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**THESIS**

**RECONCILIATION IS THE BEST SOLUTION FOR  
CONFLICT IN ACEH**

by

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December 2003

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**RECONCILIATION IS THE BEST SOLUTION FOR CONFLICT IN ACEH**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

The history of the conflict in Aceh began in the pre-colonial era, during which the Acehnese struggled to fight the Dutch for more than three centuries. The conflict has continued for the last three decades between the Indonesian central government and the GAM (Free Aceh Movement). The GAM has been able to develop and improve its struggle using conventional and modified guerilla tactics. The GAM leadership in exile utilizes central government and military weaknesses to their advantage, including the collapse of the strong authoritarian government in 1998 and the independence of East Timor afterward. They succeed in exploiting the populace's grievances in order to create enemy images of Indonesian colonialism in Aceh. The central government and military responses to confront conflict in Aceh have never changed much, and the military has always been the primary option. Though military operations have been able to suppress the rebels, it also has a negative impact on Acehnese society due to weaknesses within the military, such as less professional soldiers and a limited budget. Dialogue between the GAM and the central government took place in 1999, but ended in failure in 2003, and the central government launched an integrated operation. As the rebel movement escalates, military action that led to the integrated operation was necessary and unavoidable to restore the government system and public law and order. Nevertheless, with the lessons learned from the past rebellion, the merely military option would not be sufficient to win the war in Aceh. Aceh needs more comprehensive policies starting with reconciliation followed by economic and governance rehabilitations. The required prerequisites for reconciliation are ending the hostilities between leaders and giving more incentives for rebels in the field to surrender. The latter needs the trust that can be built by granting amnesty or sentence reduction to ex-rebels. At the same time, internal improvements should also be made within the military to foster better performance. Reconciliation and societal development do not need to halt military action as long as the security of the Acehnese and public order are still threatened.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>A. THESIS BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>B. IMPORTANCE OF THE THESIS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>C. ARGUMENTS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>D. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>E. CONTENT OF THE THESIS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>ACEHNESE REBELLIONS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>A. BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>1. General.....</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>2. Pre-Colonial to Independence.....</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>B. THE REBELLIONS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>2. The First Rebellion .....</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>3. The First GAM.....</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>4. The Second GAM.....</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>5. The Third GAM .....</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b>C. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>THEORIES ON GREED AND GRIEVANCE OF REBELLION AND THE RESOLUTION.....</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>A. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>B. GREED MOTIVES .....</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>C. GRIEVANCE MOTIVES .....</b>	<b>25</b>
	<b>D. OTHER INFLUENTIAL FACTORS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>1. Environmental Scarcity.....</b>	<b>27</b>
	<b>2. Creation of Enemy Images.....</b>	<b>29</b>
	<b>E. ADDRESSING THE CONFLICT.....</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>1. Irrevocable Commitment .....</b>	<b>32</b>
	<b>2. Graduated Reduction in International Tension.....</b>	<b>32</b>
	<b>3. Reciprocal Strategy with a Lag in Retaliation and Return to     Conciliation.....</b>	<b>32</b>
	<b>F. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>THE STRUCTURE OF THE GAM AND THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES...35</b>	
	<b>A. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
	<b>B. THE STRUCTURE OF THE GAM.....</b>	<b>35</b>
	<b>1. Hasan di Tiro.....</b>	<b>35</b>
	<b>2. Organization.....</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>3. Strategy .....</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>a. Destruct Political and Social Structure of the Existing         Government.....</b>	<b>38</b>
	<b>b. Destruct the Existing Economic System .....</b>	<b>38</b>

	c.	<i>Assault on the Javanese in Aceh</i> .....	39
	d.	<i>Weaken the Morale of the Government and Its Soldiers</i> .....	39
	e.	<i>Increase Political Pressure Toward Existing Government</i> ..	40
	4.	Finance .....	41
	5.	Arms .....	42
	6.	International Support .....	42
C.		THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES .....	43
	1.	Military Options .....	43
	2.	Negotiations and Peace Talks .....	44
	a.	<i>Peace Settlement in the First Rebellion</i> .....	44
	b.	<i>Negotiation Under President Wahid</i> .....	45
	c.	<i>Negotiation Under President Megawati</i> .....	46
	3.	Autonomy .....	48
D.		CONCLUSION .....	50
V.		GOVERNMENT OPTIONS TO ADDRESS THE CONFLICT IN ACEH .....	51
	A.	INTRODUCTION .....	51
	B.	USE OF FORCE TO RESTORE SECURITY .....	51
	1.	Improve Soldiers and Police Professionalism .....	52
	2.	Reduce Troops As Soon As Possible .....	54
	3.	Publish Rules of Engagement .....	55
	4.	Do Not Use Civilian Auxiliaries or Militias .....	55
	5.	Budget Transparencies .....	56
	6.	Prosecute Violators of the Law and Military Code of Conduct and Soldier's Oath .....	57
	7.	Keep Conduct of Military Operations Subject to Regular and Frequent Review by Civilians .....	58
	8.	Use of Mobil Brigade ( <i>Brimob</i> ) .....	58
	9.	Access for Journalists and Independent Observers .....	59
	B.	RECONCILIATION .....	62
	1.	End the Leadership Hostilities .....	63
	2.	Building Trust .....	64
	C.	SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REHABILITATION .....	65
	D.	GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION .....	69
	E.	CONCLUSION .....	71
VI.		CONCLUSION .....	73
	A.	SUMMARY .....	73
	B.	RECOMMENDATION .....	75
		BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	79
		INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....	83

