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**USAWC STRATEGIC RESEARCH PROJECT**

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**CLARET - THE NATURE OF WAR AND DIPLOMACY  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN BORNEO 1963 - 1966**

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19 April 1994

Study Project

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Unclassified

Unclassified

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## ABSTRACT

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**TITLE:** CLARET THE NATURE OF WAR AND DIPLOMACY:  
Special Operations in Borneo 1963 - 1966

**FORMAT:** Individual Study Project

**DATE:** 19 April 1994      **PAGES:** 59

**CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

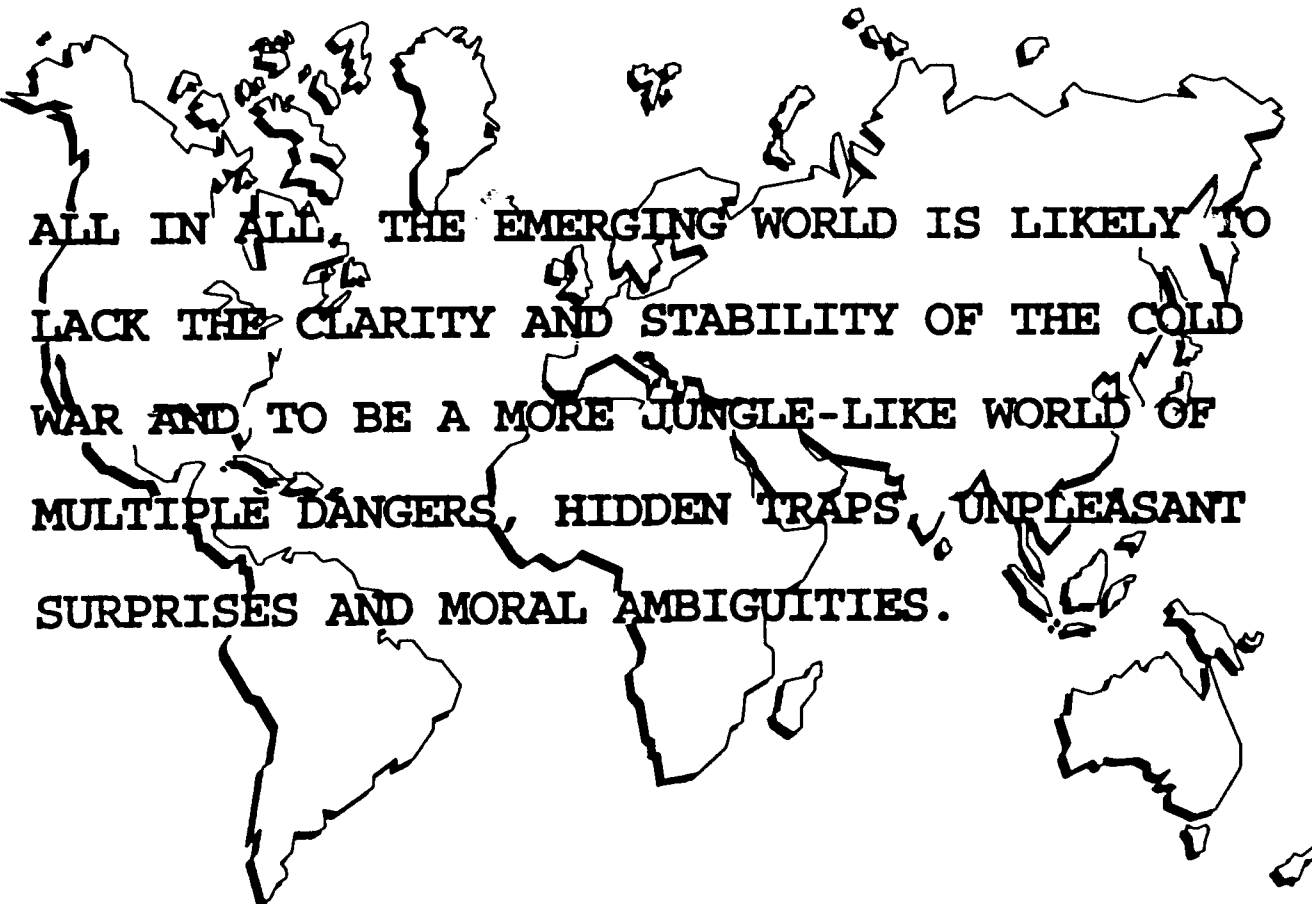
Britain was economically devastated by World War II. Consequently, she reduced the size of her Army and its presence abroad in order to reap the benefits of the hard won peace. She relied on nuclear deterrence and depended upon the projection of her military forces abroad to secure her national interests. Seventy-three percent of Britain's battalions were committed to maintaining the new world order.

A crisis began on Borneo with the Brunei Revolt on 8 December 1962. Significant national interests were not threatened until 17 August 1964 when Indonesian marines attacked Malaysia, signaling an active, external threat to British regional interests. Events in Borneo reflect the ambiguity of international intercourse. Critical national interests were at stake; however, a costly conventional war was not in Britain's interest.

Britain's political leaders controlled the low visibility, cross border operations called CLARET. Tactically CLARET seized the initiative in Borneo. Operationally CLARET forced Indonesia on the defensive. Strategically CLARET convinced Indonesia that the U.K. possessed both the power and the will to pursue its interests. Conflict termination was achieved on 25 May 1966. Resolution of the conflict followed on 11 August.

Specially assessed, selected and trained soldiers played a key role in Borneo. The success in Borneo reflects the successful organization and integration of special forces into the fabric of British strategic planning. The U.K. Secretary of State for Defence at the time, Mr. Healey, contends that the campaign was a "textbook demonstration of...economy of force, under political guidance [for the purpose of] political ends."

## THE ENVIRONMENT



ALL IN ALL, THE EMERGING WORLD IS LIKELY TO LACK THE CLARITY AND STABILITY OF THE COLD WAR AND TO BE A MORE JUNGLE-LIKE WORLD OF MULTIPLE DANGERS, HIDDEN TRAPS, UNPLEASANT SURPRISES AND MORAL AMBIGUITIES.

Samuel P. Huntington

## INTRODUCTION

With the end of the Cold War, the world exploded, cataclysmically splintering world order and creating a world that Huntington describes as ". . . a more jungle-like world of multiple dangers, hidden traps, unpleasant surprises and moral ambiguities." The U.S. response to those who challenges its interests must reflect this reality. Luxurious application of overwhelming force will not always be an option. In *The Transformation of War*, Martin Van Creveld argues that the nature war has undergone a fundamental transformation, such that the conventional military forces of the principle nation-states are hardly relevant to the predominant form of contemporary war.<sup>1</sup> Clausewitz concluded that the fundamental, ". . . the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish. . .the kind of war on which they are embarking. . ." and, by implication, the kind of military they must have to fight that war.<sup>2</sup> While the reader might dismiss Van Creveld's general assertion on the utility of conventional military forces, it is more difficult to repudiate his specific assertion that the world is fracturing along ethnic, religious and sub-national lines. This view is not only supported by a casual review of current events but it is also supported by the more erudite views of statesmen such as Senator Moynihan. Moynihan contends that sub-national fissures along ethnic lines will dominate the security concerns of the Democracies for some time to come.<sup>3</sup> The impact this has on the conduct of war is two fold. First, the issues and interests of the parties to a

conflict will be heavily influenced by cultural, religious and ethnic overtones. Second, the contestants will be sub-national groups and non-state actors, sometimes acting in proxy to nation-states.

The implication of Clausewitz's, Moynihan's and Van Creveld's conclusions is, I think, obvious, however, I do not totally agree. In *Preparing For The Twenty-First Century*, Paul Kennedy points out that we must not over-exaggerate the extent of the recent changes in world affairs. While it is true that ethnicity and sub-national conflict are burgeoning, this is not new and the "old threats" remain. Therefore, Kennedy suggests that it is more helpful to think of these recent increases in old rivalries as "coming alongside" the more traditional threats, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>4</sup> The conventional military forces of the principle nation-states are indeed relevant to contemporary conflict. They must be tailored, however, to coexist with domestic fiscal priorities and be appropriately augmented with a capability that has utility across the operational continuum. In this environment, our national interests will be well served by special operations forces but these forces require strategic vision and a commitment to excellence.

Quality is more influential than quantity in special operations. That is to say that the character of the individual soldiers and the effectiveness of their integration into the defense establishment is more decisive than their numbers.

Quality is to special operations as mass is to conventional operations. Unlike conventional operations, where quantity can have a quality all its own, in special operations, quantity, in the absence of quality, can be counterproductive. In some instances, quantity alone is counterproductive. Sufficiency is the operative maxim. Quality special operations forces (SOF) that are effectively integrated within the defense establishment provide the National Command Authorities (NCA) a selective and flexible response. SOF are often the forces of choice, falling between diplomatic initiatives and the overt commitment of conventional force, in an increasingly ambiguous world. Carefully and rigorously assessed, selected and trained soldiers, who are adequately resourced, appropriately engaged and properly responsive to our NCA, are critical to our emerging national military strategy. Their utility is applicable all along the conflict continuum. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate this utility and to discuss the nuances that are inherent in a nation's decision to embark upon the development of special operations forces. CLARET operations, conducted as part of the Borneo Campaign from 1963 to 1966, are the vehicle used to discuss and develop this theme.

