



J. M. van der Kroef
INDONESIA
AFTER
SUKARNO

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Preface

THE ABORTIVE COUP of 30 September 1965 in various parts of Java, and the subsequently accelerating fall from power of President Sukarno, form a major turning point in the modern history of Southeast Asia. Indonesia's seemingly steady drift toward Communist ascendancy at home, and toward ever closer partnership with People's China abroad, were halted and then reversed. Political parties were enabled to break with the confining practices of Sukarno's "guided democracy", and a new and meaningful effort at rehabilitating the nation's badly neglected economy got underway. At the same time the intractable problem of finding an acceptable constitutional structure remained, as did the difficulties in defining the place of the military and of Islam, in integrating the Chinese minority, in maintaining the rule of law in the face of the continuing threat of Communist subversion, and in legitimizing the permanent acquisition of West New Guinea—to name but a few areas of tension and concern. And over all there hovered the demands of a new Asian regional security system, characterized by diminished British and American involvement and interest, and predicated upon the necessity of arriving at new forms of accommodation with Indonesia's neighbours.

The following pages offer a brief survey of some of the major Indonesian developments and policies in these first few years of the post-Sukarno era. Though this volume is intended primarily for the general reader, it is hoped that the specialist may also here and there find matter of interest. The author has preferred, however, to stand as little as possible in front of the data presented, not least because of a conviction that much of the theorizing and conceptualizing in the field of Indonesian studies in recent years has had the tendency to obscure the rich and enduring diversity of the Indonesian experience.

For some of the material in this book the author has drawn on previously published articles, specifically on "Indonesian Communism since the 1965 coup", *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 43, Spring

1970, pp. 34-60; "West New Guinea: The Uncertain Future", *Asian Survey*, Institute of International Studies, University of California at Berkeley, vol. 8, August 1968, pp. 691-707; and "Gestapu in Indonesia" and "Sukarno's Fall", both in *Orbis*, The Foreign Policy Research Institute of the University of Pennsylvania, vol. 10, Summer 1966, pp. 458-87, and vol. 11, Summer 1967, pp. 491-531, respectively. For permission to reprint, the author is grateful to the editors and institutes concerned.

This book is for M.F.E., *sahabat setia*.

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CHAPTER ONE

Gestapu and its Origins

IN DJAKARTA, on the evening of 27 March 1968, General Suharto, aged 46, was formally sworn in as President of Indonesia by decision of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (*Madjelis Permusjawaratan Rakjat Sementara*—MPRS) which under Indonesia's Constitution is the country's highest policy-setting body and which elects the chief executive. Southeast Asia's largest and most populous nation thus set the seal upon a drastic change in domestic and foreign policy which had begun two and a half years before with the abortive *coup d'etat* of 30 September 1965 in Djakarta and in portions of Central Java. This change had culminated in the accelerating slide from power of Indonesia's first President and the man who, more than any other, had virtually dominated it during most of the first two decades of its national independence—Sukarno. As Suharto was being sworn in, the 66-year-old Sukarno, a virtual prisoner, was some forty miles south of Djakarta in the hill town of Bogor. Rumoured to be suffering from a variety of nervous and other disorders, and held in utter disrepute among most of the country's students and intellectuals, Sukarno yet had a potent, lingering charismatic appeal in the Javanese countryside, and remained a force to be reckoned with until his death more than two years later.

No outburst of popular elation greeted Suharto's formal presidential investiture. This was partly, perhaps, because he had already held *de facto* presidential authority for two years and had been officially named Acting President by the MPRS on 12 March 1967, while Sukarno presumably retained the shadow of his original title. But it was probably also due to growing political tensions between Suharto and major political and social groupings in Indonesia (see chapter II), and, perhaps, to a relative sense of "let-down" over the necessary but unspectacular stabilization efforts of Suharto, after the more flamboyant and diverting political gestures of Sukarno.

