</sup> But other pronouncements also implied a range of other goals in pursuing Confrontation. One goal seems to have been to thwart perceived threats. These included the threat posed by Malaysia as a neo-colonial construct which might perpetuate colonial influence on Indonesia's borders, as well as suspicion of the intentions of Malaysia's large Chinese minority.<sup>44</sup> Associated with this goal were the removal of UK bases and the creation of some kind of regional grouping that would be responsible for peace and security. It is also clear that Indonesia had a wide range of undeclared objectives. These objectives included eliciting greater prestige and respect for Indonesia and reinforcing the argument that it deserved to be consulted over significant regional political change.<sup>45</sup> Nation-building seems to have been another goal, with Confrontation reinforcing historical narratives of struggles for independence against oppressive external powers.<sup>46</sup>

But perhaps the key unarticulated objective of Confrontation was domestic power balancing. The struggle against Malaysia and its allies perpetuated a febrile atmosphere of revolutionary struggle. This external struggle focused Indonesians away from the country's domestic problems and thus put off the need to engage in economic reforms that would have hit many Indonesians hard and been politically divisive.<sup>47</sup> Crucially, it reinforced in addition Sukarno's role as 'national shadow puppet-master' in managing the antagonistic relationship between the two key domestic forces: the army and the communist party.<sup>48</sup> In many respects, Confrontation was 'the external expression of the very nature of Guided Democracy serving as a common denominator for political elements joined in adverse partnership'.<sup>49</sup>

Complicating matters further are the changes that appeared to take place in Indonesian objectives. Sukarno's evident frustration at Indonesia's failure to obtain early political concessions led him to escalate his rhetoric. In 1963, he asserted publicly his determination to *ganjang* Malaysia (to 'mouth' it or 'eat it up'); and in 1964 he announced that Malaysia would be destroyed 'by the time the cock crows on January 1, 1965'.<sup>50</sup> But did this reflect a substantive change in Indonesian objectives, or was this merely an escalation in Indonesian attempts at coercion? In March and May 1965 Sukarno made tentative political overtures to Malaysia.<sup>51</sup> This might have been, as Britain believed, simply an Indonesian ploy: but it might indicate by this stage that Indonesia desired a compromise. After the coup of 30 September, General Suharto's regime maintained a declaratory commitment to Confrontation. But it was evident through their efforts at a negotiated settlement that Indonesia's objectives had changed to obtaining a political agreement with Malaysia so that the government could focus its efforts on resolving Indonesia's crippling economic crisis.<sup>52</sup>

The relative attainment of objectives in Confrontation therefore is problematic to judge because it isn't wholly clear what goals Indonesia pursued nor their relative importance. Indonesia certainly seems to have achieved some goals. The costs of Confrontation almost certainly expedited Britain's decision to terminate its presence in Singapore. The conflict also seemed to strengthen the power of regionalism, and Indonesia's place within it. The Indonesian Foreign Minister argued in 1966 in relation to Confrontation that: 'No one has won or lost. Victory goes to the Malayan people, the great race in Southeast Asia, to which both Indonesia and Malaysia belong'.<sup>53</sup> In 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) came into being, with Indonesia as a key power.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, Malaysia was not 'eaten up'. The political settlement that was agreed 'made only symbolic concessions', in which the wishes of the population of East Malaysia would be ascertained through elections that were due anyway in 1967, and in which none of the candidates stood on a platform of withdrawal from the federation.<sup>55</sup> Franklin B. Weinstein argues that: 'From the standpoint of the issues ostensibly involved in the Malaysia dispute, the final settlement was in fact a rather complete capitulation on Indonesia's part'.<sup>56</sup> Certainly, some in the Indonesian elite took this view, the then ambassador to Washington opining that: 'It has become quite clear that for all our claims to international leadership we ended up with an even greater dependency on foreign credits and with our freedom of action seriously compromised'.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, if Confrontation was motivated primarily by domestic objectives aimed towards cementing Sukarno's rule as interlocutor between other antagonistic political actors, then it must certainly be classed a colossal failure.

An alternative would be to weight the outcomes according to relative costs. This idea features heavily in orthodox assessments: Confrontation is deemed a British

success because Britain achieved so much with so little relative to the enemy. For example, General Walker noted, from a military perspective, the ‘pathetically small’ forces that he had available to counter an enemy that he argued was as strong as the Vietcong and North Vietnam.<sup>58</sup> Economically, Adam Malik, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, in 1966 justified to the Indonesian people the ending of Confrontation because it was consuming some 70% of the government budget.<sup>59</sup>