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. THESIS BACKGROUND

Aceh has long played a special and vital role in Indonesia. The area now enjoys special status under Indonesian rule, yet it remains one of the most rebellious provinces in the country.<sup>1</sup> The first rebellion in Aceh occurred in 1953 and it did not call for Acehnese independence, but rather, greater local autonomy and a stronger role for Islam in the national government.<sup>2</sup> After seven years, the conflict ended peacefully in 1962, when the Government of Indonesia, henceforth government, restored the special status for the Aceh Province, absorbed rebel members into the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) or gave them amnesty. The rebellion changed afterwards into GAM (Free Aceh Movement), believed to be driven by both political and economical factors. Politically, the government has never fulfilled its promises to give broad autonomy status to Aceh until 2001. Economically, natural resources discovered in 1971 were the basis for industrialization contributing to the Acehnese economy. GAM's power has increased over time and its strength has escalated after the fall of Soeharto in 1998.

During 27 years of the GAM's rebellion, the government has suppressed the insurgencies by various policies without being able to put down the rebellion. The first and second GAM emerged during President Soeharto's era (1970s-1980s), in which the main approach had been military and has often been accompanied by many human rights abuses. Following the discovery of natural resources in Aceh, the policy of the central government of sending most of the revenues to Jakarta was the reason for creating dissatisfaction among the Acehnese. Economic marginalization exacerbated resentment of the local population in the industrial-site neighborhoods. The government crushed the first rebellion easily since there were only a few hundred rebels with old weapons who did not have popular support. Increased support both from outside and inside the country made the second GAM stronger. The government declared Aceh a military operation

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<sup>1</sup> *The History of Aceh*, Available at [[http://www.thejakartapost.com/special/os\\_7\\_history.asp](http://www.thejakartapost.com/special/os_7_history.asp)], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Michael L. Ross, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, Department of Political Science, UCLA, Prepared for the Yale-World Bank Project on "The Economic of Political Violence", p. 10, Available at [<http://www.polisci.ucla.edu/faculty/ross/ResourcesRebellion.pdf>], Accessed August 2003.

zone, known by the Indonesian acronym DOM, in which the Indonesian military confronted the rebellion with anti-guerilla tactics. At the end of DOM in 1998, besides a great number of casualties, the legacies of DOM were more grievances among the Acehnese toward the central government and popular support for the GAM. The worst consequence was the success of the GAM in creating an image with the majority of Acehnese that the government and military, sometimes represented by Javanese, are other colonialists in their resources rich land.

Post-Soeharto governments have introduced alternative approaches by offering autonomy and initiating peace talks. President Habibie admitted the mistakes of the past and promised to redress them.<sup>3</sup> His government formulated laws that offer greater autonomy to Aceh. As he only ruled for a very short period (May 1998-October 1999), the law was never effective and his promises were never fulfilled until he resigned.

President Wahid's government, in power almost as long as the previous government (October 1999-July 2001), initiated peace talks with the GAM and used the Henry Dunant Center (HDC) as a mediator. His efforts resulted in a series of negotiations between the GAM and the government. His successor, President Megawati initially continued the negotiations. During the negotiations, President Megawati granted autonomy status to the Aceh Province in December 2001 under Law No. 18/2001. In December 2002, the negotiations resulted in the development of a Joint Security Committee (JSC) to monitor the peace process. With such good prospects, a group of donor countries held a conference in Tokyo to design a reconstruction plan for Aceh.

Unfortunately, the realities in the field did not coincide with diplomatic efforts on the table. Besides reported violations of both parties, the JSC was in an unsafe environment to carry out their jobs. It is not easy to ascertain the real facts since there is no final report from the JSC during their tenure. From the perspective of the Indonesian government and military, the security escalation in the Aceh Province had reached a stage that could not be tolerated. As the last negotiations in Tokyo failed in May 2003, the government announced an "integrated operation" including military force, and declared Aceh a military emergency zone.

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<sup>3</sup> ICG Report, June 12, 2001, *Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace*, p. 3.