It was Sukarno who, to most of his fellow Indonesians and others abroad, had become the symbol of his country's independence aspirations, its emergent national unity, and its struggle against Dutch colonial rule. Anciently Indonesia had known little of such national unity. To be sure, before the coming of the Dutch merchants to the Indonesian islands late in the sixteenth century, there had flourished important empires and principalities based mainly on Java and Sumatra. These states had a highly developed, Hinduized (usually with some Buddhist influence) and later, Islamic cultural life. But it was not until Dutch colonial rule—exercised first by the Dutch East India Company, and later, as of the beginning of the nineteenth century, by the Dutch State Government—that the many scattered islands of Indonesia and their greatly diverse population groups had very gradually been welded together into a single, overcapping administrative and political entity. It was through this Dutch colonial system too that the Indonesian people, however inadequately, were launched into the world of modern education, public health services, jurisprudence, and a developed agricultural and minerological export economy. Even so, the early Indonesian nationalism, as it emerged during the first two decades of the present century, tended to reflect the persisting variety of regional, religious and class interests in the country. Though he had his critics and competitors in the nationalist movement, Sukarno was unquestionably the most tireless articulator of the idea of a united Indonesia, a nation which culturally and politically would synthesize this historic diversity of its peoples and their development.

Born in Blitar, East Java, on 6 June 1901, of a Balinese mother and a Javanese school teacher of aristocratic family, Sukarno (like many Indonesians he had but one name) in 1926 became a graduate in architecture at the Dutch Government's College of Engineering in Bandung, West Java, but he had little interest in practising his profession. These were the years when the Dutch colonial system, though it had, just after World War I, made a modest beginning by granting Indonesia some measure of autonomy, was under increasing strain to accommodate the political and economic demands of a growing number of educated and nationally conscious younger Indonesians. Sukarno threw himself into the rapidly developing nationalist movement and suffered imprisonment and exile at the hands of the Dutch authorities. When early in 1942, during the Second World War, the Dutch East Indian colonial empire ended with the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia, Sukarno, while collaborating with the Japanese, nevertheless continued to scheme toward an *Indonesia Merdeka*

(Free Indonesia). Neither during the closing decades of Dutch colonial rule, nor during the subsequent years of Japanese Occupation (1942-5) had Sukarno been the only nationalist leader of prominence. Indonesian nationalism, with its taproots in traditional and Reform Islam, in ethnic and regional subcultures, in Marxism, in the peasant as well as in urban middle class and modern secularist aspirations, has always had a more broadly varied character and, also historically, a longer process of elite formation than many accounts of its history and development have tended to take note of. But when on 17 August 1945, with the somewhat reluctant consent of the Japanese, and in the closing hours of World War II, Sukarno proclaimed the independence of the Indonesian Republic, most of the leading nationalists, at least on Java, rallied to his cause.

For more than four years Sukarno, as President of the revolutionary Republic, led the struggle against the returning Dutch and their Indonesian allies, the latter particularly to be found on the islands beyond Java. Sukarno's authority was repeatedly threatened: for example, in September 1948, in Madiun, East Java, the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*—PKI) briefly mounted an unsuccessful coup against his regime. But when at last, after United Nations intervention, the Dutch, at the so-called Round Table Conference in The Hague at the end of December 1949, formally transferred their sovereignty over Indonesia to a new federal Indonesian Republic (with the exception of West New Guinea, which remained under Dutch authority), it seemed natural that Sukarno would become its President also.

During the first fifteen years of Indonesia's post-revolutionary existence as a nation, and as partisan political opinion and activity became more and more sharply divisive, Sukarno seemed to find it increasingly necessary to resort to authoritarian procedures. These included the abolition of parliamentary democracy, an ever-tightening press censorship, and, eventually, political arrests, to stabilize his position. Provincial dissatisfaction, especially in Sumatra, with the heavy hand of Djakarta-based bureaucracy, and with the inadequate returns to the provinces of exchange earned by major exports like rubber, soon evolved into a string of Army-backed regional rebellions in 1956-7. The President's seemingly increasing co-operation with the resurgent PKI also aroused mounting concern. The discontent exploded in February 1958, in a near civil war, as important leaders of the *Masjumi* (Muslim Federation) and Socialist (PSI) parties joined Army dissidents in the proclamation of a new Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (*Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*

— PRRI) based in west Sumatra and northern Sulawesi (Celebes).

With the aid of loyal Army commanders and the major political parties, including the PKI, Sukarno weathered the storm, and shortly Indonesia embarked upon a high-pitched campaign of national "confrontation" against the Dutch in order to acquire West New Guinea, or Irian Barat as Indonesians call it. When, by the middle of 1962, the Dutch, under strong pressure from the Kennedy administration in the United States, gave in to the Indonesian demand, Sukarno (all the while ceaselessly purveying new verbal symbols of the nation's political direction and greatness to which obedience was exacted from all political groupings) had gone far indeed in establishing a quasi-totalitarian regime, precariously balanced on the mutual antagonism between the top commanders of the Army and the ever more influential PKI. Before the end of 1962 the confrontation campaign resumed, this time against the impending creation of the Malaysian Federation (composed of Malaya, Sarawak, Sabah or North Borneo, and initially Singapore) and against which the PKI had already been fulminating on the grounds that it was a "neo-colonialist project" of the British.