#### **Why Study Borneo?**

What about CLARET and the geo-political conditions of the day are germane to the issues considered by Van Creveld, Moynihan, Kennedy and those concerned with the future of this nation and its National Military Strategy? From 1963 to 1966,

the United Kingdom, supporting Malaysia and Brunei, combined both war and diplomacy to counter Sukarno's policy of Konfrontasi (Confrontation). Within this foreign policy, British and other Commonwealth forces, the Australians and New Zealanders, conducted a series of low-visibility<sup>5</sup> penetrations of the Indonesian border on Borneo, referred to as CLARET operations, as part of a wider program of special operations, to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives. Their purpose was to conduct preemptive, offensive combat operations against Indonesian bases. They were surgical applications of combat power in a context that afforded both the Indonesians and the Commonwealth the opportunity to deny these operations had occurred. Political and diplomatic concerns rather than solely military preoccupation were the dominant factors that influenced the Commonwealth forces' implementation of CLARET. CLARET operations are poignant examples of the verities of special operations. The former British Secretary of State for Defence, Mr. Healey, asserts that the campaign was a ". . .textbook demonstration of. . .economy of force, under political guidance [for the purpose of] political ends."<sup>6</sup> The availability of these special forces made it possible for the British to effectively use limited force with political constraint to achieve a favorable termination of the conflict in Borneo.

By 1963 an aggressive, expansionist regime was in power in Jakarta. Its foreign policy included a geo-political vision of a unified island nation which included both the Philippine islands



and the former British colonial territories of Malaysia. British colonial territory had recently gained independence after defeating a communist revolution but retained British protection as a result of a series of treaties signed in 1957. The Philippines had a longstanding defense arrangement with the U.S. who had cooperated in defeating the major uprising of the Communist Hukbalahap (Huk) movement in 1953.

Ahmed Sukarno was the first president of independent Indonesia. He exhibited a growing authoritarianism, dissolving the elected parliament in 1959 and proclaiming himself president for life in 1963. He also pursued increasingly pro-Communist policies in Indonesia and abroad, and he was eventually implicated in a Communist-instigated attack on the country's top military leaders on September 30, 1965.'

During the 1950s and early 1960s the world was reeling from what was perceived to be a relentless assault by monolithic communism. The U.S. and its allies were firmly committed to a policy designed to contain this threat. In Asia, this threat was made all the more tangible by Mao Tse-Tung's success in China, the Korean War and the French defeated in Indochina. The U.S., leader of the fight against communism in Korea, stepped in to stem the flow of communism in Southeast-Asia. Sukarno's political rhetoric, his nationalization of British property and his alignment with the People's Republic of China (PRC) all suggested a real threat of communist expansion in Indonesia. Even though the U.S. was committed in Vietnam and the British

were committed to Malaysia's sovereignty, the Philippines were directly threatened by Sukarno so the U.S. retained an interest in the conflict.

The British, following World War II (WW II), were faced with domestic and fiscal constraints similar to those the U.S. faces in the post-Cold War era. While they retained a leadership role overseas, they felt compelled to restructure the Ministry of Defence after WW II in order to reduce defense spending. Consequently, British military capability and flexibility were reduced as well. The scale of the British military response to Indonesian aggression was determined by the limited military resources available after their 'downsizing' was complete (Woodhouse, 1993).<sup>8</sup>

The new realities that faced Britain at the end of the WW II and Britain's response to those realities provide the United States with useful lessons as we proceed into the post-Cold War era. The post-WW II era was much the same as that characterized by the introductory quote of Samuel Huntington.<sup>9</sup> After WW II, Britain, like the United States after the Cold War, retained interests beyond her borders. However, she also faced the combined verities of domestic and fiscal constraints, regional instability, threats that lacked clarity, multiple dangers and the moral ambiguities that the U.S. faces today. Like the United States in the post-Cold War era, Britain, adopted a military strategy characterized by reduced forward stationing and an emphasis on forward presence. Combined with the deterrent effect

gained by her stated will to project military forces to trouble spots when called to do so, Britain hoped to maintain her leadership role overseas. Britain's ability to meet the challenges she faced depended largely upon the development of a sophisticated capability to deter and defeat aggressors all along the conflict continuum. Special operations forces played a unique role in this strategy; a role exemplified by the part they played in Borneo. In an exceptionally sensitive political environment, they were used to signal their government's intentions, compel the Indonesians to abandon their political objectives and bring the battle to the Indonesian forces in the field.

Political leaders use military forces as instruments that both signal and compel opponents. Elliot Cohen cites one study that estimated the U.S. alone conducted over two hundred shows of force since WW II.<sup>10</sup> Military forces, used as signalling devices, continue to be effective foreign policy tools. While signalling with large formations of conventional military forces remains an attractive option, marshalling such forces is often cumbersome, provocative and ineffective. In both the short and long terms, ". . . the outcomes of the use of greater levels of force have proven to be less frequently positive."<sup>11</sup> While large conventional forces have been less successful, strategic nuclear forces, used in conjunction with major conventional forces as signalling devices, have proven to be effective.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the possession of nuclear weapons and the latent threat of

nuclear use do not have a significant impact on non-nuclear powers.<sup>13</sup>

Blechman, Cohen, Kaplan and Kuth have all identified an intrinsic dichotomy in the use of military force. There is a hierarchy of national interests for all nation-states. These interests range from the vital to the peripheral. The use of overwhelming military force has utility when nation-states must protect their vital interests. On the other hand, nation-states often find that military force, or its threatened use, is necessary to protect peripheral interests. These interests, although not vital to their survival, are nonetheless, important and worth the cost associated with the use of force. It is patently obvious from even the most casual review of history that nations will use military force to protect their interests even if those interests are not vital. The use of overwhelming military force, however, is often counterproductive or at least not worth the cost associated with its use. Therefore, nation-states must ensure that their defense establishments have the proper mix of forces available for application across the spectrum of national interests.

Specially assessed, selected and trained soldiers offer three advantages to a nation's leaders. First, these military units are inherently valuable as a signal of serious commitment because of their reputation.<sup>14</sup> Second, these soldiers offer their governments better chances for success in performing sensitive signalling operations. Their extreme reliability is

necessary for operations that are dominated by political concerns rather than purely military requirements.<sup>15</sup> Third, their utility extends along the operational continuum without regard to the technical sophistication of an opponent's military forces. They are not as encumbered as conventional or strategic nuclear forces are when used to signal or compel an opponent.

Britain, Australia and New Zealand recognized the key role played by specially assessed, selected and trained soldiers. The story of the success of the Borneo campaign and of CLARET operations is a story of the successful organization and integration of these soldiers into British strategic planning.

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### **The Indonesians**

Ahmed Sukarno was born Ahmed Kusnasosro on June 6, 1901 and he became the first president of independent Indonesia in December 1949. He earned a degree in civil engineering at Bandung Technical College, where he was chairman of the General Study Club, which advocated noncooperation with the Dutch colonial regime. The club evolved by 1928 into the Indonesian Nationalist party, and the charismatic Sukarno is regarded as the party's founder.<sup>16</sup>

Exiled and imprisoned several times by the Dutch in the 1930s, Sukarno cooperated with the Japanese following their conquest of the Netherlands East Indies in 1942. Nevertheless, he maintained contact throughout WW II with the nationalist

underground. On August 17, 1945, just after World War II ended, he proclaimed Indonesia's independence.

As president of the new republic, Sukarno initially followed a neutralist foreign policy, hosting the 1955 Afro-Asian Bandung Conference. As mentioned earlier, however, he began to exhibit signs of increasing authoritarianism, dissolving parliament in 1959 and eventually proclaiming himself president for life in 1963. Both his foreign policy and domestic rhetoric became increasingly flamboyant and pro-Communist.<sup>17</sup> The free world was not amused, noting both his swing to the left and his geographic position astride critical commercial sea lanes.

The Indonesian archipelago dominates the major sea lines of communication adjacent to and south of Southeast Asia. It is northwest of Australia, and south of Vietnam and the Philippines. It is composed of approximately 3,000 islands and extends 5,110 miles in an east-west direction and 1,999 miles from north to south. The total land area is 1,482,395 square miles, roughly twice the size of Alaska. At the time of independence, Sumatra, Java, the western half of Timor, the southern two-thirds of Borneo, the Celebes (Sulawesi), and the Moluccas were the largest islands in terms of land mass.<sup>18</sup>

As Sukarno increased his authority he announced a new policy of 'guided democracy' and gave an ever increasing amount of power to the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI).<sup>19</sup> Sukarno's geopolitical vision included the formation of "Maphilindo," an acronym which referred to the unification of Malaya, the

Philippines and Indonesia.<sup>20</sup> This unified island nation would, of course, be ruled by Sukarno himself as its president for life. Sukarno cloaked his hegemonic designs in anti-imperialist rhetoric. For example, he referred to the Federation of Malaysia and others as "Neocolims," an acronym he used for neocolonial, colonial and imperialist powers.<sup>21</sup> Sukarno chose to use a policy he called Konfrontasi as the vehicle to establish hegemony in the region. Sukarno was not a communist, however, this policy eventually led to his alignment with the PRC, his encouragement of the PKI, Indonesia's withdrawal from the United Nations, the United States' termination of foreign aid to Indonesia and armed conflict with the British Commonwealth.