But elements of this argument are contestable. The notion that Confrontation was a low-cost conflict for Britain is a myth.<sup>60</sup> Whilst the forces deployed in Borneo appeared relatively small, and casualties very limited, Confrontation required the maintenance in Southeast Asia of forces not just to defend East Malaysia, but to help defend West Malaysia, to deter Indonesia from escalation, and to service a variety of contingency plans covering options up to, and including, conventional war. As Healey noted in 1965: ‘confrontation with Indonesia might escalate at any time to a level which would immediately require some 50 percent of our land forces, 75 percent of our air strike capability and 90 percent of our escort fleet. If such an escalation were to last for more than a few months, confrontation alone would involve virtually the whole of our existing Service man-power.’<sup>61</sup> At the same time, the actual number of Indonesian forces committed to Confrontation was quite small. In the first quarter of 1965, for example, total Indonesian forces committed in Borneo amounted to some 22,000 men.<sup>62</sup> Economically, British officials assumed that Indonesia was suffering less than Britain. The British ambassador to Indonesia, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, commented in August 1965 that, for the Indonesians ‘Confrontation has been too successful and painless.’<sup>63</sup> In fact, economic conditions in Indonesia were certainly dire by 1966 and far worse than those that existed in Britain. In 1965, for example, inflation in the price of rice had reached 900 percent a year.<sup>64</sup> Whether Confrontation



was using 70% of the Indonesian budget, however, is arguable, since Malik, of course, had good reasons to inflate the costs in order to justify the benefits to the Indonesian people of the August 1966 political settlement.

Cost benefit analyses relative to other conflicts are also cited by some as indicators of British success; but, in reality, they are equally contentious. One British officer commented that 'Borneo could so easily have become another Vietnam... it is against this background that its success must be measured'.<sup>65</sup> But comparing Confrontation with Vietnam is problematic: no two wars are ever exactly the same, and context is crucial.<sup>66</sup> The US' struggle against North Vietnam was an order of magnitude more challenging than Confrontation, comprising of an enemy strategy that combined a systematic internal insurgency closely linked to an active, large-scale conventional military campaign.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, comparing the outcomes for Britain or Indonesia of fighting Confrontation against the costs of not doing is highly problematic. United Kingdom policy-makers after the conflict argued for the dire consequences of failing to confront Indonesia, including the emergence of a 'Djakarta-Peking axis'.<sup>68</sup> Such arguments were, in retrospect, exaggerated; and also counter-factual and thus improvable.

Two further points complicate calculations. First, costs and benefits in Confrontation were revalued over time as objectives changed. Britain wanted the August 1966 peace settlement between Malaysia and Indonesia. But, in private, British policy-makers believed that Indonesia would continue Confrontation and that Malaysia was likely to enter the former's sphere of influence. These costs were now deemed entirely acceptable because Britain's priorities by this stage were to end the conflict and to establish friendly relations with Indonesia.<sup>69</sup> Nor is it absolutely certain that a direct relationship can be established between Confrontation and regime change

in Indonesia, as Indonesia had been politically unstable since its creation.<sup>70</sup> Sukarno's domestic policy, like his foreign policy, was built around creating and then manipulating crises. Confrontation might have accelerated the clash between the army and the communists; but it did not create it, and tensions were already growing severe even before Confrontation erupted.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, there are debates to be had about what should be considered a cost and how intangibles should be measured. For some Indonesians, the price of Confrontation, especially the events that followed the 30 September coup, constituted deep-seated metaphysical damage. These costs include profound social wounds caused by the way in which the new regime made wider Indonesian society complicit in the violent destruction of actual and suspected communists. In Christian areas, for example, the Church made victims of the anti-communist purge confess their sins in public.<sup>72</sup> The metaphysical damage also included such things as the 'othering' by the new military regime of many elements of Indonesian society, including not just communists but also socialists, some religious communities, and atheists.<sup>73</sup> These costs also extended to Indonesians' ownership of their own past. The new regime created and defended myths necessary to justify the coup and what came after, and to legitimise the New Order government.<sup>74</sup> In other words, the issues of costs and benefits in relation to Confrontation can be extended much further than the narrow political and economic interests of the state.

### **From Whose Perspective?**

To complicate matters even further, the literature on victory highlights the importance in judgements on success in war of the question of whose perspective we should be taking when we assess the success or failure of an armed conflict.

Different political actors can, depending on their perspective, reach different, though perhaps equally legitimate, conclusions regarding who has won or lost, because different actors may have different interests and biases and may weigh costs and benefits differently.<sup>75</sup> Even within a belligerent, judgements over the success or failure of military action may vary across a range of interested actors including political elites, the government, the public, the media, and the armed forces. Indeed, winning a war militarily may not be the only, or even the most important, interest that a political actor might have.<sup>76</sup> So whose view really matters: political leaders; the domestic population; the international community?

The complexities arising from different answers to this question become quickly evident when one looks at the outcomes of Confrontation for actors within Indonesia. As revisionist perspectives demonstrate, Indonesia achieved some of its key objectives during Confrontation. But states are not, in practice, unitary actors. Successes and failures for the abstraction that is a state may seem very different for key actors and constituencies within it, since their own objectives often are not the same as those of the state of which they are a part.