With little doubt these "external" ventures of confrontation and the crisis atmosphere they created, helped in the short-run stabilization of the Sukarno regime, although virtually all meaningful economic development seemed to be grinding to a halt. Perhaps even more important was that during 1963-5 and in the context of the anti-Malaysian confrontation—as in the case of the earlier confrontation of Dutch-held West New Guinea, characterized by an international press war scare, a psychological pressure campaign, infiltration by paratroopers, and Indonesian guerilla and terrorist attacks—Peking and Djakarta established an ever warmer pattern of international political co-operation. It was then too that the PKI, under its chairman Dipa Nusantara Aidit, rose to the position of its greatest influence since its founding in May 1920. Already in March 1962, Aidit, along with leaders of other major parties, had become a cabinet minister without portfolio, and in the following months overt and covert Communist representation in the Cabinet widened. Meanwhile Sukarno, in December 1964, ordered the abolition of the belatedly formed anti-PKI organizations like the *Badan Pendukung Sukarnoisme* or Body for the Support of Sukarnoism, just as four years earlier he had banned the anti-Communist *Masjumi* and PSI parties on the grounds that some of their leaders had been involved in the PRRI rebellion. And as in public addresses he urged the PKI to "go ahead" and to "grow, grow further",

the PKI accelerated its militant confrontation of “landlords”, “capitalist bureaucrats”, “CIA agents” and “imperialist culture”, seizing foreign, especially British-owned estates and attacking United States Information Service libraries.

With a membership which by early 1965 approached two million, and with additional tens of thousands in its labour, peasants’, women’s and youth fronts, the PKI had in fact become the largest political party in Indonesia. Its power radiated to all areas of government, from village officials to provincial governors and from managers of major government enterprises to the armed forces. While most Army officers remained anti-Communist, PKI influence increasingly extended itself to lower naval and Marine Corps (*Korps Komando Operasi* — KKO) personnel, and even to the top command of the Indonesian Air Force. Indeed, even in the Army itself PKI cadres were making special efforts to win over individual officers who, for various reasons, were discontented with top Army policies, or were gripped by promotion or service speciality jealousies. This process was undoubtedly facilitated by the fact that PKI cadres, with official approval, lectured to the armed forces on the nature of the Indonesian Revolution and the party’s place in it.

By the middle of January 1965, the PKI, in the teeth of bitter Army opposition, also began a campaign to arm “workers and peasants” in an independent, so-called Fifth Force (so named to distinguish it from the already existing four “forces”, the army, navy, air force and police), ultimately winning Sukarno over to the idea. PKI-directed demonstrations culminated in various parts of Java in seizures by Communist peasant front groups of “landlords’ lands” and during the ensuing violence scores were injured or killed. Elsewhere, meanwhile, rising tensions between Muslim villagers and PKI militants erupted in other bloody clashes. Despite the unmistakable, if covert, rising popular opposition to all these PKI pressures the party seemed increasingly to have its way. One incident is illustrative. On 3 August 1965, it was announced that the High Court of North Sumatra province would shortly meet, not in its usual location in Medan, but in Djakarta. There it was expected to reach a “more suitable” verdict than the fifteen- to twenty-year prison sentences it had just meted out to twenty-three cadres of the PKI peasant front who had been convicted previously of beating to death an Army officer. The officer in question, sent to clear squatters from government land, had, according to the Communist press, “provoked” the “people’s leaders” (that is the peasant front cadres). The PKI raised such an outcry over the original verdict that the Government deemed it wiser to order the court to

reconsider the case — but this time in (for the Communists) the more sympathetic atmosphere of Djakarta, a precedent in Indonesia's judicial history and a portent of the PKI's power hardly to be minimized.

