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Joint Warfighting: Lessons Learned from the Dwikora Operation Experience during the Konfrontasi, 1963–67

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Abstract

This research examines the Indonesian military (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia/ABRI*) operations during the Indonesian - Malaysian *Konfrontasi* (1963-67). The Indonesian government executed the politics of *Konfrontasi* in order to oppose a plan of Malaysian administration to extend The Federation concept, which embraced Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. In a move against this proposal, President Sukarno announced *Dwikora* Operation aimed at crushing the Malaysia federation. However, the ABRI did not support confrontation policy wholeheartedly. This research seeks to address the question of why the *Dwikora* Operation failed. The study employs a qualitative historical analysis by using a case study as research strategy. The Indonesian military archives are used as the main sources to explain and analyse the *Dwikora* Operation. By using interdisciplinary approach, this article critically evaluates how the political element in the military operation will affect the implementation of the operation. This analysis concludes that the failure of the ABRI's operation during the *Konfrontasi* is mainly affected by a certain level of military rivalry.

This research examines the Indonesian military (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia/ABRI*) operations during the Indonesian - Malaysian *Konfrontasi* (1963-67). The Indonesian government executed the politics of *Konfrontasi* in order to oppose a plan of Malaysian administration to extend The Federation concept, which embraced Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. In a move against this proposal, President Sukarno announced *Dwikora* Operation aimed at crushing the Malaysia federation. However, the ABRI did not support confrontation policy wholeheartedly. This research seeks to address the question of why the *Dwikora* Operation failed. The study employs a qualitative historical analysis by using a case study as research strategy. The Indonesian military archives are used as the main sources to explain and analyse the *Dwikora* Operation. By using interdisciplinary approach, this article critically evaluates how the political element in the military operation will affect the implementation of the operation. This analysis concludes that the failure of the ABRI's operation during the *Konfrontasi* is mainly affected by a certain level of military rivalry.

Joint Warfighting: Lessons Learned from the *Dwikora* Operation Experience during the *Konfrontasi*, 1963–67

ANTON ALIABBAS

Background

This paper analyses the Indonesian military joint warfighting during the Indonesia-Malaysia *Konfrontasi* (1963-67). During this period, there have been military operations with considerable successes and failures. The confrontation (*Konfrontasi*) was an essential episode in Indonesian history. Indonesia's conflict with Malaysia was not simply a problem of their opposition towards the creation of Malaysia Federation. It was an accumulation at various turbulent political and economic factors resulting in a very complex and volatile situation. Some factors that contributed to this dynamic environment were domestic political turmoil, poor economic performance, tense military rivalry, and the Cold War. These factors had a substantial affect on the execution of the Indonesian military operation.

President Sukarno defined the policy of *Konfrontasi* as a practice of coercive diplomacy to create a sense of crisis and provoke diplomatic intervention.¹ He started launching this policy in 1958 when Indonesia had disputed with the Netherlands over the island of Western New Guinea,

¹ Leifer, *Dictionary*, 54.

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now Papua. Sukarno tried to annex the island by combining military and diplomatic activities. When the Malaysia Federation plan was imposed in 1961, the Indonesian government did not oppose it. Indonesian Foreign Minister, Subandrio said Indonesia would not refuse the plan as long as the people agreed.² However, the Brunei Revolt led by A.M. Azahari on the 8th December 1962 was a turning point in the relationship with Indonesia and its neighboring country. Soon afterward then Sukarno declared his support to the ‘independence struggle’ of the Brunei people. Moreover, by January 1963, Sukarno employed the word of *Konfrontasi* in his political jargon against the Malaysia Federation plan.³

As Indonesian government rejected the establishment of Malaysia Federation, which also embraced Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak,⁴ Sukarno launched People's Twofold Command (*Komando Dwikora*) on 3 May 1964 that aimed at crushing the federation.⁵ However, the Indonesian Armed Forces (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia/ABRI*) supported the policy of *Konfrontasi* half-heartedly. During that time, the ABRI also struggled to improve its unity, cohesion, and professionalism. As a consequence, the military operation, known as the *Dwikora* Operation (*Operasi Dwikora*) failed to achieve its ultimate goal, crush the Malaysia Federation.

Most studies have explicitly focused on the performance of Indonesia's opponents in the *Konfrontasi*.⁶ Our knowledge is scarce as to how the *Dwikora* Operation was conducted and why it was failed. In so doing, this article examines in detail the Indonesian military operation during the *Konfrontasi*. The *Dwikora* Operation was selected as a case study here because the operation illustrates that. It is not simply military operation but rather one in which the effect of political behavior in the military organization was felt at many stages. Thus the analysis of the way military operation executed should not be limited to looking at the field but should extend to the internal dynamics of the military organization.