#### The British

In the summer of 1948 the Communists increased terrorism in Malaya as part of their rebellion against British rule. The rebellion was not simply a rebellion against British colonial rule. The British were publicly committed to a time-table for independence. The Communist were also attempting to subvert the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia and its association with the United Kingdom.<sup>22</sup> The British responded with a legal contrivance known as a State of Emergency, which identified a level of violence greater than civil disorder but short of war.<sup>23</sup> British military superiority, both tactical and operational, and their pacification programs, turned back the threat of the Malayan Communist Party (MPC), the ethnic Chinese based

revolutionary movement in Malaya. The 'Emergency' was over by 1960.

In 1957, during the latter part of the Malayan Emergency, the British signed a series of treaties which committed them to defend their colonies, Malaya and Singapore, after independence. In 1959, this same arrangement was made with the Sultan of Brunei for the defense of that protectorate. The British, while thoroughly engaged in fighting the MPC, were also committed to a stable and independent Malaya. To that end they initiated a move to create a federation of Malaya, Singapore, and the states of Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo.

The British retained economic and political interests in the region. Her commitments to the region were centered on three points. First, the British were committed by treaty to the defense of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. Second, the British were committed through their participation in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Third, pressure from the United States to maintain British deployments east of Suez, thus contributing to the U.S. policy of containment, committed the British to a role in the region. The Eisenhower administration distrusted Sukarno even though the United States had assisted Indonesian independence.<sup>24</sup> After all, 'Maphilindo' was to include the Philippines and Sukarno's political complexion seemed to grow increasingly 'Red' by the hour.

Britain was economically devastated by WW II. Consequently, she reduced the size of her Army and increased her reliance on



nuclear deterrence. The 1957 Defence White Paper outlined Britain's desire to bring defense spending down to a level consistent with the nation's economic capabilities. In order to do this the government proposed to reduce the armed forces by as much as one third. This level of reduction was justified by the assumption that the nuclear deterrent had revolutionized strategic planning and reduced the requirement for a presence in troubled regions.<sup>25</sup> The Whitehall reduced the British Army dramatically. Charters and Tugwell cite sources that place the overall reduction of the Army between 1956 and 1961 at fifty percent.<sup>26</sup> This level of reduction, coupled with an increasingly unstable world, resulted in a quantum increase in the Army's operational tempo during this period.

While British domestic consensus constrained its defense establishment there was an increase in the instability of the world order. Nationalist movements demonstrated a remarkable vitality during this period, a vitality similar to that witnessed during the post-Cold War period. The increase in the number of newly formed nation-states during the post-WW II period mirrors that of the post-Cold War period. This caused the British Army to commit large numbers to overseas operations. These included Northern Ireland (1956-1962), Palestine (1945-1948), Kenya (1952-1960), South Arabia and Aden (1963-1967), Malaya (1948-1960), Oman (1958-1959), Cyprus (1955-1959) and Borneo (1963-1966) (Beckett and Pimlott, 1985). Thirty-three percent of Britain's battalions were committed to NATO and stationed with the Army of

the Rhine. Forty percent of the Army was committed to other overseas operations.<sup>27</sup>

These facts had three significant effects. First, while national interests were at stake in Borneo, it was not in the interest of the British to engage in a costly conventional conflict there. They lacked the resources to do so; both the defense budget and the Army had been reduced. Second, although the British were committed by treaty to defend Malaysia, from Sukarno's perspective, her ability to do so was in question. The reduction in the priority given to the British defense establishment, together with the substantial number of Army deployments, might have signalled a corresponding reduction in British commitment to its leadership role overseas. While the British government seemed willing to deploy its soldiers, its budget would not long support these deployments and domestic consensus was withering; a type of donor fatigue was setting in. The National Service Act had been repealed, ending unpopular conscription, and recruiting was falling short of its goals.<sup>28</sup> While direct causation can only be established by Sukarno himself, it is patently obvious that the British did not demonstrate credible extended deterrence. Third, the British developed a professional and highly sophisticated army.<sup>29</sup>

One common feature shared by the conflicts to which Whitehall committed the British Army was their political dimension. Specifically, the common thread was that the political dimension dominated military considerations. Malaya,

Palestine and Northern Ireland are classic examples of the military's subordination to a civilian supernumerary. This influenced activities down to the lowest level.<sup>30</sup> The complex political circumstances meant that even minor military actions had significant political impact. In the British Army, this fostered a level of political sophistication not seen in other modern European armies. Strict political control of operations became an accepted and well understood aspect of their concept of operations.<sup>31</sup> Charters and Tugwell summarize the characteristics and implications of these conflicts as follows: 1) the political nature of the conflicts and operations implied political control, 2) the 'low-intensity' level of combat implied small-unit operations, 3) the clandestine nature of the enemy implied an emphasis on intelligence, 4) the psychological nature of the warfare implied both domestic and international scrutiny of the Army's methods, and 5) the unconventional nature of the warfare implied the need to develop unconventional and innovative methods to bring the battle to the enemy in extremes of terrain and climate.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the British were ideally suited for their role in the confrontation with Sukarno's expansionist foreign policies.

### KONFRONTASI

Konfrontasi began as a multi-faceted policy of the Indonesian President to disrupted the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia. After Malaysia was established, Konfrontasi continued as a policy to destabilize Malaysia and

corrode British resolve. Konfrontasi used two elements of national power, the military and diplomacy, and operated all along the conflict continuum. Sukarno used political histrionics in both domestic and international politics in his program of psychological operations to support his goal, hegemony in the region--Maphilindo. Deception also played a part in the manner he chose to apply the military component of his policy. Through the use of surrogates, Sukarno hoped to maintain the facade that Malaysian and British interests were illegitimate. Sukarno's covert use of force was designed to place the Malaysians, and their British allies, in the position of being perceived as suppressors of indigenous aspirations. He used the Clandestine Communist Organization (CCO), the armed wing of the predominantly Chinese Sarawak Communist Party, as a front for his initial military moves. Through the use of surrogates, often organized, equipped and led by Indonesian officers and non-commissioned officers, he attempted to hide his role and present his opposition with a politically elusive target.

On 8 December 1962, an Indonesian supported revolt broke out in Brunei. The Brunei Revolt, also known as the Azahari Revolt, named for its leader, marked a change in Indonesian policy towards Malaysia. Although the British suppressed the revolt, raids from across the border in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) increased. The raiders were recruited from Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore and led by members of the Indonesian Army and Marine Corps.<sup>33</sup>

On 12 April 1963 raiders attacked a police station near Tebedu in the southwestern or First Division of Sarawak. Some of the raiders were members of the CCO.<sup>34</sup> The British Director of Borneo Operations (DOBOPS) was Major General Walter Walker, who had experience during the Malayan Emergency. His opponent during that emergency was also a predominantly Chinese communist organization. MG Walker soon discovered that the CCO insurgents were concentrated in Kalimantan across the border from the First and Second Divisions of Sarawak. However, he also discovered that these border insurgents, referred to as Indonesian Border Terrorist (IBTs), were supported by a large number of Indonesian regular forces. This changed the complexion of the developing conflict.

MG Walker ordered a sudden large-scale crackdown on the CCO which helped to delay any planned insurrection; however, this did not dampen Indonesian raiding along the border. In August 1963 a large force of uniformed insurgents raided deep into the Third Division of Sarawak near the town of Song. The prisoners captured by British forces revealed that the commissioned and non-commissioned leadership of these raiders were all Indonesian regulars.<sup>35</sup>

President Sukarno continued to escalate tensions on Borneo as the date of Malaysia's federation neared. Sukarno hoped to exert pressure on the political developments through the use of force. On 16 September 1963, Sarawak and Sabah gained formal independence and joined the federation. Brunei, already an

independent British protectorate, chose to maintain that status. Having failed to derail the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, Sukarno increased pressure in order to destabilize the new Federation.