Already, toward the close of December 1964, reports had appeared in the Malaysian (though not in the censor-ridden Indonesian) press about a recently exposed PKI Central Committee document describing stepped-up agitation planned for 1965, in preparation for an eventual *coup d'etat*. Whatever the accuracy of these reports, it is likely that any PKI plan for a *coup d'etat* were — at least until August 1965 — greatly modified by the consideration that the party was ascending so steadily in power that a coup might not at all be necessary. What ultimately prompted the formation of the conspiracy of the so-called 30 September Movement (*Gerakan September Tiga Puluh*, usually abbreviated to *Gestapu* by acronym-minded Indonesians) is still shrouded in a good deal of controversy and uncertainty. But it now seems likely that PKI leaders, alarmed in August 1965 over reports of Sukarno's rapidly declining health, allied themselves with a number of dissident Army officers, some of them in the Central Java-based Diponegoro division, others in the East Java-based Brawidjaja division. So began the preparations for a pre-emptive strike against top Army commanders designed to nullify an expected Army move against the Communists in the event of Sukarno's sudden death or total incapacity. Members of *Gerwani* (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* — Indonesian Women's Movement), the PKI's women's front, and of *Pemuda Rakjat* (People's Youth), the Communist youth organization, were mobilized both in Central and West Java during the latter half of August 1965. Some 2,000 members of these organizations, with the connivance of Air Force officers, were eventually given military training in small rotating groups in an isolated and marshy spot called Lubang Buaja (crocodile hole), within the perimeter of Halim Air Force base near Djakarta.

The Government of People's China, from the start, was aware of and materially assisted the *Gestapu* conspirators. At least two weeks *before* the coup, for example, Bangkok and Hong Kong sources reported on the extensive supplies of arms and explosives being sent to Indonesian Communists by Communist China via small East and West Java ports and fishing villages. This military hardware was packed in crates supposedly containing building materials being sent by Peking to assist in constructing facilities in Djakarta for the forthcoming August 1966 Conference of the New Emerging Forces, the Sino-Indonesian rival organization to the United Nations (indicative of the growing political *rapprochement*

between Djakarta and Peking had been Indonesia's decision to leave the United Nations, in January 1965). The importation of these crates containing weapons occurred without customs inspection because of an earlier agreement between Indonesia's Foreign Minister Subandrio and Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi. It was not least because of his behind-the-scenes assistance to the *Gestapu* plotters that after the coup Subandrio came widely and popularly to be branded as Durno, the nefarious scheming adviser figure in the Javanese *wayang* (shadow play) repertoire. In fact, during his trial in October 1966, Subandrio declared that through his intelligence organization he had heard rumours of the impending *Gestapu* plot. However, he had not informed Sukarno, said Subandrio, because he believed that the President himself was already well familiar with the planned coup!

There can be, indeed, little question that Sukarno was aware of the preparations for *Gestapu*. Also, apart from the uncertainties for his future posed by his health, Indonesia's President evidently believed that even after the establishment of the plotters' "Revolutionary Council", as announced in the first rebel broadcast in Djakarta early in the morning of 1 October 1965, he would in effect retain his position. There is the testimony of the later-executed Air Force Major Sujono, commander of the Halim base security force, who directly supervised the training of the Communist assassin squads at Lubang Buaja, and who, reportedly, was delegated by the PKI to indoctrinate Lieutenant-Colonel Untung, the nominal leader of the *Gestapu* conspirators, in the Communist ideology. Sujono testified during the trial of captured PKI Politburo member Njono, in the middle of February 1966, that Sukarno was apprised well in advance of the coming coup. Moreover, Sukarno's behaviour during the critical first hours of the coup period can only deepen suspicion. For example, in the early morning hours Sukarno went voluntarily to — of all places — Halim Air Force base, which he almost certainly knew to be the headquarters of the *Gestapu* plotters. Sukarno's own explanation is that he went to Halim so that he would have been able to fly away "should an unwanted eventuality have risen". At Halim, he was seen to pat the shoulder of Brigadier-General Supardjo, one of the chief conspirators, after Supardjo reportedly told him of the murder of six Army generals by the Lubang Buaja assassin squads just a few hours before. This presidential pat, of which subsequently much was made by Sukarno's critics, may have been a congratulatory or a restraining gesture. But it should be noted that well after the coup Sukarno had contact with and attempted to protect Supardjo and even exchanged letters with him while Supardjo was in hiding.