2 Arto, *Indonesia and I*, 185.

3 Pluvier, *Confrontations*, 65.

4 Mackie, *Konfrontasi*, 3.

5 Pusat Sejarah Markas Besar TNI, *Operasi Dwikora 1962- 1966*, 23.

6 See, for instance, Nick Van der Bijl, *Confrontation: the war with Indonesia, 1962-1966*, (Barnsley, S. Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Military, 2007); Raffi Gregorian, “Claret Operation and Confrontation, 1964-1966,” *Conflict Quarterly*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (Winter 1991); H James, and Denis Shell-Small, *The undeclared war: the story of the Indonesian confrontation, 1962-1966*, (Singapore: Asia Pacific Press, 1971); R Jackson, *The Malayan Emergency: The Commonwealth's War, 1948-1966*, (London: Routledge, 1991); David Easter, *Britain and the Confrontation with Indonesia 1962-1966*, (London: IB Tauris, 2004); Christopher Tuck, *Confrontation, Strategy and War Termination: Britain's Conflict with Indonesia, 1963-66*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013); Bob Hall, Andrew T Ross and Derril De Heer, “Comparative Study: Combat operations in North Borneo (Indonesian Confrontation) and 1ATF in Vietnam,” (Canberra: Defence Science and Technology Organisation, 2012)

Specifically, for two reasons, this study evaluates how the political element in the military operation will affect the implementation of the operation. First, the politicization of the military is one of common features in new states, which gained the independence after World War II.⁷ As Indonesia declared its independence in 1945, this feature was also found in the country. The ABRI plays a significant role in shaping Indonesia politics.⁸ Second, since its beginning, the ABRI had developed its political culture. In fact, even the ABRI had expanded its involvement in civilian affairs since 1958.⁹

As the study acknowledges the ABRI as a political-military institution, it is interesting to take a close look at the effect of politicization of the military on its operation. In general, the military operation during the *Konfrontasi* confirms that military rivalry has affected the implementation of the operation.

Data and methods

The study employs a qualitative historical analysis¹⁰ by using a case study as a research strategy. It is predominantly used archives from the Centre for Indonesian Military History (*Pusat Sejarah TNI/Pusjarah TNI*) and the Centre for Indonesian Army History (*Dinas Sejarah TNI Angkatan Darat/Disjarahad*).¹¹ To enhance the material, the study employs archives from the Indonesian National Archives (*Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia/ANRI*). In addition, this article also draws insight from numerous witness and expert interviews. The interviewed participants included retired military and civilians who were involved in the *Dwikora* Operation or surrounding events that are related to the period of *Konfrontasi*. To The study combines primary sources (archives and interviews) with secondary sources. In the following pages, both primary sources and insights from abundant secondary sources (including scholarly work on the *Konfrontasi*) are examined.

7 Janowitz, *The military*, vii

8 Crouch, *Militer dan Politik di Indonesia*, 21.

9 Said, *Legitimizing Military Rule*, 9-63.

10 Thies explains this method as a branch of qualitative research with using historical records as primary data to develop and test the theory. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide," 351-372.

11 As the archives from the Pusjarah TNI do not apply any numbering system to record the archives, this research uses the title of records, place, and/or issuing date in referencing for the archives from the Pusjarah TNI.

Differences in Perceptions toward the *Konfrontasi*

Many scholars have analyzed the Indonesian motives toward the *Konfrontasi*.¹² The motives were expansionism, a diversion from domestic problems, anti-colonialism spirit, breaking the unity of Malaysia and harming Malaysia economy. However, those insights cannot fully narrate the diverse view of the main actors within Indonesia who were involved in the *Konfrontasi*. As Hindley noted, there was a complex motive behind the policy of *Konfrontasi*.¹³

The main actors involved in the *Konfrontasi* were President Sukarno, the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*/PKI), Subandrio and the ABRI. For Sukarno, the establishment of Malaysia Federation might harm the Indonesian unity. Malaysia was seen as the country that gave aid to rebellion, and its economy was more attractive than Indonesia.¹⁴ However, Sukarno was not aiming to escalate the tension toward open war.¹⁵ In fact, he only set the primary task of the military operation command as to prepare and deliver retaliation operation in the enemy territory.¹⁶ Hence, this attitude toward the *Konfrontasi* was easily interpreted as an effort to distract people from economic problems. The Crush Malaysia (*Ganyang Malaysia*) program might be seen as a way to mask a soaring level of deficit. As Mackie argued that Sukarno did not provide any good solution to overcome the deficits.¹⁷