Thus, Indonesia might well be able to claim several successes during Confrontation, but this was of little solace to Sukarno, the primary architect of *Konfrontasi*. The Indonesian President was a clear loser. Whatever objectives he identified for Indonesia in pursuing Confrontation, it was designed to strengthen his position and certainly not to weaken it. However, Confrontation exacerbated the domestic contradictions within Indonesia, making it impossible, finally, for Sukarno

to continue his balancing act between the Indonesian army and the communist party.<sup>77</sup> The 30 September coup began a process that broke Sukarno's power. Although he was not officially deposed as President, in retrospect the army effectively sidelined Sukarno from March 1966.<sup>78</sup>

For both the Indonesian communist party (the PKI) and the Indonesian army (the TNI), Confrontation during its prosecution for several years delivered positive outcomes. Though the PKI's declaratory goal in Confrontation was the destruction of Malaysia, its actual objective was to use the conflict to assist its rise to power in Indonesia.<sup>79</sup> Until the 30 September coup, Confrontation performed this function successfully, the PKI extending its political and economic influence, marginalising many rivals, and encouraging Sukarno's radical shift leftwards.<sup>80</sup> For the TNI, Confrontation staved off moves to undermine the army's economic position. It provided a possible opportunity to re-introduce martial law and to establish a nationalist rhetoric that helped to undercut the appeal of the PKI and improve the army's reputation with the wider population.<sup>81</sup>

However, since the PKI and TNI were mutually antagonistic, the two became locked into a zero-sum game. Over time, it became clear that the main beneficiary of Confrontation was the PKI, which was attempting even to infiltrate the TNI and to establish a worker's militia as a rival military force.<sup>82</sup> The army also worried that Confrontation was escalating to the point at which it might become a conventional war, an eventuality which might in turn have profoundly negative consequences for the TNI.<sup>83</sup> The resolution of this internal struggle through the events that followed the 30 September coup reversed decisively these positions. It became evident that, shorn of Sukarno's protection, the PKI's organisation and resources were simply inadequate in the face of those possessed by the army. The Communists were portrayed in

General Suharto's counter-coup as illegitimate, unpatriotic agents of China. The PKI was destroyed, the organisation being banned and its membership either killed or imprisoned in a systematic campaign initiated and conducted by the army, alongside other sympathetic actors.<sup>84</sup> There is still some dispute over the numbers of those that lost their lives: at the time, the official tally was under 90,000; this is certainly a grotesque under-statement; half a million is a recurrent figure in the literature, though some have argued that the figure was up to a million.<sup>85</sup> General Suharto specifically, and the army generally, were huge beneficiaries of the process by which Confrontation ended dominating unchallenged the Indonesian political system until the 1990s.

But Confrontation illustrates other layers of complexity. Even using such labels as 'the army' or 'the PKI' imposes a level of coherence in objectives that was not necessarily present. For example, in the army, there were many officers who genuinely did sympathise with Indonesia's declared objectives, believing that Malaysia was a real threat and an affront to Indonesia's status as a regional power. Indeed, the 30 September coup itself was launched by a core of army units. Moreover, even the majority anti-PKI element in the army consisted of several factions. The faction surrounding General Yani was more supportive of Sukarno, believing that his support for the Communists was a short term tactical move, whereas those behind General Nasution believed that the PKI had successfully subverted Sukarno.<sup>86</sup> Even for the army, therefore, the outcomes of Confrontation were not uniform. For these TNI factions, the demise of Sukarno represented different qualities of outcome. Indeed, Yani was killed in the coup and Nasution himself was marginalised by Indonesia's new leader General Suharto.

Similarly, assessing the implications for the 'PKI' can be misleading. Many of those that suffered during the campaign to crush the communists were only tenuously linked to the organisation. The Suharto regime's definition of what constituted a communist included groups sometimes with only the loosest affiliation to the PKI. For example, to be a 'communist' in 1966 in Indonesia might involve simply being on the list of those that benefited from the Agrarian Land Reform Law. This programme, intended to distribute land to those without it, was implemented with the help of the PKI but it was a Sukarno government programme.<sup>87</sup> Beyond those executed, some one and half a million Indonesians also were arrested and imprisoned. Many of these were subjected to torture and served prison terms of ten to fourteen years. Further, the new regime's propaganda vilifying the PKI created widespread fear about associating with ex-political prisoners. Those arrested, even if subsequently released because of lack of evidence, acquired pariah status. With 'E/T' or 'ex-tapol' ('tapol' being the abbreviation for *Tahanan Politik* or political prisoner) stamped on their identity cards, individuals and their families became effectively *persona non grata* in Indonesian society, excluded by their communities and by the state.<sup>88</sup>