On 28 September 1963, a large force of Indonesian regulars raided a post in the Third Division of Sarawak. Approximately two hundred Indonesians attacked Gurkha soldiers and Malaysian Border Scout at this post.<sup>36</sup> The effect of this raid was two-fold. First, it served to alienate the indigenous population in the border areas. The Border Scouts were all recruited from the border tribes and the raiding Indonesians executed several prisoners that they captured. This drove a wedge between the Indonesians and the border tribes and eliminated any hope that the Indonesians might gain either support or intelligence from these natives. Second, the British recognized the vulnerability of the Border Scouts and the importance of the indigenous people. Consequently, they reorganized them. The Border Scouts had been originally recruited, trained and organized with the help of the British 22 Special Air Service (SAS) and designed to work as small teams, collecting intelligence, and capitalizing on their native expertise and access.<sup>37</sup> Over time the concept was lost. MG Walker reorganized them under the command of Major J.P. Cross, an officer with immense experience with indigenous troops and an exceptional grasp of Asian languages. He took them out of uniform and refocused their efforts on intelligence gathering.<sup>38</sup>

The British also sent small, SAS teams to live and work with other indigenous tribes. The SAS<sup>39</sup>, originally formed as a light raiding force during the fight for the North African desert during WW II, expanded that role to include living and fighting with irregular forces in Greece and later in France.<sup>40</sup> They developed this role during the Malayan Emergency, maturing as a unit and adapting to the emerging reality of the post-war years. In Borneo, they provided the natives humanitarian assistance and collected information about the remote border area and Indonesian activities. These SAS soldiers shared the hardships of life with the natives and were accepted into their longhouses. The significance of this relationship cannot be overstated for the very center of life for these natives was their longhouse and the SAS found acceptance there in the center of their community.<sup>41</sup> They organized and lead these indigenous forces, demonstrating both their commitment to and their concern for the welfare to these natives.<sup>42</sup> The activities of the SAS, both in the tribal longhouses and across the border in Kalimantan, set the stage for the initiation of CLARET operations.<sup>43</sup>

Unable to effectively pressure the British or the peoples of Borneo through either their surrogate CCO or small scale raids by their general purpose forces, the Indonesians increased both the tempo of their incursions and the significance of their commitment. In December 1963, the Indonesians raided across the border in two areas, attacking Malaysian positions and inflicting heavy casualties. One raid attacked the western end of Sarawak

while the other attacked Sabah at Kalabakan. When security forces ran down the raiding party, they found them to be Indonesian marines. While the British noted the severe defeat suffered by the Malaysians, they kept it quiet out of consideration for the Malaysians and concern for its effect on the moral of the Federation.<sup>44</sup>

Sukarno kept up the pressure and intimidation until he announced a 'cease fire' in January 1964, which coincided with the visit of the UN mission to Borneo. Sukarno, through his political activity, had orchestrated a UN Mission Of Inquiry to Borneo. He had demanded a true investigation of the will of the people of Borneo on the issue of joining the Federation of Malaysia.<sup>45</sup> Sukarno hoped, through the use of force and the implied threat of greater force, to intimidate the people. It did not work. The United Nations concluded that the native population was, in fact, well represented and very supportive of the Federation.<sup>46</sup> Sukarno naturally rejected the findings of the United Nations and again turned up the heat.

Between March and May 1964, Indonesian terrorists bombed 13 separate locations in Singapore. On March 6, and again on March 31, 1964, two Indonesian regular army units fought heavy engagements with Gurkha elements.<sup>47</sup> Both engagements signaled a significant increase in the Indonesian commitment to the conflict. The Indonesians were now using their best units in the attack and were committing them to larger battles.



Diplomatic engagement continued but failed to resolve the conflict. Talks were held in Tokyo in June 1964. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Federation's leader, asked bluntly when Indonesian troops would leave Malaysia so that discussions could continue. Sukarno's response was that since Malaysia did not exist, he had every right to have his troops where he pleased.<sup>48</sup> In May, leading into the talks, Sukarno announced that there would be a nation-wide mobilization of 'volunteers to fight Malaysia'.<sup>49</sup> When the talks broke off, Sukarno vowed that he would 'crush Malaysia' by the 1 January, 1965.<sup>50</sup> However, Tunku's moderation and Britain's resolve did have a positive effect on world opinion. Sukarno had failed to adequately represent either the British or the Malaysians as the aggressors in the conflict. This would prove to be critical to the strategy the British adopted. It would also place a premium on the maturity and judgment of individual soldiers while they endured enormous physical and psychological stress.

#### CLARET

"Strategy is the...use of engagements for the objects of war. Tactics is the...use of armed forces in the engagements. Engagements are...simple acts each complete in themselves."<sup>51</sup>

Clausewitz

CLARET operations evolved from limited penetrations of the border for the purpose of reconnaissance, to deep penetrations for the purpose of destroying Indonesian bases and interdicting their lines of communications. CLARET's evolution was paced by the evolution of the geo-political forces attending to the

conflict, the evolution of the domestic and international politics of the parties to the conflict, and the adaptation of military strategy by those parties. Every stage in this evolution was made possible by the 22 SAS.

The 22 SAS, originally formed during World War II, was reactivated during the Malayan Emergency and named the Malayan Scouts(SAS). They were particularly well suited for their role in Borneo. The SAS operated in small, predominantly NCO-lead teams called patrols. These patrols deployed to and lived in the villages and longhouses in the border areas similar to the employment of U.S. Army Special Forces in the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Program in the Republic of Vietnam.<sup>52</sup> There, through an effective 'hearts and minds' campaign, the SAS developed a unique rapport with the local tribes and Border Scouts. The natives, following their normal routine, crossed the border to hunt and trade. They collected information and brought it back to the SAS who, in turn, passed it along to their headquarters.<sup>53</sup> This information was used to identify the points along the border where Indonesian incursions occurred and to effectively maneuver forces into ambush. The SAS began active cross-border reconnaissance operations in Kalimantan from as early as May or June of 1964.<sup>54</sup> During this period they began to develop a picture of the Indonesian's Order of Battle and their operational profile. As the SAS became firmly entrenched in the border region, they were ideally positioned to complement an evolving British strategy.<sup>55</sup>

The event that caused the shift in British strategy was the 17 August 1964 seaborne incursion on the Johore coast of Malaya by Indonesian marines.<sup>56</sup> While LtCol Woodhouse had urged the case for crossing the border on military grounds in late 1963, he failed to win approval on those grounds alone. 'Hot pursuit' border crossings had been authorized in response to border incursions from April 1964.<sup>57</sup> However, these operations were limited to a distance of up to 3,000 yards, and more importantly, they were only to be undertaken in response to an Indonesian incursion.<sup>58</sup> LtCol Woodhouse, recognizing the need to conduct operations that denied the Indonesians both the luxury of safe bases and the operational initiative, proposed cross-border operations independent of the strategic and political advantages inherent in these operations. Notwithstanding this, the Conservative Government, in power in the United Kingdom until October 1964, took the initial political decision to authorize CLARET operations.<sup>59</sup> When Mr. Denis Healey became Secretary of State for Defence in October 1964, a result of Labour's majority in the general election, he spent two to three days in Borneo in October 1964 and was fully briefed by MG Walker and LtCol Woodhouse.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, Mr. Healey's government, recognizing the strategic utility of these small, tactical operations, not only continued CLARET operations but also expanded them to realize their full potential and to leverage the geo-political environment.<sup>61</sup>

The timely decision to authorize offensive cross-border operations under the code name CLARET allowed the British to respond to the buildup of Indonesian forces adjacent to the First Division of Sarawak. It also positioned them to respond to the seaborne incursion in Johore.<sup>62</sup>

CLARET was not an extension of the tactics used to counter Indonesian raiding, a reactive program, but an altogether new strategy and a proactive program. These proactive engagements were designed to gain and maintain the initiative, put the Indonesians on the defensive and, at the same time, they helped to control escalation. They also demonstrated British resolve.<sup>63</sup> British resolve was a critical message that Sukarno, or those around him, had to receive if diplomatic efforts were to have a chance of success. Sukarno had to be convinced that the British possessed the resolve to defend Malaysia and prevent Indonesian success. Without that, Sukarno had no motivation to negotiate. If Sukarno refused to accept reality, then those around him had to be convinced of the futility of continued support for Sukarno. British analysis of the political dynamics of Indonesia accepted Konfrontasi as a policy unique to Sukarno. If the Army were faced with a choice between Konfrontasi and the stability and survival of Indonesia then Sukarno would not survive. Therefore, British strategy had to balance CLARET and other military and political initiatives so that Konfrontasi would be perceived as the threat to Indonesian stability and survival not Malaysia and

the Commonwealth's forces there. Therefore, CLARET operations had to remain low-key.

At the strategic level, high-profile, cross-border operations would threaten the British international position as the defender state, escalate the conflict and serve to focus attention away from Konfrontasi as an offensive policy. High-profile operations on Indonesian territory would restrict the diplomatic maneuver room available to both the Indonesians and the Commonwealth. Finally, high-profile operations on Indonesian territory would clearly be seen by the Indonesian Army as a threat to Indonesian sovereignty and focus domestic support for Sukarno. Therefore, extraordinary measures were taken to ensure CLARET supported British strategy. Fortunately, security training in the 22 SAS made it possible from 1959 onwards to move troops to operational areas without the fact becoming public knowledge.<sup>64</sup>

The success of CLARET depended upon a level of political sophistication and personal maturity and judgement uncommon in the average soldier, however, as a result of assessment and selection, this was quite common in the soldiers of the SAS. The SAS had developed a high level of competence during the Malayan campaign; however, the leadership of the Malayan Scouts (SAS) was not satisfied with the overall performance of the unit. There was specific concern over the quality of the character of some of the personnel recruited during the intensive program to rapidly expand the unit.<sup>65</sup>

During the Malayan Emergency period volunteers were accepted based upon interviews only. This inevitably resulted in waste of resources because men proved unsuitable in significant numbers and had to be 'returned to unit' (RTU).<sup>66</sup> The 'interview only' technique failed to identify the three main reasons for RTU--lack of discipline, lack of will and poor aptitude for learning due to low intelligence.<sup>67</sup> In the early days in Malaya, training was restricted in scope and those who were either not motivated or not trainable could be 'carried' by the better men.<sup>68</sup> This proved to be unacceptable as training became more sophisticated and the demands of the operations increased. Greater reliance was placed upon the individual soldier and sound judgement under stress was at a premium.