Perhaps the most careful assessment of Sukarno's alleged place in the *Gestapu* affair was made by General Suharto himself in a report to the MPRS on 7 March 1967. In this report Suharto apparently also used, in part, the findings of a somewhat earlier investigation of Sukarno's relationship to the *Gestapu* affair made by the Attorney-General's office. Sukarno, declared Suharto, could not be marked down "as a direct instigator, or the master-mind, or even an important figure of *Gestapu*/PKI", unless new facts became available. Rather, Sukarno had helped create the recent political climate in Indonesia which so greatly encouraged the PKI. When shortly before the coup Sukarno had been warned by Army Brigadier-General R. H. Sugandhi that a subversive plot was about to be hatched (reportedly Sugandhi's participation in the *Gestapu* affair had been solicited by PKI chairman D. N. Aidit) Sukarno, according to Suharto, turned Sugandhi aside with a warning not to give in to "this Communist phobia". Also, Sukarno, upon hearing reports (presumably given him by Supardjo at Halim) of the killings by *Gestapu* terrorists of leading Army generals, had dismissed the matter with the remark that "such things will happen in a revolution". And on 2 October 1965, at a time when the coup had to all intents and purposes already failed, Sukarno — according to Suharto — continued to deal with Supardjo, even though he was known by then as one of the chief *Gestapu* plotters. Yet Sukarno also knew that the day before, Suharto and the "provisional leadership of the Army" had already branded those involved in the coup as traitors and declared them dishonourably dismissed. Later, after the coup, Suharto noted, Sukarno in various speeches and public exhortations had tried to protect the role of Communism in Indonesia's national development and though he denounced the coup itself he had all along failed to take legal steps against known *Gestapu* leaders.

Even so, it is probable that the extent of Sukarno's fore-knowledge of and the propriety of his conduct during and after the coup will be debated for a long time to come. The same is likely to be true also for the PKI's role in it, even though leading party figures unquestionably prepared for and collaborated closely with Army dissidents in the whole *Gestapu* affair. Pre-meditation and planning speak readily from the establishment on the morning of 1 October 1965 in the Central Java city of Surakarta (nearly simultaneously, it might be added, with the first radio announcement of Untung's Revolutionary Council in Djakarta) of a local Revolutionary Council. This council's guiding force was Utomo Ramelan, Surakarta's mayor and prominent PKI member. PKI planning speaks equally from "Operation Naming Names", that is the practice before the coup

of PKI cadres in a number of areas in Java and Kalimantan (Borneo) of compiling lists of prominent local party opponents, and from the earlier-mentioned training of Communist assassin squads at Lubang Buaja. There is also the evidence given after the coup by exiled or captured PKI spokesmen. In its July-August 1968 issue, the magazine *Tricontinental*, which is published in Havana as the mouthpiece of the Castro-sponsored Solidarity Organization of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, carried long excerpts of the testimony at the trial of Sudisman, a top PKI leader and Politburo member. The testimony record, which *Tricontinental's* editors claim came to them from "honourable people" present at Sudisman's trial, shows Sudisman stating that he "made decrees and drew up the plan for the Council of Revolution" (that is Untung's Council) and that he, Sudisman, was present at Halim and Lubang Buaja at the time the *Gestapu* affair began. This trial testimony also shows Sudisman saying with reference to the coup that "all actions were executed by individuals who happened to be members of the PKI". Nevertheless, Sudisman asserted, the PKI as such was not involved in the plot. (*Inter alia* it might be noted that the excerpts of Sudisman's trial testimony printed in *Tricontinental* wholly conform to the unpublished Indonesian transcript of Sudisman's trial by the *Mahmillub* or special military court which the present writer was privileged to see.)

Underground and exiled PKI members in their evaluations of the coup have also been quite candid about Communist involvement and intent. The purpose of the coup, according to one Indonesian evaluation in the October 1967 issue of the *World Marxist Review*, the Prague-published voice of Moscow-orientated Communist parties in the world today, was not only to frustrate a "conspiracy" of Indonesian generals. It was also to establish a revolutionary government, with the participation of the Communists and other groups, "as a preliminary to People's Democracy". A similar statement appears in the evaluation attributed to a Moscow-orientated group of Indonesian Communists in exile somewhere in Southeast Asia. Considering the meaning which Communists attach to the term "People's Democracy", it is difficult to interpret these assertions other than that the coup was intended by PKI leaders themselves as a step toward the creation of a Communist state in Indonesia. It seems equally evident, however, that the statements of Sudisman and other Indonesian Communists, that the PKI as such was not involved in the coup, have some substance of truth also, although wittingly or not many party and front members were obviously engaged in preparations for it. Available evidence thus far strongly suggests

that, either because of caution or because of poor co-ordination, only a few Politburo members and party provincial and district leaders appear to have been aware that a coup was being planned. And even fewer were familiar with tactical details, including the date and the manner of the strike. Poor co-ordination in overblown party and front organizations was, indeed, a major reason why the party's destruction could occur with such astonishing speed in the first weeks after the failure of the coup.