Only The PKI has strongly opposed the Federation's proposal since 1961.¹⁸ The PKI perceived the Malaysia Federation as a form of "neo-colonialism."¹⁹ Even Sukarno admitted that chairman of the PKI, DN Aidit was behind of the policy to support the Brunei Revolt.²⁰

12 See, for instance, Donald Hindley, "Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia: A Search for Motives," *Asian Survey*, Vol 4, No 6 (June 1964); Pluvier 1965; John O Sutter, "Two Faces of Konfrontasi: "Crush Malaysia" and the Gestapu," *Asian Survey*, Vol 6, No 10 (October 1966); Mackie, *Konfrontasi*; Brian May, *The Indonesian Tragedy*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978)

13 Hindley, "Indonesia's Confrontation," 905.

14 Curtis, "Malaysia and Indonesia," 28; Hindley, "Indonesia's Confrontation," 907.

15 Pusat Sejarah Markas Besar TNI, *Operasi Dwikora 1962- 1966*, 62.

16 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 32/KOTI/1964 dated 2 June 1964.

17 Mackie, "Problems of the Indonesian Inflation," 8.

18 Sundhaussen, "The political orientations," 533.

19 Sutter, "Two Faces," 525-526.

20 *Amanat Presiden Sukarno pada 13 Februari 1963* [Speech of President Sukarno on 13 February 1963] in Pengurus Besar Front Nasional [National Front Central Board], *Jalankan Panca Program, Ganyang Semua Tantangan* [Implement Five-Program, Crush All Challenges], (Jakarta: Pengurus Besar Front Nasional, 1963), 18.

Meanwhile, Subandrio perceived the Malaysia Federation was aimed to contain Indonesia influence in the region.²¹ Although he also presumed the Malaysia Federation would boost China's influence in the region as China has superior in some people and armed forces capability.²²

Interestingly, the ABRI formally objected the establishment of the Malaysia Federation. This standpoint was based on two reasons. First, Malaysia project was not reflecting the whole country's population. Second, the establishment of British Military bases in Malaysia might pose a threat to Indonesia.²³ However, the ABRI did not fully support the policy of *Konfrontasi*. Only the Air Force, the Police and the Navy agreed to commit their best in delivering the policy. Although the Army publicly agreed to support the Brunei Revolt, they were divided into two groups: willing and reluctant to deliver military operation.²⁴ Brackman argued the domination of the PKI in the *Konfrontasi* had caused the fragmentation within the Army.²⁵ For General AH Nasution, Defence Minister who led the willing group, the military operation would avoid the military budget cut, maintain military unity and Army's political role in Indonesia.²⁶ Meanwhile, General Ahmad Yani, the Army Commander in Chief who led the reluctant group, seemed more pragmatic and preferred proposing a peaceful approach to solve the dispute, as he recognized the opponents, Britain and her allies, had superior in military capability.²⁷ Maj Gen Suharto, later became Indonesian President, was part of this group. Consequently, the Army did not deploy its best units in considerable numbers in Kalimantan.²⁸ However, then, the Army's split significantly hindered the implementation of Dwikora Operation significantly.

21 Subandrio, *Keterangan Pemerintah tentang susunan baru dan regrouping Kabinet Kerja dalam rapat pleno terbuka DPR-GR pada 11 Desember 1963* [Government explanation regarding new structure and regrouping of Working Cabinet in the Open Plenary Session of Parliament on 11 December 1963]

22 Van Langenberg, "Dr Subandrio," 73; Arto, *Indonesia and I*, 184; Mukmin, TNI dalam politik, 91.

23 Komando Mandala Siaga [Vigilance Command], *Peran Komando Mandala Siaga dalam Konfrontasi terhadap Malaysia* [The Roles of Vigilance Command in the Konfrontasi against Malaysia], (Komando Mandala Siaga: Jakarta, 1967), 6; Jusuf, *Sejarah Perkembangan Angkatan Laut*, 190.

24 Mukmin, *TNI dalam politik*, 143.

25 Brackman, *Southeast Asia's*, 207.

26 Kahin, "Malaysia and Indonesia," 264; Sundhaussen, "The political orientation," 546.

27 Brackman, *Southeast Asia's*, 206.

28 *Ibid.*, 27.