These points reinforce the potentially very wide list of groups for whom conflict can deliver markedly different outcomes. M. C. Rickleffs, notes, for example, that whatever the outcomes of Confrontation 'a greater tragedy lay in the suffering of the Indonesian people'.<sup>89</sup> Those that 'lost' included, for example, those loyal to Sukarno; and also socialists; atheists (who were labelled Communists by many religious groups); and traditional religions (who similarly were seen as atheists by the officially sanctioned religious establishment).<sup>90</sup> The ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia was also associated with the Communist cause.<sup>91</sup> As Adrian Vickers asserts, 'Much of a generation of the country's brightest minds, teachers, artists,

journalists and natural leaders, was killed or treated like pariahs'.<sup>92</sup> Gender-based perspectives on the outcomes of the 1965 coup expose the sufferings imposed on women; suffering which has often been ignored because of inherent gender biases in assessing the costs of war.<sup>93</sup> Many of those involved in Gerwani, the PKI's women's movement, were attracted not so much by Communist ideology but simply by the organisation's progressive attitude towards improving women's lives.<sup>94</sup> Others were accused of being in Gerwani simply because their socially forward-looking views marked them out as trouble-makers.<sup>95</sup> Military propaganda portrayed Gerwani as a brutal and sexualised organisation.<sup>96</sup> Partly in consequence, those women and girls arrested, or those that were relatives of those arrested, often experienced profound trauma. Sexual violence, including rape, sexualised mutilation and torture, sexual humiliation, enforced prostitution, sexual slavery and enforced abortion were 'pervasive' during the period.<sup>97</sup> Women's guilt often was by association. Those whose husbands were arrested or killed might find themselves *diambil* ('taken') as a forced wife, or as an unofficial wife, or compelled into prostitution.<sup>98</sup> More widely, the Suharto regime's focus on the immorality of the PKI generally, and Gerwani specifically, helped to undermine the legitimacy of all forms of progressive women's activism. Part of the stability promised by the New Order rested upon the conception that women should play their 'proper role' in society, a role defined in traditional terms.<sup>99</sup> Thus, even if 'Indonesia' gained many of its objectives during Confrontation, many Indonesians lost profoundly. The consequences of the 30 September coup extended much more widely than the PKI, and much more widely than the two million Indonesians that were killed or detained.

Even in Britain, the outcomes varied depending upon one's choice of actor. After the conflict, the British military defined Confrontation as a significant success.

Perhaps the key exponent of this view was General Walker. For Walker, Confrontation was 'a complete success'.<sup>100</sup> In particular, Walker drew attention to the direct link between British and Commonwealth military tactical success and the positive strategic political outcome for Britain. Walker saw as one of the key facilitators of this relationship Operation Claret: a campaign of secret cross-border military operations into Indonesian Borneo that deprived the TNI of the initiative and convinced Britain's adversary that it could not win. Walker's view was that Claret 'brought the Indonesians to the conference table in 1966.'<sup>101</sup> Certainly, at the tactical military level the campaign seemed for the British and Commonwealth soldiers involved a hard-fought but successful campaign.<sup>102</sup>

However, during Confrontation, British military operational level perspectives (including those of Walker himself) were much more pessimistic. The problem seemed to be that British operations were so constrained that Indonesian leaders were simply not aware of Indonesian military failures because Indonesian military subordinates 'who conceal or distort the true situation have probably convinced Sukarno himself that the military activities have had some success.'<sup>103</sup> In the latter part of 1965, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, Air Marshal Sir John Grandy argued that Britain had had 'some tactical success' against Indonesia but that British activities had 'had no strategic effect in that they have not changed Indonesia's aims, nor have they affected her capability to sustain or, even to increase the present level of confrontation.'<sup>104</sup> Additional evidence, drawn from documents and interrogations obtained from captured Indonesian cross-border raiders, seemed to reinforce the British military's perception that the peace deal of August 1966 was not a victory at all: it was a sell-out that guaranteed success for the Indonesians. Reflecting the more general private British view that Confrontation was going well for the Indonesians,



and that the latter's antipathy towards Malaysia was implacable, the military view was that the August 1966 peace settlement was simply a ruse: a mechanism by which Indonesia could de-couple Britain from the conflict. Borneo Headquarters, for example, took the view that the Indonesians were 'using the end of confrontation as a cover to obtain by other means what they had failed to achieve by overt hostilities.'<sup>105</sup> Borneo headquarters was firmly of the opinion, even in September 1966, that Indonesia's 'friendly overtures ... are only a cloak to cover Indonesia's real intent and determination to destroy Malaysia'.<sup>106</sup>

This view extended even to some of the key political decision-makers. For example, one concern of Denis Healey was to ensure that after a political settlement had been reached to end Confrontation, British forces were removed from Borneo as quickly as possible. Indeed, the draw-down of forces began the day after the settlement was signed. Part of the reason for this was Healey's belief that Indonesia might well re-commence Confrontation, a situation that might drag Britain back into the fray. It was crucial, therefore, that British forces were exited as quickly as possible so that if Confrontation began again, the UK could argue that it was no longer a British responsibility to protect Malaysia.<sup>107</sup>

For some Indonesian actors, then, Confrontation did indeed represent a colossal political defeat. Moreover, the list of those who suffered potentially is very wide. But for others, General Suharto and the TNI especially, the outcomes were hugely favourable. Equally, for some British actors, the peace settlement of 1966 was a qualified result that represented not a decisive victory but only a pause in Indonesian aggression.