Before the operation began, foreign journalists and observers warned that launching a military operation was not the correct decision. During the first three months of the operation, independent national and international agencies criticized the Indonesian military and government policies. From my point of view, the military operation launched by the government is necessary and must be done in a more professional and appropriate way. Although necessary, the military operation is not yet sufficient to restore a sustainable peace in Aceh.

Collier finds that economic agendas are more important than grievances with respect to the causes of civil war. Conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievances.<sup>4</sup> Collier and Hoeffler suggest that a resource such as wealth, as in Aceh, increases the likelihood of civil war because it presents rebel organizations, such as the GAM, with an opportunity to fund themselves through looting and extortion.<sup>5</sup> Although Ross supports Collier and Hoeffler's findings, he explains further and slightly differently that the greed factor would end up with the grievance factor.

On the other hand, Kriesberg describes four interdependent conditions between two parties that could lead to a conflict as a result of grievances. Dixon, who develops a theory of the causal links between severe environmental scarcity and violence and Stein, who explains a creation of enemy images that engenders grievance and over time prolongs and intensifies a conflict, establish other useful explanations of conflict in Aceh. Dixon finds that environmental scarcity can contribute to civil violence, including insurgencies and ethnic clashes. Environmental scarcity is caused by the degradation and depletion of renewable resources, the increased demand for these resources, and/or their unequal distribution. These three sources of scarcity often interact and reinforce one another.<sup>6</sup> Following her explanation, Stein develops three possible strategies to manage and reduce the conflict caused by hostile enemy images.

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<sup>4</sup> Collier, Paul, The World Bank, April 10, 1999, *Doing Well Out of War*, NS-3042 Course Documents, Available at [[http://nps.blackboard.com/courses/1/NS3042\\_Mr/content/\\_105717\\_1/econagendas.pdf](http://nps.blackboard.com/courses/1/NS3042_Mr/content/_105717_1/econagendas.pdf)], pp. 1-4, 13-14, Accessed August 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Ross, University of Michigan, *Natural Resources and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Case Studies*, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Dixon, Thomas F., Homer, Princeton University Press, 1999, *Environmental, Scarcity, and Violence*, p. 177.

## **B. IMPORTANCE OF THE THESIS**

Since the fall of Soeharto, Indonesia has entered a transition period from an authoritarian to a more democratic government. East Timor independence exacerbated separatist movements in Aceh and Papua and placed the unity of Indonesia at risk. At the same time, the government is struggling to recover its economy and establish good governance. The government is making Aceh a priority because the conflict has escalated following the failure of the latest peace agreement.

Statistical data shows that most insurgencies succeed in winning their wars, either by defeating the adversary in the battlefield or on the table. In other words, only a few countries had won their intra-state conflicts. Experiences from East Timor also show that reconstruction in post conflict environment requires a lot of effort, possibly much more than merely stopping the war. The Indonesian government must apply the appropriate policy in Aceh by analyzing carefully and honestly the cause of the conflict. Enriched with the lessons learnt from the previous policy as well as from other countries, the analysis must be implemented thoroughly with tight control and adequate evaluation. If the government can properly resolve the conflict in Aceh, it will be a model and valuable stepping-stone for tackling other conflicting areas, such as Papua, and minimizing the desire for self-determination from other regions.

## **C. ARGUMENTS**

This thesis will argue that the GAM rebellion is driven more by *grievance* rather than *greed* and over time, it has become a wicked problem. As a result, the government should resolve the conflict by addressing the causes of the grievances of the GAM beyond a military operation with a multidimensional approach. For that purpose, the military and government need to be more professional in performing their jobs with the ultimate goal of winning the hearts and minds of the Acehnese. Achieving this goal would separate the people from the rebels and lessen their opportunities to undermine the government and military. The autonomy proposed will not satisfy the demands of the GAM, as stated by one of its commanders that autonomy is just too late: “It is like giving a toy car to an adult, who already needs a real car.”<sup>7</sup> The military operation is necessary to restore security, but it is not sufficient to achieve a sustainable peace in Aceh.

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<sup>7</sup> M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik*, Bond of Torned Heart, Yayasan Ulul Arham, Jakarta, 2002, p. 78.



Therefore, broader policies include reconciliation, economic reconstruction, as well as better governance and participation should have the same priority as the military operation. This may be the last chance because if unsuccessful, the credibility of the military and the government will be diminished further. Moreover, the unity of Indonesia is threatened and Aceh, and probably other provinces, would become the same case as East Timor.

#### **D. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

In this thesis, I will use descriptive, analytical, and prescriptive methods based on data on the GAM and the government policies and interrelated factors from books and other published materials and the Internet.