The Dwikora Operation

As in the *Konfrontasi*, Sukarno put the Crush Malaysia program as part of three government programs.²⁹ However, he failed to show his sincerity in delivering the program. The Dwikora Operation seemed only to provoke Britain and boost the negotiation. The Indonesian government never aimed to escalate the conflict into open warfare. The reason for this can be judged by assessing the primary task of the military operation command. Sukarno set its task only to prepare and deliver retaliation operation in the enemy territory.³⁰ Although to uphold the mission, he created the command as a unified military command that involved all military services. As the Supreme Commander of the ABRI, Sukarno set the two aims for the military operation command: to develop and conduct military operation defending territory and helping the people of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, Brunei and Sabah in dissolving the Malaysia Federation; and to lead and employ the armed forces and volunteers in upholding the mission.³¹ Vice Air Marshall (VAM) Omar Dani, the Air Force Commander in Chief led the command.³²

During the Dwikora operation, the ABRI deployed at least 108,132 troops.³³ To uphold the mission, the ABRI also mobilized volunteers by establishing Dwikora Combat Support Volunteer Brigade (*Brigade Sukarelawan Bantuan Tempur Dwikora*).³⁴ The military operation

29 The three government programs were (a) food and clothing, (b) the Crush Malaysia, and (c) continuing development. Subandrio, *Keterangan Pemerintah tentang susunan baru dan regrouping Kabinet Kerja dalam rapat pleno terbuka DPR-GR pada 11 Desember 1963* [Government explanation regarding new structure and regrouping of Working Cabinet in the Open Plenary Session of Parliament on 11 December 1963]

30 Pusat Sejarah Markas Besar TNI, *Operasi Dwikora 1962-1966*, 62.

31 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 23/KOTI/1964 dated 16 May 1964

32 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 23/KOTI/1964 dated 16 May 1964; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 34/KOTI/1964 dated 2 June 1964.

33 Laporan Staf Gabungan III Komando Mandala Siaga [Report of Third Joint Staff of the Vigilance Command] dated 15 May 1967. Lampiran D [Annex D]

34 After President Sukarno launched *Konfrontasi*, many Indonesian were ready to fight against Malaysia and voluntarily came to local military command requested to join guerrilla campaign. To accommodate the volunteers, Air Force Commander Omar Dhani established the volunteer brigade in 1964. There is no exact number of the deployment of the volunteers during the Dwikora Operation. Military claimed at least 21 million Indonesian registered as volunteers. Prior to their departure, the volunteers were joining short military training and exercise. Pusat Sejarah Markas Besar TNI, *Operasi Dwikora 1962-1966*, 57-61; However, not all volunteers were civilians. Many of them were the undercover soldiers. The Navy Headquarter, for instance, circulated a letter that offered troops to be a 'volunteer'. Interview with former Marine private soldier, 1 October 2015, in Jakarta; See also, Bagian Sejarah KKO AL, *Korps Komando*; Mackie, *Konfrontasi*.

command covered Sumatera, Java and Kalimantan Islands. The operation was started on 16 May 1964 and ended on 26 May 1967.

Other Military Operations

Mackie suggests three stages of pre-Dwikora Operation.³⁵ The difference between the stages is the use of military forces. In Stage I (December 1962-April 1963), the direct involvement of the military was very limited and the *Konfrontasi* only formed as ‘war of words.’³⁶ Several limited military operations were launched but only performed a low-level show of force.³⁷ In Stage II (April-August 1963), the ABRI started to deliver military incursions.³⁸ This approach was taken in order to give more pressure to Malaysia during meetings in Manila and Tokyo.³⁹ In the Stage III (September 1963-June 1964), Sukarno showed his resistance stance toward the proclamation of the Malaysia Federation. Regular troops began to be deployed in Sumatera and Kalimantan border. The covert military operation, called as *Operasi A* (Operation A), was launched in February 1964, under the direct supervision of General Yani.⁴⁰ This operation included intelligence, counter-intelligence, psywar, sabotage, demolition and reception committee in the enemy line.⁴¹ It was a joint operation where all services deployed their Special Forces unit.⁴²

It was recognized that Operation A did not go perfectly. There were some failures in delivering this operation. The landing at Pontian (17 August 1964), for instance, was failed due to poor preparation.⁴³ Although it was marked as the first Indonesian military attack in the

35 Mackie, “Low-Level Military,” 10-16.

36 Mackie, “Low-Level Military,” 10-11.

37 During this period, the Air Force delivered four operations to perform show of force in response to the maneuvers of British military in Kalimantan. Trihadi, *Sejarah Perkembangan Angkatan Udara*, 59-60; Dokumen Sejarah Dwikora SP 0027/D/10/4 *Malaysia*.

38 Gregorian, “Claret Operation,” 48.

39 Mackie, “Low-Level Military,” 11; Dokumen Sejarah Dwikora SP 0034/D/10/4; Komando Mandala Siaga, *Peran Komando Mandala*, 6.