## **Perception**

Perhaps more than anything, this analysis of the complexities of judging success and failure in Confrontation illustrates the importance of perception (and the shaping of perception). As the literature on victory identifies, calculations regarding success or failure in war often are a matter of perceived outcomes. In other words, rather than ‘score keeping’ an armed conflict, attempting to weigh objectively the costs and benefits of war or the attainment of political objectives, audiences instead ‘match-fix’: observers form a general opinion of whether a war has been won or lost and interpret the metrics to fit this.<sup>108</sup> Victory and defeat, in other words, are often ‘imagined’ conditions.<sup>109</sup> Formal peace settlements, acknowledged publicly by both sides, might in theory be expected to define a common narrative on a war’s outcome.<sup>110</sup> But actually, perceptions on the outcome of a war are shaped by many things: the media; pre-existing mind sets; psychological biases; and/or salient events.<sup>111</sup>

For example, if the reality was that Indonesian military operations were unsuccessful tactically, this was not necessarily always the perception from an Indonesian military point of view. As one British participant noted in a conversation after the war with an Indonesian officer: ‘To him the issue was quite clear: we had raided into Indonesia regularly and just as regularly had been driven off so they had won.’<sup>112</sup>

But what matters in particular are the perceptions of key constituencies. For the British government, the key constituency was domestic opinion. British public opinion on the outcome of the campaign was shaped by issues regarding access to information (or the lack thereof). One factor was that the British government did not openly announce the changes over time to its objectives. Thus, the public was simply

unaware of the relevant objectives, costs and benefits against which Confrontation might be judged. In this context, the growing cost of the war, its longevity, and the changing objectives, were either hidden from view or portrayed as the inescapable costs of Britain honourably standing by its Malaysian ally. In that sense, the most obvious costs to the UK were the physical and financial ones, but these were not excessive: 64 killed and 89 wounded, and five million sterling per year.<sup>113</sup> These were set against the Government's public articulation of the costs of failing against Indonesia, 'the tragedy that could have fallen on a whole corner of a continent if we had not been able to hold the situation and bring it to a successful termination'.<sup>114</sup>

A second factor was that the nature of the final settlement: in particular, that this was a formal settlement process marked by a peace agreement. This peace agreement provided open and unequivocal symbolic acknowledgement of the attainment of the original goals that the government had announced openly: there appeared to be no room for debate, therefore, about the outcome. Third, there had been little open scrutiny of the conduct of Confrontation that would have allowed a more informed debate on its success or failure. Geography helped: in Borneo, for example, the poor infrastructure and dense jungle meant that journalists were wholly reliant on the Ministry of Defence for access to combat areas. Moreover, certainly by 1966, the Foreign Office was running an effective information and propaganda campaign, helping to shape the strategic narrative on the campaign. Indeed, because the Indonesian government had banned foreign journalists, British government sources were often the only source of credible information of what was going on in Indonesia.<sup>115</sup> For these reasons, the British public perceived Confrontation as an unequivocal success.

The issues of access to information, lack of critical scrutiny, and important symbolic events are relevant also in Indonesian public discourse. In the Indonesian case, the information issue was manifest not just in the withholding of evidence, but of the deliberate and systematic manufacture of evidence on the nature, costs and benefits of Confrontation. An Indonesian historian noted in 1965 that 'history instruction is an important means of training good citizens and of developing love and loyalty for one's country; it is essential to a young country like Indonesia for the "nation building" in which its people are all engaged'.<sup>116</sup> This instrumental view of the function of history was embraced by Suharto's regime in its efforts to shape popular Indonesian perceptions of the events surrounding Confrontation in order to enhance the legitimacy of the new regime. Under Sukarno, anti-imperialism was the key legitimating theme, focusing therefore on the 'enemy without'. Under Suharto, however, the narrative changed to anti-communism and the army's role in protecting Indonesia from the 'enemy within'.<sup>117</sup> The Suharto regime set about creating a new history of the Sukarno period through such means as standardised official school and university textbooks; the banning of contradictory literature; and a programme of army propaganda conducted through films, books, memorials and museums, and choreographed acts of commemoration.<sup>118</sup> These measures included, for example, the creation of the Museum of Communist Treachery, which laid out a narrative of an insidious communist canker eating away at Indonesia for the twenty years since its independence and which school children were compulsorily required to visit.<sup>119</sup>

In this narrative, Sukarno and the communists were the villains, not the Malaysians or the British. Confrontation itself was marginalised, becoming one discrete element in the folly of Sukarno and the treachery of the PKI. In the army narrative, Confrontation was 'launched by the Communists through the former regime

of Indonesia'.<sup>120</sup> Confrontation, then, was not a defeat for Indonesia or its military but for Sukarno and the PKI. In this crisis only the military and its successful deterrence of external threats prevented Indonesia from being destroyed.<sup>121</sup> The final peace settlement was mobilised to help reinforce this narrative. Suharto declared that 'Peace with Malaysia is not capitulation but a compromise in the interests of both parties and peace in South-East Asia'.<sup>122</sup> In making this credible, he was aided by Malaysia, which wished to restore cordial relations as quickly as possible. Thus Malaysia's premier avoided any triumphalism in the signing of the August 1966 peace agreement, instead portraying the end of Confrontation as 'good for all'.<sup>123</sup> Both the Indonesian and British publics therefore could believe that they had achieved success. Given the importance of these constituencies to their respective governments, did it really matter if the perceptions of success did not accord with many aspects of the reality?