Finally, there is the role of the Army in the *Gestapu* affair. Official Army sources identify two main evil geniuses. One was Lieutenant-Colonel Untung, a veteran officer and Sukarno protege, who, during the earlier-mentioned PKI uprising in Madiun in 1948, had for a while fought on the side of the Communists. Untung nevertheless appears not to have been greatly held back in his career because of this, and on the day of the coup he was a battalion commander of the presidential palace guard. The other was Army Brigadier-General M. S. Supardjo, long known for his pro-Communist sympathies, who at the time of *Gestapu* was commander of the Army Strategic Reserve's Fourth Combat Command stationed in Menggaian, West Kalimantan. Supardjo, concerned with carrying on Indonesia's anti-Malaysia confrontation along the Sarawak border, was well placed at this post. For not least because of his political sympathies he had little difficulty in assisting in the development of joint guerilla operations with dissident Communist-orientated Chinese in Sarawak.

Still other military, for example a number of field-grade officers of the Diponegoro division in Central Java, also played not insignificant roles in the coup attempt in their area. But since they were far from the Djakarta scene they tended to remain outside the spotlight. And certainly principal allies of Supardjo and the plotters were Air Marshal Omar Dhani, Indonesia's Air Force chief, who knew all about what was happening at his Halim base and with whom Supardjo conferred directly upon his arrival in Djakarta from Kalimantan forty-eight hours before the coup, and Colonel A. Latief, brigade commander of the Djakarta garrison. Moreover, in the latter half of 1968, when for months scores of military from all major services branches were being arrested for alleged complicity in the *Gestapu* affair, Indonesian Army spokesmen gave the strong impression that the number of conspirators in the Army was far greater than was originally supposed. One cannot be sure, however, that some of the Army's arrests during and since 1968 were not actuated by keeping alive a "Red scare" in order to justify the Army's emergency powers.

Apparently, throughout all of August and September 1955, secret meetings took place in Djakarta, attended by Untung, Sujono, a representative of the PKI Central Committee (usually Tjugito, known as Sjam or as Sjam Kamaruzaman), and occasionally emissaries of Supardjo and Latief. Sometimes the plotters met in Latief's home. It was during these meetings that the principal tactical decision of the coup was taken—to kill Defence Minister General Nasution, Army commander Lieutenant-General Ahmad Yani and other top Army leaders, in order to immobilize and demoralize any potential resistance to the coup. Also in those discussions the deployment of the forces at the disposal of the plotters was agreed upon. In addition to the 2,000 Communists trained at Lubang Buaja, Untung's own palace guard battalion (most of the junior officers of which had been persuaded by Untung with promises of rapid promotion to join the plot), and a few elements of Sujono's Halim base security force and of Latief's Djakarta garrison troops, the *Gestapu* conspirators also counted on the support of a para-troop battalion of the Army's Diponegoro division and on one battalion from the Army's Brawidjaja division. These latter had recently arrived in the capital in connection with the parade to be held on Armed Forces Day, on 5 October. Top officers of these battalions had been subverted by the PKI, but their rank and file appeared to have had but small idea as to what end they were being used. As a matter of fact, by the afternoon of the first day of the coup, the rebellious Brawidjaja battalion had been talked into surrendering by General Suharto, and later even participated in crushing the rebel remnant. Untung and Supardjo also appeared to have believed that they had backing from a Siliwangi division armoured unit in West Java, from other Diponegoro companies in Central Java, and that they had naval and KKO support at the Surabaya naval base. These expectations were, with the exception of the Siliwangi elements, not without some foundation. But in the event, only units of the Diponegoro division were to give the conspirators any significant support in Central Java.

Why the *Gestapu* plotters decided to strike on the night of 30 September to 1 October 1965 is still not clear. A principal reason may have been that by this time there was considerable danger of a leak and that the planned attacking force could not be kept in high alert much longer. For example, Major-General S. Parman, the Army's chief of Intelligence Services, in one of the tragic ironies of the *Gestapu* affair, appeared to have been informed several hours before the coup that the Communists were planning some sort of surprise attack. Before he could find