40 Hadiningrat, *Sedjarah Operasi-Operasi*, 60.

41 Bagian Sejarah KKO AL, Korps Komando, 322.

42 Prior to the Operation A, the Navy’s Command Corps (*Korps Komando/KKO*, now Marines Corps) assigned an operational task force to East Kalimantan on 27 September 1963. Besides securing the border, this task force also infiltrated Malaysia territory and attacked her military posts. This was an implementation of Marine Corps Commander Directive (*Direktif Panglima Korps Komando Angkatan Laut*) No 94/G/Rhs/KKO.62 dated 21 September 1963. *Ibid.*, 271-281.

43 Pontian is in Johor Baru, Malaysia. *Ibid.*, 328-329.

Malaysian mainland, the implementation of the operation was far from planned.⁴⁴ The Navy's Command Corps (*Korps Komando*/KKO, now Marines Corps) had loss of more than seven personnel, and the Malaysian also captured several KKO troops.⁴⁵ Another failure mission was the Labis Landing (1-2 September 1964). This was an airborne operation and aimed to infiltrate the Malayan Peninsula.⁴⁶ However, the mission was completely failed. VAM Dani accused the incident was suspicious as the Malaysian could easily capture almost all troops from the Air Force's Quick Reaction Force Command (*Komando Pasukan Gerak Cepat*/PGT) paratroopers.⁴⁷ Moreover, there was one mission that had been successfully delivered during Operation A. It was demolition and sabotage of military and economic targets in the Malayan Peninsula, especially Singapore.⁴⁸ At least, 42 bomb incidents occurred during 1963-1965, resulting in deaths of seven people and injuring more than 50 people.⁴⁹

Why the Dwikora Operation Failed

It is essential to understand that the failure of the Dwikora Operation was caused by several problems. Indeed, the *Konfrontasi* has a multifaceted situation. However, certain political features could explain why the Dwikora Operation failed to achieve its objective in crushing the Malaysia Federation.

The Intensity of Unhealthy Military Rivalry

As the military is not immune from politics, Stepan argued that military might perform diverse political functions.⁵⁰ As noted already, the ABRI was one of key actors in Indonesian politics and had a unique political culture.⁵¹

44 Kosut, *Indonesia: The Sukarno Years*, 94; Bagian Sejarah KKO AL, *Korps Komando*, 330-331.

45 Ibid., 331.

46 Unlike previous operation, for the Labis Landing, the Air Force's Quick Reaction Force Command (*Komando Pasukan Gerak Cepat*/PGT) paratroopers was acknowledged as solely performer from the military element. Basically, the the Army Special Forces (*Resimen Pasukan Komando Angkatan Darat*/RPKAD) was prioritized for airborne assaults, as it is the Special Forces. Surodjo and Soeparno, *Tuhan*, 52.

47 Ibid., 54.

48 Gagasan Tentang Operasi Khusus [The idea of Special Operations], dated 6 January 1965, signed by Omar Dani.

49 Ali, *Konfrontasi*,

50 Stepan, *The Military*, 7.

51 Said, *Legitimizing Military Rule*, 9-63.

Consequently, factions and rivalry intra and inter-services are common characters for the institution.

Indeed, organizational development requires competition as it can promote service morale, innovation, and adaptation of improved strategy or doctrine.⁵² However, unhealthy rivalry can potentially act as a disruption, especially to the characteristics of a professional military, corporates that acknowledges group consciousness and professional competences.⁵³ Rivalry in the military may occur when members should show their loyalty to superior, and they fail to maintain unity.⁵⁴ Rivalry involves a focus on a specific, identifiable, opponent, and represents a relationship that is built up over a series of interactions.⁵⁵

In the ABRI case, this political feature could be seen in two levels, organizational and personal. In the organizational level, for instance, each service seemed to compete separately in order to prove their loyalty to Sukarno. During that time, none of the military commanders were against Sukarno's *Konfrontasi* explicitly. All of them were articulating the importance of the *Konfrontasi* in their official speeches on various occasions. They also openly supported the Brunei Revolt. Even, General Nasution did cross command and bypassed the chain of command of General Yani by dispatching troops to the Indonesian-Malaysian border in the Kalimantan Island.⁵⁶ Besides the absence of joint doctrine and military budget reductions, this precedent is also reinforced by the extensive changing of the ABRI structure that Sukarno directly controlled all military commanders.⁵⁷

On a personal level, several key military actors were aligned with blurred factions. The certain issue often dictated the creation of the informal faction. Gen Yani and Gen Nasution, for instance, were often competing for each other over influence in the Army. As the successor to Nasution, Yani replaced some Army's strategic positions including regional commanders who were known Nasution's aides.⁵⁸ In another issue, although they had a different approach over the communist issue, both Nasution and Yani were known as anti-PKI.⁵⁹

52 Ash, "Purple Virtues,"

53 Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 7-18.