In order to eliminate those types of personalities found unsuitable in Malaya, colloquially call 'the cowboys', the leadership of the now renamed 22 Special Air Service Regiment initiated a detailed and rigorous assessment, selection and training process in 1952.<sup>69</sup> John Woodhouse, then a Major and a veteran of the Malayan Scouts (SAS), was directed to return to England and establish a formal assessment and selection process. The process emphasized an individual's self-discipline, self-reliance and initiative.<sup>70</sup> The practical training pushed men to the limits of their endurance (will power) and tested their intelligence, creativity, innovation and resourcefulness.<sup>71</sup> The process eliminated candidates who were physically inferior, who failed to demonstrate sound, independent judgment under stress

and who lacked drive and determination. It produced candidates of superior IQ and superb physical condition who could reach calm and considered judgments under great physical and mental stress. They were determined, self-reliant and quick-witted.<sup>72</sup>

British intuition about the design of the assessment and training program was the result of sound operational experience and keen observation. It has been validated by the operational experience and empirical data of the U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI) and others. In an unclassified study the ARI arrived at the following conclusions:

"Soldiers who have not been trained under stress conditions do not react well when confronted with antagonistic situations. They tend to compromise critical or sensitive situations."

"The phenomenon of training under stress is that each successive antagonistic or stress situation is more easily overcome than the preceding situation."

"Highly motivated soldiers, trained under exacting and stressful conditions, have proven that they reach relatively higher levels of performance and retain these skills longer than those not exposed to similar conditions (Army Research Institute)."<sup>73</sup>

The implication of these conclusions for special forces operations in Borneo in general, and for CLARET operations specifically, is significant. Small, isolated teams, operating in an environment of great physical and psychological stress, and in circumstances of great political sensitivity, succeeded based upon the personal strength of character and the physical and mental stamina of the individual patrol members. The blunders in Malaya in the beginning damaged the unit's reputation which took seven to eight years to undo.<sup>74</sup> The selection and training

process quickly proved to be effective; very few men who passed it were subsequently found to be unsuitable.<sup>75</sup>

This commitment to quality over quantity was adhered to when, in 1963-64, LtCol Woodhouse, now the Commanding Officer of the 22 SAS, insisted that no 'short cuts' be taken in expanding the unit from two to four squadrons.<sup>76</sup> It also resulted in a two year delay in fielding the additional squadrons, a delay the British accepted as necessary.<sup>77</sup> The lessons learned by the British were applied by other Commonwealth forces as well. Both New Zealand (1954) and Australia (1957) formed SAS units and participated in operations in Borneo. The Australians recognized that they must also organize a formal assessment and selection course for their SAS which they did in 1960.<sup>78</sup> By reorganizing their criteria and program of assessment, selection and training the Commonwealth forces were more than prepared to support CLARET.

Another crucial feature of the British integration of the SAS into their defense establishment is eloquently communicate by David Stirling in 1985.<sup>79</sup> Stirling, the founder of the WW II SAS, noted that creativity, innovation and initiative are critical components of successful special operations. They are part of the necessary 'mindset' for special operations. Stirling cautioned that a specialist unit, when integrated into the military establishment, "...runs the risk of being stereotyped and conventionalized."<sup>80</sup> This often results in the suppression of the necessary mindset and the substitution of a conventional



mindset, that is, "the unreflective conformity to prior experience and precedent."<sup>81</sup> The British did not fall into this trap and were, therefore, able to undertake the full range of special operations called for in Borneo.

While CLARET operations targeted the Indonesians and supported broad strategic themes at the international level, they were conducted day-to-day in the back yards of the indigenous people on both sides of the border. Support from these people was critical to the British strategy and, unlike the Indonesians, the British focused a great deal of attention on the people for whom the war was being fought.

The political sensitivity of the 22 SAS grew from the realization in Malaya, 1950-59, that victory was only obtainable with the support of the indigenous people in the area of operation.<sup>82</sup> Achievement of this aim depended, in part, on a demonstrated military capability. However, success mainly relied upon proving over a long and sustained period, while isolated in primitive tribal villages and while on patrol, that the welfare of the border tribes was the primary aim.<sup>83</sup>

The British did this in three ways. First, the avoidance of air strikes where there was any risk of killing non-belligerents, a lesson learned by 1954 in Malaya.<sup>84</sup> Second, the importance placed, by the 22 SAS in particular, on the correct treatment of civilians and prisoners.<sup>85</sup> Third, the concern with the disruption of the tribal economy caused by the sudden inflow of cash that might result from the obtrusive presence of foreign

soldiers. Local economies were almost self sufficient. The sudden departure of military forces and the consequent ending of medical support and cash payments for labor might have caused considerable unrest. Therefore, it was desirable to limit the impact of the military, to keep necessary payment to a minimum and not be over generous with gifts."

British foreign policy was executed by those small, predominantly NCO-lead patrols or teams which were isolated for prolonged periods. The conditions endured by these soldiers were extremely austere. There was no practical way to provide them with sustained logistical support. Consequently, they were required to live and eat with the primitive, native population. This clearly demonstrate that they shared the same interests and hardships with the local people and it won their confidence and support.

Communication with these isolated teams was restricted to periodic, scheduled high-frequency radio contacts conducted by encrypted Morse Code. This technical limitation had two effects. First, all transmissions must necessarily be brief. Second, the execution of these prolonged missions absolutely depended upon the sound judgement, innovation, initiative, creativity and indomitable spirit of relatively young soldiers. Detailed guidance and daily supervision by senior, commissioned officers was both impractical and impossible, which placed a premium on proper mission-type orders.

The conduct of CLARET operations and their low visibility execution had tactical, operational, strategic and political dimensions. By maintaining the pressure on Sukarno militarily, foreign policy objectives could be achieved at a reduced cost in both men and matériel. By maintaining the lowest possible profile of the operations the British would not forfeit the moral high ground and world public opinion. At the same time, this low profile left the door open for the Indonesians to disengage without admitting defeat internationally or domestically.

The British strategy is described by one of Clausewitz's four dimensions of war. The British pursued the strategic defense by incorporating the tactical offense thus terminating the conflict with the status quo maintained.<sup>87</sup> Domination of Indonesia was clearly never the objective of the British treaties of defense nor the political objective of the war itself.

While, MG Walker insisted on a thorough preparation before approving specific raids, his trust in the competence of the soldiers was complete. In his words, he regarded "70 troopers of the SAS as being as valuable. . . as 700 infantry in the role of Hearts and Minds, border surveillance, early warning, stay behind, and eyes and ears with a sting."<sup>88</sup> CLARET operations, however, were subject to a stringent set of restrictions which reflected political decisions made in Whitehall. These restrictions, designed to ensure secrecy and efficiency, demonstrate the unique relationship between special operations and their political masters. These relatively small, tactical

military actions, conducted to support operational objectives, directly impact national strategy both militarily and politically. Had these rule been violated, the strategic impact would have far out weighed the tactical outcome. It is not uncommon that tactically successful special operations can yield strategic defeat, if they are not properly synchronized with the strategic objectives they serve. Therefore, ordinary military operations can require extraordinary restrictions. These restrictions became known as the "Golden Rules."

MG Walker's stipulations follow:

1. The DOBOPS retained sole authority to approve each operation.
2. Only thoroughly trained and tested troops could be used across the border.
3. The depth of each penetration was specifically circumscribed.
4. Each operation must be designed to thwart specific enemy offensive action.
5. Air support across the border was prohibited except in the most extreme emergencies.
6. Each operation must be preceded by meticulous planning and rehearsal down to the specific actions of individual soldiers. (He set a minimum time of two weeks for rehearsals)
7. Each operation must be planned and executed with the maximum amount of tactical and operational security. Each individual was sworn to secrecy; complete, detailed cover plans were prepared; all soldiers and equipment must be 'sterile', that is, not traceable to British forces if captured; nothing must be left in Kalimantan.
8. Absolutely no soldier would be allowed to fall into Indonesian hands--dead or alive.<sup>89</sup>

The implication of these rules is clear; in special operations, a balance is struck between political or diplomatic concerns and military expedience. The depths of the penetrations were established as a balance between the desire to maintain a low-keyed approach to the Indonesian military problem and the desire to maintain the initiative and prevent safe havens. While reconnaissance operations were enthusiastically conducted, offensive CLARET operations were used to thwart enemy initiatives and send consistent signals to the Indonesian military. Air support to all cross-border operations was severely restricted because it was more difficult to control. Not only was it a very high-profile military presence across the border, it could be filmed or shot down and captured. The capture of British personnel or equipment could severely damage the political and military objectives served by these operations. The U.S. experience with the U-2 incident clearly demonstrates how operations, while 'clandestine', may be well known to the opposing sides. The advantage gained by each side, is in not openly admitting to their existence. This can be lost through the capture of personnel or equipment that might be traced to the operations' sponsor. The results of such revelations are often not predictable, this is, not predictable beyond the clear loss to the sponsor.