### **Over what time period?**

A final issue that complicates judgements regarding success and failure in war is that of the point in time at which this judgement is drawn. The difficulty here is that taking a shorter or a longer time-frame can change radically one's assessment of the outcome of a war. In 1918, for example, the First World War was perceived from a British perspective as a costly but decisive success; but viewed from the perspective of 1939, the outcome would seem much more ambivalent. For many, taking an extended temporal view on the issue is vital: real successes in war are long-lasting; they resolve deep-seated political issues.<sup>124</sup>

On this basis, for example, it might be possible to argue that long-term developments vindicated for Britain positive assessments of the outcomes of Confrontation. The war provided a necessary corrective to the mistaken defence and foreign policy assumptions made by British policy-makers in 1963. Even if Confrontation itself were not a success judged in 1966, in the long-term its outcomes could be construed as positive. Certainly, the negative developments expected by British policy-makers in August 1966 did not emerge. Suharto's regime proved more amenable to Western interests than was predicted. The August 1966 settlement did establish a functioning status quo between Malaysia and Indonesia: if relations between them were not always cordial, they worked well enough for British interests. Confrontation demonstrated early on that the British calculation that it could remain in Singapore for the medium term was largely beyond its financial and political strength. It also demonstrated that key defence policy assumptions, for example that Britain's military requirements in Southeast Asia could be met with limited intervention forces, were also mistaken. If we judge that during the defence reviews from 1966-71, the decisions made to retrench were the correct ones, then the great efforts made by Britain during Confrontation, the successes and also the difficulties, helped contribute to a sane reassessment of British global policy. At the same time, the positive political outcomes seem enduring: Britain quickly forged a cooperative relationship with the post-Sukarno Indonesian government that remains today; Malaysian-Indonesian relations remained stable and continue to do so.

And yet, by extending the temporal envelope, we create a number of difficulties. One problem is that the longer the time-frame, the more difficult it becomes to determine the relationship between cause and effect: it becomes more and more difficult to determine to what extent a given war is responsible for later

outcomes.<sup>125</sup> Another challenge relates to the problem of metrics: are the same metrics appropriate for both short-term and long-term assessments, especially since military campaigns can change in nature over time as a result of new political objectives, or new facts on the ground. Finally, if we are to focus on the salience of long-term outcomes in our definition of victory, then how long is the ‘long-term’?<sup>126</sup>

For these reasons, by extending the temporal envelope we complicate greatly issues of relating cause and effect: it simply isn't easy to determine the extent to which Confrontation itself was an independent, or merely dependent, variable in the re-shaping of long-term British foreign policy. The decision to cut Britain's commitment in Southeast Asia preceded the end of Confrontation: indeed, Confrontation then acted as an obstacle to achieving this goal. More broadly, previous events in Aden seem already to have established that British attempts to sustain a large military presence globally was a quixotic enterprise that ran against the tide of history. With the perspective of hindsight, the impact of Confrontation's apparent success seems limited: success in 1966 did not change the nature of the cuts that Britain intended to apply afterwards. The trajectory of Britain's relationships with the US, Australia, and New Zealand were not decisively altered: other conflicts, Vietnam especially, and the broader and inexorable decline in Britain's regional military presence had more impact. Australia and New Zealand, for example, continued their shift towards the US. Once Confrontation had ended, Anglo-Malaysian relations declined, and whilst links remained, not least through the Five Power Defence Pact, which replaced AMDA, these links were much weaker: necessarily so, as Britain's presence in the region continued to decline.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, the long-term issues surrounding the Malaysia project were never fully resolved. There continued to be tensions between East and West Malaysia, Malaysia and Indonesia, and between Singapore and

Malaysia. Relations between the three countries are workable, but the inclusion of the territories of Sarawak and British North Borneo in Malaysia has created a persistent irritant.<sup>128</sup>

Second, extending the temporal envelope requires consideration of even more potential participants, costs and benefits. For example, in Indonesia, society contended with a regime that was 'at best paternalistic and at worst oppressive'.<sup>129</sup> The New Order regime broke the existing Indonesian political parties; cracked down on agencies of free expression, including artists and the media; entrenched the political and economic role of the military; and suppressed Islamic radicals.<sup>130</sup> Any of these could be construed as costs or benefits depending upon whose perspective one takes.