54 Ash, "Purple Virtues," 4.

55 Kilduff, et al., "Whatever it takes," 7.

56 Sundhaussen, "The political orientations," 546; Dokumen Sejarah Dwikora SP 0002/D/10/4.

57 Humaidi, "Politik Militer AURI," 25.

58 Feith, "President Soekarno," 970-971.

59 Sundhaussen, "The Fashioning," 201.

Another personal rivalry example is VAM Dani and Maj Gen Suharto. Indeed, Suharto was disappointed when Sukarno appointed Dani as the military operational commander.⁶⁰ Suharto felt he deserved to be the Commander, as he was more experienced and senior to Dani. Later, Dani also was unhappy with the appointment of Suharto as Deputy Commander.⁶¹ The friction between Dani and Suharto occurred several time after they worked as a team.⁶² Technically, VAM Dani was the commander of all forces engaged in the war. In practice, Army officers exercised dominant authority over those military operation command functions supposedly under the control of Dani. Suharto frequently challenged Dani's authority. Dani had never been satisfied with Suharto strategy in the Dwikora Operation. Suharto and also Yani was succeeded to make the unified command system "in name only." Dani could not exercise his full command or even operational control over all troops operating during the *Konfrontasi*. As Dani only had a coordinating relationship with the commanders of the Army and Navy, the commanders still controlled their troops regarding their involvement in the *Dwikora* Operation. This shows the fragmented nature of the senior command arrangements role within the operation.

Unclear-cut Hierarchy

As noted already, Sukarno imposed the new structure of the Indonesian Armed Forces in 1962. As Sukarno tried to curtail Nasution's in the military, he assigned all military commanders under his leadership. Consequently, Nasution only had limited authority for military management.⁶³ In addition, Sukarno also established the 'new' Supreme Operational Command (*Komando Operasi Tertinggi/KOTI*) that one of the main tasks was to uphold the Crush Malaysia program.⁶⁴ Sukarno also assigned the main function of the KOTI to evaluate, plan, control and oversee government programs

60 Interview with Jusuf Wanandi, a civilian who was involved in the Suharto's Special Operation, 25 November 2016 in Jakarta.

61 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 13/KOTI/1965 dated 13 March 1965

62 They had several disagreements over various issues. Regarding the structure of military command, for instance, Suharto preferred it consisted of components of all services, while Dani was more favoured the structure of military command only as functional command. As a result, Suharto submitted a resign letter but Sukarno refused to accept his resignation. Dokumen Sejarah Dwikora SP-002/D/2014.

63 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 225/Plt/1962.

64 Prior to this, government had established a Supreme Operation Command for the liberation of West Irian (*Komando Operasi Tertinggi Pembebasan Irian Barat/KOTI Permibar*) in 1961. But, Sukarno dissolved it in 1963 following the problem of West Papua resolved through the 1962 New York Agreement. Bagian Sejarah KKO AL, *Korps Komando*, 322.

by coordinating all national resource.⁶⁵ Although KOTI was not part of the hierarchical military chain of command, it coordinated all military matters.⁶⁶

In consequence, those Sukarno's moves created more complication. As he led the KOTI as Supreme Commander, he failed to arrange clear scope of the work and institutional function between the KOTI and the cabinet. There was too much overlapping as several cabinet members also held strategic posts in the KOTI.⁶⁷

Theoretically, the hierarchy is the best structure for getting work done in big organizations.⁶⁸ In short, it could be interpreted as superior-subordinate relationships. The core of hierarchy is the differentiation between the role of superior and subordinate.⁶⁹ Hierarchical structure also could be the source of a great deal of trouble and inefficiency for the organization.⁷⁰ Worthy argued that the over-complexity of organizational structure is one of the main causes of poor management-employee relationships.⁷¹ In the *Konfrontasi* case, the overlapping structure has made unclear formal communication as all commanders of the services were directly under Sukarno leadership. The result was the KOTI could not control the military operation command effectively.⁷²

The military operation command, therefore, was pessimistic in its unified command system. Under a unified command system, the military services do not have operational direction over the assigned forces.⁷³ They only have to provide troops to the military operation command and deliver service authority including preparation of troops and administrative support — however, the case study showed the military services still controlled their troops. As the Indonesian Army supported the *Konfrontasi* half-heartedly, it delayed the deployment of combat troops to the military command.⁷⁴ Even the KOTI also refused to hand over Operation

65 Article 2 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 142/1963 dated 19 July 1963.

66 General Yani was appointed as Chief of Staff of the KOTI. Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 148/1963 dated 23 July 1963.

67 They were Army Commander in Chief, General Yani as Chief of Staff of the KOTI; Foreign Affairs Minister, Subandrio as First Joint Chief for Intelligence; and Cooperatives Minister Brigadier General Achmadi as Third Joint Chief for Manpower Deployment.