These rules were faithfully followed by everyone involved. The most intricate preparations were undertaken for each operation. The SAS conducted thorough and detailed

reconnaissance, often being sent back to develop the target if initial information prove insufficient. They plotted the fields of fire for individual crew-served weapons. They completed detailed route reconnaissance for infiltration and exfiltration. The degree to which each aspect of every operation was subject to senior review was staggering. Brigadiers approved reconnaissance patrols in coordination with Division commanders. All other activity across the border was personally reviewed and approved by DOBOPS with the advice and assistance of the SAS and the recommendations of the Division commanders.<sup>90</sup>

A classic example of a CLARET raid was one which began its development in August 1964. The raid was conducted as a combined operation of the 22 SAS and the Gurkhas. That August, the Indonesian's 518th Battalion was stationed at a post near Nantakor in Kalimantan opposite the Fifth Division of Sarawak and western Sabah.<sup>91</sup> From there, the Indonesians conducted a series of cross border raids, slipping back across to Kalimantan and safety.

The 22 SAS conducted a thorough reconnaissance of the post to include a meticulous selection of routes into and out of the target area. They gathered a detailed picture of the post and the surrounding area which allowed the Gurkhas to build an equally detailed sand table. The Gurkhas developed their plans and rehearsed each aspect on the sand table. They then rehearsed each aspect in 'real time' on terrain that replicated the target area. Each Gurkha soldier practiced his specific tasks from the

time he first crossed the border, through the raid itself, and back again across the border. He also rehearsed his responsibilities during contingencies such as chance enemy contact in route or the death or the wounding of a comrade.<sup>92</sup>

MG Walker approved the plan for execution in September 1964 after an extensive review.<sup>93</sup> The Gurkhas crossed the border with the SAS who led them along the routes the SAS had selected. In the target area the SAS placed each section the proper attack position. The Gurkhas successfully executed the raid and captured the post. They then searched the facilities and burned them. During the return to the border the Gurkhas dropped off ambush patrols to delay any pursuing Indonesians.<sup>94</sup>

Sukarno became increasingly isolated in the United Nations and threatened by British political/military activity. In response, he developed closer ties with the People's Republic of China in November and December.<sup>95</sup> During this same period, the free world recognized China as a significant threat in Asia and, with her detonation of her first nuclear device that fall, she had joined the nuclear club. Consequently, Australia, threaten by Indonesian designs in the region and concerned with the implications of Sukarno's campaign for Papua New Guinea, dispatched troops to Borneo and instituted selective service.<sup>96</sup> In January 1965, Sukarno completed his self-imposed isolation by withdrawing from the United Nations and fully aligning himself with the world's newest nuclear power, China.<sup>97</sup>

The implication of these developments for CLARET operations was varied. First, the British wanted to defuse the mounting escalation and destabilization of the region. They believed that strikes against the Indonesian navy and air force, which were planned but later abandoned, would unnecessarily escalate the conflict.<sup>98</sup> At the same time they also recognized the mounting threat to Borneo and the danger of direct confrontation with China, Indonesia's newest ally. Therefore, Whitehall opted for the indirect approach and authorized an increase in the depth of CLARET raids to 5,000 yards. Later that year, Whitehall again increased the authorized depth of penetration, this time to 10,000 yards.<sup>99</sup> Second, while the British increased the depth of the raids, they recognized the political sensitivity of CLARET operations and Whitehall began to temper the execution of CLARET raids to limit the probability of escalation. Despite the increased authorization in depth, CLARET raids remained few in number. MG Walker considered CLARET operations to be psychological rapier-thrust designed to put Sukarno on the defensive and therefore achieve the tactical initiative through offensive operations.<sup>100</sup>

The Indonesian pressure increased along the border of the Fifth Division in Sarawak and the area adjacent to Brunei. In order to suppress this threat a force of 148 Gurkhas crossed the border and raided the Indonesian base at Long Medan. The raid was prepared with the same meticulous attention to detail that characterized all CLARET operations. The level of senior



supervision reflects the political control and sensitivity of these operations. MG Walker, DOBOPS, and the Commander-in-Chief, FARELF himself personally visited the Gurkha company commander planning the raid.<sup>101</sup>

The raid was executed with force and precision. Intelligence reports later indicated that 50 percent of the Indonesian garrison had been killed and the target area abandoned by the survivors. The long term effect of the raid was that although the Indonesians did continue to operate in the area, they never reopened Long Medan nor did they cross the border in that region again.<sup>102</sup> The political effect of the Long Medan raid is not as clearly defined. The Indonesians did continue a presence in the area, although much reduced; however, they obviously felt less secure and could not have exercised the same level of influence over the local population as they had previously enjoyed. The British signal to both the Indonesians and the local population was clear, they would remain persistent, patient and present.

In March 1965, MG George Lea, a former 22 SAS commander, took over as DOBOPS. He was not only an aggressive soldier, but he was also a respected general officer who clearly understood the full capacity for action that the SAS possessed. During this period the Indonesians were still very active and continued to conduct a series of unsettling incursions. Consequently, MG Lea increased the tempo of CLARET operations by authorizing the SAS to execute offensive operations during the last two days of their

reconnaissances. These actions were, however, restricted to only those targets with high potential for success.<sup>103</sup> Prior to this, CLARET raids were conducted in retaliation for incursions or as preemptive strikes at enemy concentrations. These new operations forced the Indonesians to pulled back from the close border area and to spend the minimum time near the border. MG Lea again increased the pressure by expanding CLARET targets to include the lines of communications used by the Indonesians. These included the tracks and rivers that intelligence and topography suggested as targets of high potential. This tactic reflected a policy that became known as 'the art of the possible'.<sup>104</sup>

MG Lea's intensification of CLARET operations throughout the summer of 1965 began to demonstrate how escalation of surgical operations at the tactical level had the effect of de-escalation of the conflict at the operational and strategic level. At least one Indonesian commander sent a message to his opposite number in Sarawak indicating that he had changed his strategy. He told his British counterpart that he had withdrawn from the border and would not conduct any more offensive operations. He went on to request that he be left alone.<sup>105</sup> The Indonesian Army became increasingly demoralized and, with this demoralization, disaffection within the Clausewitzian Trinity began. The bond between the Indonesian Army, the Indonesian people and the government of President Sukarno began to disintegrate. The domestic situation in Indonesia deteriorated badly. Sukarno was under great pressure because his promised victory by 1965 had

evaporated. The Indonesian economy was suffering unprecedented inflation, a result of the combined effects of the termination of foreign aid, the international isolation and the cost of the war. Indonesia was teetering on the edge of collapse.

Sukarno had also wooed the PKI and the People's Republic of China which was a relationship he could not control. On 30 September 1965, the PKI staged an unsuccessful coup. This resulted in chaos throughout Indonesia. The anti-communist Indonesian Army, attempting to regain control, began a blood bath and slaughtered thousands.<sup>106</sup>

The British assessed the domestic and international developments and their impact on Borneo and temporarily halted CLARET operations. Their reasoning was that the Indonesian Army would end Konfrontasi as soon as it was ordered to do so. On the other hand, the Communists, notably the IBTs, would continue the struggle out of revolutionary zeal. If the British relaxed the pressure on the Indonesian army, it might read this relaxation as a signal that the British were willing to wait and see if the Indonesian army was willing to take the necessary steps to remove Sukarno and suppress the PKI.<sup>107</sup> This became known to the SAS as 'be kind to Indos'.<sup>108</sup>

The precedent for western support of dissident Army elements was set in 1959-1960 when the CIA supported the Army Colonels who had prematurely attempted Sukarno's overthrow.<sup>109</sup> Sukarno was implicated in the September 1965 Communist-instigated attack directed against the country's top military leaders.

Consequently, General Suharto, who led the anti-Communist counterattack, began to take gradual steps to replace Sukarno as the country's leader.

Despite their internal problems, limited Indonesian incursions into Malaysia continued and MG Lea wasted no time responding by again escalating CLARET operations throughout the second half of 1965 and into January 1966.<sup>110</sup> Each operation achieved tactical success but the combination of all the operations achieved much more. As a result of the operational and strategic pressure of these CLARET raids, the Indonesians withdrew from all 17 posts in the border area. By late December 1965, the Indonesians had completely withdrawn from the border to a distance of ten thousand yards.<sup>111</sup> From this distance the Indonesians could no longer effectively support incursions into Malaysian territory. CLARET operations continued to provide the pressure necessary to keep the raiders at bay.<sup>112</sup>

With the reduction in Indonesian Army inspired incursions, MG Lea reduced the number of CLARET operations in early 1966 in order to limit the number of Indonesian deaths given the political situation in Indonesia. Incursions were limited to those conducted by the IBTs. The Indonesian army was continuing the wholesale slaughter of communists in their efforts to suppress the PKI.<sup>113</sup> Once again MG Lea drew a distinction between the IBTs and the Indonesian army.<sup>114</sup>

Unfortunately, Konfrontasi, continuing its convulsive death, remained a threat to Malaysia. In January 1966, intelligence

indicated that the Indonesians planned to raid Tebedu even though they had withdrawn from the border. The British attempted a preemptive CLARET operation, however, it was only partially successful. A combined force of Chinese IBTs and Indonesian regulars successfully crossed the border to raid Tebedu in February. While the CLARET operation failed to preempt the border crossing, the raiders were intercepted before they reached their objective.<sup>115</sup>