Assessing Confrontation is also complicated by where we choose to draw the temporal line. For example, the discussion has already identified the Suharto government's programme to instrumentalise history. Questions, then, about the success or failure of Confrontation could vary from an Indonesian perspective depending upon whether one focuses on the period before or after the Asian financial crisis and the consequent fall in 2008 of Suharto's New Order regime. The New Order's 'Orwellian achievement' of re-writing history continues to be successful even today.<sup>131</sup> The 1950s continues in Indonesia to be seen as a period characterised as a 'dynamic road to disaster'.<sup>132</sup> The focus on Indonesian popular understanding of the period of Confrontation continues to be on the 30 September coup and the intensity of the communist threat in that period and after.<sup>133</sup> Confrontation has been established as a campaign fought creditably by the Indonesian military. Indeed, in 2014, the Indonesian navy named one its ships, the KRI *Usman Harun*, after two 'National Heroes of Indonesia' involved in bombings in Singapore in 1965 and executed by Singapore in 1968.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, post-1998 *reformasi* has begun to create some



measure of change. From 2001, formal calls began, even from the Indonesian Department of National Education, to 'straighten the history' (*meluruskan sejarah*).<sup>135</sup> It may be, then, that at a future point in time some of the traditional cost-benefit calculations of the events of 1965-66 might begin in Indonesia to unravel.

## **Conclusion**

Orthodox assessments of Confrontation pitch it as a decisive British victory. The argument often advanced is that it was a decisive success militarily: though heavily outnumbered, Commonwealth forces succeeded in defeating actual Indonesian incursions, and deterring Indonesian escalation. This military success, so it is argued, was also decisive politically: if true success in war comprises a result 'that is acknowledged, sustained, and resolves underlying political issues',<sup>136</sup> then it might be argued that Confrontation was a success: it met Britain's declared goals: the settlement was formally recognised; and it survived through to the present day. Equally, then, Indonesia must have lost - it failed militarily and the final political settlement gave it nothing that it had struggled for. Revisionist perspectives have questioned these orthodox assumptions. Using archival sources, they have demonstrated that for Britain, Confrontation became in many respects self-defeating and that Indonesia itself could claim some important successes.

As the preceding discussion has shown, clearly the revisionist perspective is the more credible. However, assessing Confrontation's outcomes is extraordinarily complex and can provide profound insights into the concepts of victory, defeat, and the iterative nature of strategy. As the literature on victory identifies, the measure of success or failure depends upon what objectives we choose to use as metrics; how we

assess costs and benefits; whose perspective we take; what subjective perceptions of success or failure may have formed; and over what time-scale we make our judgments. By 1966, for the British government what mattered most were domestic perceptions and those of its key allies: both of these constituencies viewed Confrontation as a victory. In that sense, the peace settlement of August 1966 reflected a victory for Harold Wilson's government. In the long run, perceptions of British success continued, making it for one author '[t]he most successful use of armed forces in the twentieth century'.<sup>137</sup> But it is possible simultaneously to argue that the real losers and winners of Confrontation were Indonesian: the PKI and the TNI respectively. The first was, quite literally, destroyed; the second established itself until the late 1990s as the unchallenged political power in Indonesia. As Confrontation demonstrates, therefore, measuring success and failure in war is often hugely problematic: a point that helps to explain why strategy remains relentlessly difficult to do well.

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Grove, *Vanguard to Trident: British Naval Policy Since World War Two* (London: The Bodley Head, 1987), 265.

<sup>2</sup> John Subritzky, 'Britain, Konfrontasi, and the End of Empire in Southeast Asia, 1961-65', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2000): 209.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: Robert Mandel, *The Meaning of Military Victory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006); J. Boone Bartholomees, 'Theory of Victory', *Parameters* (Summer 2008): 25-36; William C. Martel, 'Victory in Scholarship and Strategy on War', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2011); Fred Charles Ikle, *Every War Must End*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Jan Angstrom and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (eds.), *Understanding Victory and Defeat in Contemporary War* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz* (London: Pimlico, 2002), 159.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example: General Sir Walter Walker, 'Borneo', *The British Army Review*, No. 32 (August 1969), 7-15; Gregory Blaxland, *The Regiments Depart: A History of the British Army, 1945-1970* (London: William Kimber, 1971); Harold James, and Denis Sheil-Small, *The Undeclared War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1971); Tom Pocock, *Fighting General: The Public and Private Campaigns of General Sir Walter Walker* (Bungay: Chaucer Press,