68 Jacques, "In Praise of Hierarchy,"

69 White Jr, "Organizational Design," 433-434.

70 Jacques, "In Praise of Hierarchy,"

71 Worthy, "Organizational Structure," 174.

72 Komando Mandala Siaga, *Peran Komando Mandala*, 98.

73 Cardwell III, *Command Structure*, 56.

74 Surodjo and Soeparno, *Tuban*, 45

A to the military operation command.⁷⁵ Indeed, the unified command system does not mean a merging of all services into a single service.⁷⁶ However, in order to establish an effective operation, military operation command needs to apply the principles of maximum integration and the principle of full utilization of forces.

For the military, insufficiency of the amount of information may affect military performance.⁷⁷ To overcome the problem, Van Creveld suggests a formal communication system should be enriched by informal communication.⁷⁸ In the *Konfrontasi* case, the informal channel is more effective to disrupt the military operation. Suharto utilized his informal channel to deliver the covert operation. After he led the military command in 1965, he used both channels to achieve his interest, normalize the Indonesia-Malaysia tension.

Frequent Changing Structures

The KOTI has changed the structure of military command five times during the execution of the Dwikora Operation.⁷⁹ These changes have been often accompanied by new mechanism or a new configuration. There are a few key highlights from these changes — first, the expansion of the Joint Staffs (JS).⁸⁰ At the beginning of the Dwikora Operation, JS consisted of four sections: intelligence, operation, administrative and logistics.⁸¹ Then, the KOTI expanded the JS into six sections: intelligence, operation, and training, personnel, logistics, territorial and communication.⁸² Later, the JS comprised of seven sections: intelligence, operation and training; personnel and administrative; logistics; territorial and people resistance; communication and electronics; and treasury.⁸³ Second, a form of combat forces. This matter was at the center of an apparent tug of war between Dani and Yani-Suharto. Dani preferred the form of combat forces as joint task forces, and he had operational

75 Bagian Sejarah KKO AL, *Korps Komando*, 331-332; Komando Mandala Siaga, *Peran Komando Mandala*, 100.

76 Cardwell III, *Command Structure*, 60.

77 Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 265.

78 Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 273.

79 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 28/KOTI/1964 dated 19 May 1964; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 33/KOTI/1964 dated 2 June 1964; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 01/1964 dated 30 September 1964 ; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 10/KOTI/1965 dated 1 March 1965; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 124/KOTI/1965 dated 21 October 1965.

80 Task of the Joint Staffs was to assist the military operation commander.

81 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 28/KOTI/1964 dated 19 May 1964.

82 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 33/KOTI/1964 dated 2 June 1964.

83 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 124/KOTI/1965 dated 21 October 1965.

control to the forces.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, both Yani and Suharto favored the form applied component system, and the military operation commander did not have control to the combat force.⁸⁵ It seemed to apply the Army's Doctrine of Territorial Warfare that the implementation of the operations would be decentralized, even though the strategy would be centralized.⁸⁶ Also, the component system may create a productive land, naval, and air force team in preventing unnecessary overlapping works. Third, the scope of the military operation command. At the beginning of the operation, the command only performed as the functional command. It reflected through its official name 'the Alert Command' (*Komando Siaga/Koga*).⁸⁷ However, Dani missed his first-year targets such as failure to develop combat elements, unable to gather proper the intelligence data, and lack of military operation activities.⁸⁸ Thus the KOTI improved the structure of the Koga from the functional command into the theatre command. To ensure the presence of unified command, Sukarno established the Vigilance Command (*Komando Mandala Siaga/Kolaga*) to replace the Koga.⁸⁹

Frequent restructuring may have created potential shortcoming, as military operation requires steady and consistent improvement. As Forsyth argues 'the long-term nature of the mission requires a consistent operational approach to achieve the strategic ends set forth by national authority while also requiring our forces to remain flexible and adapt to the ever-changing tactical situation.'⁹⁰ The military hierarchy was aiming to increase the probability that the troops would perform on the battlefield.⁹¹ In contrast, the structure changing did not improve the decision-making mechanism within the military operation command. The collective decision-making mechanism⁹² has also contributed to poor performance

84 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 28/KOTI/1964 dated 19 May 1964; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 01/1964 dated 30 September 1964.

85 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 33/KOTI/1964 dated 2 June 1964; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 10/KOTI/1965 dated 1 March 1965; Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 124/KOTI/1965 dated 21 October 1965.

86 Biro Research Departemen Luar Negeri [Research Bureau of Department of Foreign Affairs], *Perang Wilayah* [Territorial Warfare], (Jakarta: Biro Research Departemen Luar Negeri, 1962).