In March 1966, a very large CLARET force was maneuvering to conduct an attack on the Indonesians at Kindu. While the forces were actually positioning for the final assault, they received word to suspend operations and withdraw.<sup>116</sup> The Indonesians had sent a secret peace initiative to Kuala Lumpur.<sup>117</sup>

Limited CLARET operations continued during the diplomatic negotiations but only against the IBTs who remained active along the border. Meanwhile, the SAS continued to prepared the battlefield through deep reconnaissance patrols. Through these operations, the British maintained the capacity to quickly resume offensive CLARET operations against the Indonesians should they become necessary.<sup>118</sup>

As the British had predicted, when Sukarno was overthrown by his generals on 25 May 1966, Indonesian officers, representing General Suharto, met with Malaysian government representatives to resolve the conflict.<sup>119</sup> Three days later all CLARET operations ceased. The government of Indonesia formally renounced Konfrontasi on 11 August 1966.<sup>120</sup>

## WAR, DIPLOMACY AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

The confrontation between Sukarno and the Commonwealth forces, and CLARET operations in particular, affords an excellent opportunity to study the relationships that exist between war, diplomacy and special operations. Analysis of a crisis focuses our attention in a way not possible through the study of longer-term relations between competing nations. International crises are international politics in microcosm. International crises tend to highlight factors and processes central to the general conduct of international political intercourse. This is possible because, in a crisis, processes at the core of international relations are revealed in a way that sharply focuses them on a single, well defined issue.<sup>121</sup> Konfrontasi and CLARET are ideal examples of this phenomenon.

In order to understand CLARET operations one must first understand the nature of war and its relationship to diplomacy.<sup>122</sup> James Der Derian identifies diplomacy as the formal system by which nation-states articulate their external relations and seek to mediate their differences "...through the use of persuasion and force, promises and threats, codes and symbols [emphasis added]."<sup>123</sup> Mr. Der Derian's lucid characterization of the totality of diplomacy recognizes that the use of 'persuasion and force' and 'promises and threats' is an integral part of diplomacy. That is to say that war or the threat to use force is an essential part of diplomacy, a constituent or component of diplomacy. To be effective in securing its interests, a nation

must demonstrate a policy of reciprocity in diplomatic and military actions.<sup>124</sup> Therefore, war, or the use of military force, and diplomacy must be viewed as interlocking events along the continuum of international political intercourse.

To fully understand CLARET operations, indeed all special operations, and their strategic implication one must understand the relationship between the elements of national power. With this more complete understanding of the nature of war and diplomacy comes a fuller appreciation of the utility of special operations and the requirements for those who execute them.

#### The Paradigm

In order to deter, defeat or compel an aggressor the defender must combine military capabilities and bargaining behavior that enhances his credibility. It is critical that the defender demonstrate his ability to deny the aggressor a quick and decisive victory. The defender must also demonstrate a policy of reciprocity in diplomatic and military actions. Finally, the defender must not be perceived as backing down under pressure or intransigence in confrontation with an aggressor.<sup>125</sup>

National security policymakers recognize that national interests can extend beyond defense of the national homeland to the defense of other states. The difference between the defense of the national homeland and the defense of other states is the difference between inherently credible threats that deter aggressors and threats that must be made credible to aggressors.<sup>126</sup> In other words, the aggressor must be made to

believe that a nation is willing to defend another state and its interests. Establishing credibility and, in so doing, effecting the utility of military forces as means to signal and compelling an opponent, is a balancing endeavor. In a situation of extended deterrence,<sup>127</sup> actions taken by the defender to establish credibility can be mistaken by the aggressor and provoke a spiral of military escalation.<sup>128</sup>

CLARET operations are classic examples of the efficacy of special operations. Used as a device to both signal and compel the Indonesians, CLARET operations demonstrate the utility of and requirements for specially assessed, selected and trained soldiers.

#### CONCLUSION

"The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish...the kind of war on which they are embarking: neither making it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."<sup>129</sup>

Clausewitz

Britain was economically devastated by World War II. Consequently, she reduced the size of her Army and increased her reliance on nuclear deterrence. The reduced size of the Army coupled with a heavy operational tempo (OPTEMPO) resulted in an Army that was spread extremely thin.

For the British in Borneo, this new world order had two effects. First, while critical national interests were at stake in Borneo, it was not in the interest of the British to engage in a costly conventional conflict there. Second, the British failed



to demonstrated a credible extended deterrence to Sukarno. Nuclear deterrence was irrelevant and Britain's ability or willingness (or both) to project power and provide for Malaysia's security was questionable.

CLARET operations were designed to seize the initiative from the Indonesians, forcing them on the defensive. Once the British gained the initiative they could convince the Indonesians that they possessed adequate power to prevent a quick victory and that they possessed the political will to pursue their interests. Termination of the conflict would only be achieved when the Indonesians were convinced that the cost of resorting to the use of force was too high and outweighed the value of their foreign policy objective.

The British chose CLARET operations and specifically the low visibility or clandestine nature of the operations because through CLARET operations the British were able to exercise some control over the escalation of the conflict while maintaining the initiative. Controlling escalation was a political imperative. By maintaining a low profile, the British were able to marshal international and domestic public opinion and isolate Indonesia as the clear aggressor. By avoiding publicity, the British were able to allow the Indonesians an opportunity to disengage without admitting military defeat. Finally, although certainly not the least important attribute of these operations, CLARET required a limited allocation of precious resources. A few carefully assessed and selected soldiers afforded the British the capacity

to respond to this threat to their national interests without over-extending their armed forces or escalating the conflict beyond their capacity to respond. CLARET operations were both suitable to the required task and feasible within Britain's meager defense budget.

CLARET operations are an excellent example of international politics in microcosm and of both Clausewitz's 'continuation of political intercourse with the addition of other means' and Sun Tzu's indirect approach. The former British Secretary of State for Defence, Mr. Healey, argues that the campaign was a "...textbook demonstration of...economy of force, under political guidance [for the purpose of] political ends."<sup>130</sup> This would not have been possible had the Commonwealth forces not organized the SAS. Likewise, the unique special light infantry skills of the Gurkhas and others enabled the Commonwealth to prevail.

It was, however, not simply the organization of the SAS that contributed to such an achievement. It was the establishment of a formal and rigorous assessment, selection and training process coupled with a commitment to creativity, innovation and initiative within the SAS that established the necessary 'mindset' for the conduct of successful special operations. Heeding Stirling's caution that integration of specialist units into the military establishment "...runs the risk of (these units) being stereotyped and conventionalized," the quintessential mindset of the SAS was maintained.<sup>131</sup> It is also noteworthy that the strategic leadership of both MG Walker and MG

Lea encouraged rather than suppressed the necessary mindset for successful special operations. Their approach was not characterized by "the unreflective conformity to prior experience and precedent."<sup>132</sup> This fact was also noted by the 22 SAS who made MG Walker an honorary member of their regiment--MG Lea having already been "badged." The only other man so honored was MG William P. Yarborough, a U.S. Army Special Forces officer.<sup>133</sup>

Casualty figures vary according to how they are being accounted for. The Ministry of Defence reports ninety-two soldiers of the U.K. and two Australians killed for a total of ninety-four.<sup>134</sup> However, Peter Dickens, researching the Borneo Campaign, reports 114 U.K. and Commonwealth troops killed and 118 wounded.<sup>135</sup> While still recognizing this disparity and the tragedy of any soldier's death, these figures are startling when considering the Campaign lasted from 1963 until 1966. Of note is the losses of the special forces. The 22 SAS lost three killed and two wounded by enemy action, and three killed in a helicopter crash.<sup>136</sup> The Australian SAS lost two, one gored by an elephant and one presumed drowned (Horner, 1991). Dickins credits the British strategy in general and CLARET operations in particular with this startling success (Dickens, 1983). Denis Healey, the U.K. Minister of Defence, considered the efforts to represent "the most efficient use of military force in the history of the world."<sup>137</sup> Without regard to one's perspective, the numbers speak for themselves.

The lesson for those faced with the combined realities of domestic and fiscal constraints, regional instability, threats that lack clarity, multiple dangers and moral ambiguities is patently obvious. Our response to these challenges must keep pace with reality. Luxurious application of overwhelming force will not always be an option. The new lexicon emerging within national security circles is fully consistent with this reality and the utility of special operations forces who, being carefully assessed, selected and trained, possess the maturity and judgement to adapt to the ambiguities they face. Reassurance, leverage, conflict containment, punitive intrusion and support to democracy abroad are emerging concepts that demand adaptable, flexible and innovative soldiers.<sup>138</sup> 'Economy of force, under political guidance [for the purpose of] political ends' may be the desirable alternative to total domination of the enemy in a protracted conflict. Neither termination nor resolution of a conflict necessarily demand the total domination and destruction of the enemy. A carefully and rigorously assessed, selected and trained special operations capability that is adequately resourced, appropriately engaged and properly responsive to a state's national command authority, is a critical national asset. It has utility and application all along the conflict continuum. CLARET operations are classic examples of this utility.