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- 1973); J. A. C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963-66* ( London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Major Peter J. Kramers, 'Konfrontasi in Borneo 1962-1966', *Military Review* (November 1990): 64-74; Robin Neillands, *A Fighting Retreat: The British Empire 1947-97* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996).
- <sup>6</sup> 'Guidance for Ministers: Malaysia', 12 July 1963, CAB 21/5520, The British National Archive, Kew, Surrey, United Kingdom (henceforward TNA).
- <sup>7</sup> For discussions of Indonesian objectives see JAC Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963-66* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 132-139; Franklin B. Weinstein, *Indonesia Abandons Confrontation: An Inquiry into the Functions of Indonesian Foreign Policy* (Equinox: Jakarta, 2009); MC Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c.1200* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 294-311; Cindy Adams, *Sukarno: An Autobiography* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 300-307; 'The Era of Confrontation' (Djakarta: Dept. of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia, 1964), 11.
- <sup>8</sup> House of Lords Debate, 6 February 1963, *Hansards*, Vol. 246, cc. 593-692.
- <sup>9</sup> Neillands, *A Fighting Retreat*, 456.
- <sup>10</sup> General Sir Walter Walker, 'Brunei and Borneo, 1962-1966: An Efficient Use of Military Force' in *The Imperial War Museum Book of Modern Warfare: British and Commonwealth Forces at War, 1945-2000*, ed. Julian Thompson (Basingstoke: Pan, 2002), 219; Nick Van der Bijl, *Confrontation: The War With Indonesia, 1962-66* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 2007), 241-242.
- <sup>11</sup> House of Commons Debate, 27 November 1967, *Hansards*, Vol. 75, cc. 52-53.
- <sup>12</sup> General Sir Walter Walker, *Fighting On* (London: New Millennium, 1997), 152.
- <sup>13</sup> Quoted in Sue Thompson "'The greatest success of British diplomacy in East Asia in recent years": British Diplomacy and the Ending of Confrontation, 1965-66', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (285-302): 285.
- <sup>14</sup> Peter Dickens, *SAS: Secret War in South-East Asia* (New York: Ivy Books, 1983), 268. See also J. P. Cross, *Jungle Warfare: Experiences and Encounters* (London: Arms and Armour, 1989), 178; Van Der Bijl, *Confrontation*, 246; John D. Orme, *The Paradox of Peace: Leaders, Decisions and Conflict Resolution* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 60.
- <sup>15</sup> Blaxland, *The Regiments Depart*, 409-410.
- <sup>16</sup> Bryan Perrett, *Canopy of War: Jungle Warfare from the Earliest Days of Fighting to the Battlefields of Vietnam* (Wellingborough: Patrick Stephens Ltd, 1990), 128.
- <sup>17</sup> See also Christopher Tuck, *Confrontation, Strategy and War Termination* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).
- <sup>18</sup> Subritzky, 'Britain, Konfrontasi, and the End of Empire', 209.
- <sup>19</sup> David Easter, *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia, 1960-66* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004), 199.
- <sup>20</sup> Subritzky, 'Britain, Konfrontasi, and the End of Empire', 224.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example: Emile Simpson, *War From the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Paul Rosenthal, "'Confrontation": Countering Indonesian Insurgency, 1963-66' in Gregory Fremont Barnes (ed), *A History of Counterinsurgency*, Vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015), 94-123.

<sup>23</sup> Bradford A. Lee 'Winning the War but Losing the Peace? The United States and the Strategic Issues of War Termination,' in Bradford A. Lee and Karl F. Walling, *Strategic Logic and Political Rationality: Essays in Honour of Michael I. Handel* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 250.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Codner, *The Implications of War Termination Consideration for the Operational Level Commanders*, (Newport, RI: US Naval War College Operations Department, 1991), 3.

<sup>25</sup> James L. Foster and Garry D. Brewer, 'And the Clocks Were Striking Thirteen: The Termination of War,' (RAND Papers, March 1976): 8-9, accessed June 21, 2010, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/2008/P5559.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Lee, 'Winning the War but Losing the Peace,' 254.

<sup>27</sup> Mandel, *The Meaning of Military Victory*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Smoke, *War: Controlling Escalation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 245-253; Barbara F. Walter, *Reputation and Civil War: Why Separatist Conflicts are so Violent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10-15; Paul R. Pillar, *Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 216-218.

<sup>29</sup> 'Greater Malaysia: Report by the Chairman of the Official Committee', (D (61) 62), 24 October 1961, CAB 131/26, TNA; Selkirk to Macmillan, 27 June 1961, PREM 11/3418, TNA; JP(62)155 (Final), 'Long Term Strategy,' 28 January 1963, DEFE 7/2155, TNA; Cabinet Defence Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Meetings, 9 February 1963, CAB 131/28, TNA; Cabinet Defence Committee 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 9 February 1963, CAB 131/28, TNA; Cabinet 48<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 25 July 1963, CAB 128/37, TNA.

<sup>30</sup> P.L Pham, *Ending 'East of Suez': The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964-68* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15-33.; see also Matthew Jones, 'A Decision Delayed: Britain's Withdrawal from South East Asia Reconsidered, 1961-68.' *English Historical Review* 117 (June 2002): 577.

<sup>31</sup> DO(64)59, 'Commonwealth Prime Minister's Meeting – The Main Defence Issues,' 19 June 1964, CAB 148/2, TNA.

<sup>32</sup> Easter, *Britain and the Confrontation*, 112.

<sup>33</sup> OPD(O)(65)32, 'South-East Asia and the Far East,' 5 May 1965, CAB 148/43, TNA.

<sup>34</sup> Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Matthew Jones, 'U.S. Relations with Indonesia, the Kennedy-Johnson Transition, and the Vietnam Connection, 1963-1965,' *Diplomatic History* 26 (Spring 2002):

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<sup>43</sup> Michael Leifer, *Indonesian Foreign Policy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), 86 & 102.

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<sup>55</sup> Leifer, *Indonesian Foreign Policy*, 109.

<sup>56</sup> Weinstein, *Indonesia Abandons Confrontation*, 91.

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