87 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 23/KOTI/1964 dated 16 May 1964.

88 Laporan Komando [Command Report] No LAPKO-02 & 03/'65 mengenai *Perkembangan Komando Mandala Siaga Dalam Bulan Februari dan Maret 1965* [Progress of the Vigilance Command during February- March 1965].

89 Keputusan Presiden [Presidential Decree] No 9/KOTI/1965 dated 28 February 1965

90 Forsyth, "Unity of Effort?"

91 Demchak, *Military Organizations*, 36

92 Any decision from the military operation command requires consent from commander and deputy commanders. Komando Mandala Siaga, *Peran Komando Mandala*, 106.

of the military operation command because none of the commanders worked full time for the command.

Disunity of Command

The command is bound up with many factors. Besides structure, technology, armament system, tactics and strategy, a factor of discipline might intrude on command.⁹³ The military command required a concentration of power in one person. The leader be responsible for making a judgments, employing knowledge, and making a decision.⁹⁴ Military rivalry produced remarkable disunity of command outcomes. Dispatching of the *Kompi* (Company) T from Battalion 600R into the Indonesian- Malaysian border in East Kalimantan was one of the notable incidents. Nasution did ‘illegal’ maneuver of Nasution by commanding the Inter-regional commander for Kalimantan Brigadier General Hassan Basry to deploy the troops.⁹⁵ At that time, Nasution has no authority to command any troops. Although the Army Headquarter ordered to abort the mission, the *Kompi T* disobeyed Yani’s command and continued the journey to Sabah territory. Professional arrogance also may result in disunity of command and disrupt the unity of effort.⁹⁶ In this regard, according to Keijzer, acceptance, an element of authority, is the basis of power.⁹⁷ As stated earlier, the friction became unhealthy as Suharto disrupted the operation by launching a covert operation to weaken the Dwikora Operation.⁹⁸ As the Commander of Army Strategic Reserve Command (*Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat/Kostrad*), he also ordered the delay of the deployment of combat troops to Sumatera.⁹⁹ Both Yani and Suharto were active to seek a peaceful solution of the Indonesia-Malaysia dispute. The point is, as Forsyth posits, level of cooperation within the military command is more dependent upon the personalities of the commander to working together to achieve a common objective.¹⁰⁰

93 Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 261.

94 Nye, *The Challenge of Command*, 19.

95 Dokumen Sejarah Dwikora SP 0002/D/10/4

96 Forsyth, “Unity of Effort?”

97 Keijzer, *Military Obedience*, 19.

98 The covert operation aimed to normalize the tension between Indonesia and Malaysia. It was under Gen Yani approval. See Elson, *Suharto: A Political Biography*, 92; Mukmin, *TNI dalam politik*, 115; Wanandi, *Shades of Grey*, 68.

99 Crouch, *Militer dan Politik*, 78.

100 Forsyth, “Unity of Effort?”

Conclusion: Lessons to be Learned

Unity of command is one of the critical issues within the military campaign. It ensures a single-minded approach to operations and prevention of operational paralysis.¹⁰¹ Developing unity of effort is essential. However, the unity of command also depends on the personalities, capabilities, and relationships of the military commanders.¹⁰² Moreover, the Dwikora Operation shows how poor command arrangements would disrupt the unity of effort.

There was a degree of tension within the Kolaga. The primary source of tension tended to be associated with command relationships. As Rice argued, ‘sensitivity reflects the participants’ concern over who will command their forces and what authority that commander will have.’¹⁰³ In wartime, it is impossible to know with certainty what will be the outcomes for the rivalry.¹⁰⁴ Unhealthy rivalry during the *Konfrontasi* occurred because the services were motivated by the desire to maintain resources and authority. In the case of the Army and the Air Force, this stance was motivated by the desire to have a dominant role in any conflict. Consequently, it resulted in operational difficulties. Shared doctrine might reduce the interservice rivalry at the level of the service commanders. Although, it was never a convincing option as Sukarno was also keen to politicize the military.

Indeed, joint operations were an essential part of the Indonesian Armed Forces campaigns in the past. Those operations will be even more critical in future campaigns. Learning from failures of the operation is essential for the Indonesian military in overcoming contemporary problems. Failure to ensure unity of command will continue crippling the mission. As Clausewitz says, ‘the conduct of war resembles the working of an intricate machine with tremendous friction, so that combinations which are easily planned on paper can be executed only with great effort.’¹⁰⁵

101 Forsyth, “Unity of Effort?”

102 Devlin, “Joint Operations,” 17.

103 Rice, “Command and Control,” 152-167.

104 Furrer and Thomas, “The Rivalry Matrix,” 620.

105 Paret, *Clausewitz*, 197.

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