## ENDNOTES

1. Van Creveld, Martin. *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 192.
2. Rapoport, Anatol. *Carl Von Clausewitz ON WAR* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1968), 87.
3. Moynihan, Daniel, P. *Pandaemonium Ethnicity in International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 24.
4. Kennedy, Paul. *Preparing For The Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 1993), 102.
5. Sensitive operations wherein the political/military restrictions inherent in covert and clandestine operations are either not necessary or not feasible; actions are taken as required to limit exposure of those involved and/or their activities (JCS PUB 1). CLARET is often inaccurately referred to, in the popular press, as a program of covert or clandestine operations (i.e., operations designed to conceal their sponsor, covert, or operations designed to conceal to conduct of the operations themselves, clandestine). While cross-border reconnaissance might have been concealed, offensive operations could not have been concealed. The limited steps taken to reduce the obvious British sponsorship of CLARET do not justify their characterization as covert operations.
6. Gregorian, Raffi. "CLARET Operations and Confrontation, 1964-1966." *CONFLICT QUARTERLY*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (Winter 1991): 52.
7. Bunge, Frederica M. ed. *The American University Indonesia: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1983), 34.
8. From personal correspondence with LtCol J.M. Woodhouse, RA (Ret.) Commanding Officer of the 22 SAS Regt. from 1962-65. In Borneo he was directly responsible to MG Walker for employing the 22 SAS and for advising him on the irregular forces raised from indigenous tribes. He first urged crossing the border in late 1963.
9. At the time of this quote Samuel P. Huntington was Eaton Professor of the Science of Government and Director of the John M. Olin Institute of Strategic Studies at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University.

10. Cohen, Elliot A. *Commandos and Politicians Elite Military Units in Modern Democracies* (Cambridge: The Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1978), 79.
11. Blechman, Barry M. and Kaplan, Stephen S. *Force Without War U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1978), 520.
12. Ibid, 521.
13. Kuth, Paul K. "Extended Deterrence and the Outbreak of War." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82 No. 2 (June 1988): 75-76.
14. Cohen, 89.
15. Ibid, 123.
16. Bunge, 67.
17. Ibid, 56.
18. Ibid, 67.
19. Miller, Nathan. *Spying For America* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 57.
20. Gregorian, 55.
21. Ibid, 51.
22. Beckett, F. W. and Pimlott, John ed. *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency* (New York: St Martin Press, 1985), 98.
23. 'Emergency' is a term whose legal significance reflects the millions of dollars that might have been lost to war clauses in commercial insurance contracts. John Gullick, one-time member of the Malayan Civil Service, states that it was in deference to the London insurance market, on which the Malayan economy relied, that the insurgency was characterized not as a war but as an emergency. Insurance rates covered losses due to riot and civil commotion in an emergency but not in a civil war (Gullick, 1958).
24. Miller, 165.
25. Charters, David A. and Tugwell, Maurice ed. *Armies in Low-Intensity Conflict A Comparative Analysis* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1989), 87.
26. Ibid, 34.
27. Ibid, 44.

28. Ibid, 45.
29. Ibid, 23.
30. Ibid, 35.
31. Ibid, 78.
32. Ibid, 89.
33. Dickens, Peter *SAS: The Jungle Frontier* (London: Arms and Armour Press Ltd, 1983), 99.
34. Gregorian, 62.
35. Ibid, 61.  
Dickens, 98.
36. Cross, J. P. *In Gurkha Company* (London: Arms and Armour Press Ltd., 1986), 120.
37. Gregorian, 45.
38. Ibid, .  
Cross, 156.
39. Within the entrepreneurial spirit of the 22 SAS lies one of the great lessons of the Borneo Campaign. Their background and contributions will be covered in greater detail when CLARET operations are discussed.
40. Geraghty, Tony *Inside The Special Air Service* (Nashville: Battery Press, 1981), 79.
41. Bunge, 78.  
Gullick, John, M. *The Indigenous Political System of Western Malaya* (London: Humanities Press, 1958), 77.
42. Woodhouse.
43. Dickens, 87.  
Geraghty, 143.
44. Gregorian, 58.
45. Ibid, 60.
46. Ibid, 51.
47. Ibid, 45.  
Cross, 67.

48. Ibid, 55.
49. Ibid, 59.
50. Ibid, 58.  
Dickens, 167.
51. Rapoport, 67.
52. Stanton, Shelby L. *GREEN BERETS AT WAR U.S. Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956-1975* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1985), 86.
53. Dickens, 87.  
Gregorian, 45.
54. Geraghty, 89.
55. Dickens, 89.
56. Gregorian, 52.
57. Horner, David *SAS: Phantoms of the Jungle A History of the Australian Special Air Service* (London: Greenhill Books, 1991), 198.
58. Ibid, 187.
59. Woodhouse.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Dickens, 99.
63. It is interesting to note that one's view of the significance of special operations is often limited by the prism through which they are viewed. COL Jim Wallace, the Australian Commander of Special Forces, views CLARET as mainly a tactical play aimed at increasing warning time through depth, a valid tactical perspective, however, incomplete. David Horner, the historian and writer, supports Mr. Healey's point of view. Mr. Horner agrees with the author's thesis that the decision to execute CLARET had a strategic/political motivation and dimension. The author's assertion is that special operations, CLARET specifically, have tactical, operational and strategic dimensions. Properly sustained, trained and implemented, they are ideal instruments for use in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment of this global village in which international intercourse is exercised. From Horner, David through personal correspondence, 1993 and Wallace, Jim Col.,



63. continued.

currently serving as Commanding Officer of the Australian Special Forces. From personal correspondence, 1993.

64. Woodhouse.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Geraghty, 87.

70. Woodhouse.

71. Ibid.

72. Paschall, Rod *LIC 2010 Special Operations & Unconventional Warfare in the Next Century* (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1990), 76.

73. From personal conversation with Dr. Owen Jacobs, ARI 17-18 April, 1994.

74. Woodhouse.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Horner, 98.

79. Seymour, William *British Special Forces* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1985), 92.

80. Ibid, vi.

81. Schoomaker, Peter J. *WINNING THE VIOLENT PEACE: Special Operations Short of War* (A paper presented as a Research Associate, National Defense University, 1989), 35.

82. Woodhouse.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Rapoport, 157.
88. James, Harold and Sheil-Small, Denis *The Undeclared War* (Singapore: Asia Pacific Press, 1971), 94.
89. Gregorian, 43.
90. Ibid, 49.  
Dickens, 77.
91. Ibid, 44.
92. Ibid, 57.  
Cross, 55.
93. Ibid, 56.
94. Ibid, 55.  
Cross, 95.
95. Ibid, 57.
96. Horner, 135.
97. Gregorian, 43.
98. Ibid, 56.
99. Horner, 77.
100. Ibid, 69.
101. Cross, 27.  
Gregorian, 45.
102. Ibid, 67.  
Ibid, 46.
103. Dickens, 97.
104. Ibid, 88.  
Gregorian, 44.
105. Allen, Charles *The Savage Wars of Peace* (London: Michael Joseph 1990), 132.
106. Bunge, 196.

107. Gregorian, 60.
108. Ibid, 55.  
Dickens, 89.
109. Miller, 76.  
O'Toole, G. J. A. *Honorable Treachery* (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991), 97.
110. Dickens, 55.
111. Gregorian, 53.
112. Dickens, 45.
113. Gregorian, 43.
114. Dickens, 79.
115. Ibid, 154.  
Gregorian, 57.
116. Gregorian, 51.
117. Dickens, 177.
118. Geraghty, 55.
119. Gregorian, 44.
120. Dickens, 99.
121. Synder, Glenn "Crisis Bargaining." *International Crisis: Insights from Behavioral Research*, ed. George F. Hermann (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1972), 123.
122. Webster defines diplomacy as "the conduct by government officials of negotiations and other relations between nations. Webster identifies the word war as coming to English from Germanic roots, from the word werre. He defines war as "a state of open, armed, often prolonged conflict carried on between two nations, states, or parties (Soukhanov, 1984)." War occurs along the continuum of conflict that is international intercourse as it is conducted in the anarchy that characterizes relations between nation-states. The conduct of war may be modified and therefore not conducted as 'open, armed conflict,' as is the case in covert, clandestine or low visibility war.
123. Krieger, Joel ed. *The Oxford Companion To Politics Of The World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 269.

124. Kuth, 45.
125. Ibid, 47.
126. Schelling, Thomas *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966, 65.
127. *Deterrence* - a policy that seeks (through the use of signals) to convince an adversary, through the threat of military retaliation, that the costs of resorting to the use of military force to achieve foreign policy objectives will outweigh the benefits hoped to be gained (Howard, 1982); *Extended deterrence* - a confrontation in which the national security policymakers of one state, the defender, threaten the use of force against another state, the aggressor, in order to persuade (compel) that state not to use military force against an ally of the defender (Kuth, 38).
128. Jervis, Robert *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, 92.
129. Rapoport, 196.
130. Gergorian, 65.
131. Seymour, vi.
132. Schoomaker, 35.
133. Geraghty, 65.
134. Hawkins, David *The Defense of Malaysia and Singapore* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 1972), 89.
135. Dickins, 125.
136. Dickens, 175.
137. Walker, Walter "Borneo." *British Army Review*, No. 32, (August 1978): 63.
138. The concepts and lexicon referred to here are taken from *PROJECT 2025*, published on 6 November 1991, a project conceived by the Vice Chairman of the Joint chiefs of Staff as a means for injecting long-term strategic vision into U.S. military planning during a time of international upheaval and revolutionary developments in technology.

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