#### **E. CONTENT OF THE THESIS**

Chapter I presents the purpose, major questions and argument of the thesis. Chapter II explains the background of Aceh from pre-colonial to the three stages of the GAM. Chapter III discusses different schools of thought about the causes of a rebellion and its resolution. Chapter IV examines the structure of the GAM and the chronology of government policies in addressing the conflict in Aceh. It will explore the GAM key actors and possible economical and political domestic and international support. Chapter V examines the possible and more sustainable government policies to address the rebellion. What are the government's best solutions to address the conflict? How should the government implement its multi-dimensional approach? Chapter VI presents the conclusions and recommendations for the government and military to put down the rebellion in Aceh as part of an effort to keep Indonesia united.

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## II. ACEHNESE REBELLIONS

### A. BACKGROUND

#### 1. General

The Aceh Province<sup>8</sup> is located in the western-most part of Indonesia, in the northwestern land of Sumatra, surrounded by the sea from the southwest to the northeast and shares a border with North Sumatra Province. The coastal areas west of the Bukit Barisan mountain range are, in general, sparsely populated and desolate. Here, the plains are narrow and the land uneven and hilly with only two towns in this region, Meulaboh and Tapaktuan. The land towards the east of the Bukit Barisan range is more flat and fertile, and the largest part of the province's population is concentrated there. The land is dotted with paddy fields and people engage in either agriculture or trade. The majority of the population is concentrated in and around the coastal towns and cities, which leave the hinterland almost empty. Aceh is one of Indonesia's provinces that bears the Special Region status (*Daerah Istimewa*) and is divided into 16 regencies (*kabupaten*): West Aceh, Aceh *Besar*, South Aceh, Aceh Singkil, Center Aceh, Southeast Aceh, East Aceh, Bireuen, Pidie, Simeuleu, Aceh Jaya, Nagan Raya, Southwest Aceh, Gayo Lues; and 4 cities (*kotamadia*): Banda Aceh (the capital city), Langsa, Lhokseumawe, and Sabang.

According to 2001 census data, the population of Aceh is 4.5 million. The major tribes are the Acehnese<sup>9</sup>, Gayo, Tamiang, and Alas. Arab, Chinese, European and Indian influences were the dominant foreign factors that helped shape modern Aceh. Indeed, to judge by the physical features, it can be seen among many Acehnese that some intermixing must have taken place during the centuries of contact with the outside world. Some European features, for example, are most commonly found among the people of the Lamno region in Western Aceh, while Indian traits can be found among the people in coastal towns. According to local narratives, Islam is said to have arrived at Perlak in the year 800.<sup>10</sup> Due to this, and to the fact that the province is still substantially Islamic to

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<sup>8</sup> The official name of this province is *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD)*.

<sup>9</sup> Henceforth throughout this paper, I use the term "Acehnese" for the Aceh people as a whole despite the fact that Acehnese is only one ethnic group among other ethnic groups in Aceh.

<sup>10</sup> Bowen, John R., *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 31, Issue 4 (October 1989), *Narrative Form and Political Incorporative: Changing Uses of History in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 683.

this day, Aceh is also known as Mecca's verandah among Indonesians. There are very few non-Moslems in Aceh and most of them are immigrants living in cities. The teachings of Islam are faithfully practiced in the people's daily lives, and generally imbue the local traditions. Mosques are filled to overflowing with believers on Fridays and on other days in which congregational prayers are prescribed. The Aceh language is composed of several regional dialects, or local languages, which are sometimes so different from each other that speakers of one may not be able to communicate with those of another. This is probably due to the isolation of many areas because of the existence of natural barriers. Four major language or dialect groups can be distinguished. In West and South Aceh, the dialect is similar to that of the Minangkabau in West Sumatera. In the Kuala Simpang region of East Aceh, the Deli Malay dialect prevails. In Central and South East Aceh, the Gayo Alas dialects, respectively, are spoken.

## **2. Pre-Colonial to Independence**

The first Islamic ruler in Aceh, even in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, Peureulak, was inaugurated in the year 840. In 1292, Peureulak is merged into the kingdom of Pasai (Pasé), which in turn merges into *Aceh Darussalam* in 1465.<sup>11</sup> It was in the 1520s that Aceh grew in significance, and first began to appear as the entity it is today.<sup>12</sup> Aceh expanded its territory toward the Malay Peninsula and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century reached its zenith during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda from 1607 to 1636. By means of a highly successful “absolute strategy” and an ambitious and spectacular policy of expansionism, Sultan Iskandar Muda made Aceh the most powerful state in the region. By 1620, Iskandar controlled Pahang, Kedah, and Perak on the Malay Peninsula, and he even had designs on Java. Aceh itself was a major center of Islamic scholarship, and the “tradition of Atjeh as an Islamic state” began.<sup>13</sup> Aceh was ruled by Islamic Shariah law and had trading relations with many foreign nations. Aceh was a lucrative source of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 684 and *Aceh's Islamic Kingdom*, available at [<http://www.info-indo.com/sumatra/acehislamickingdom.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p .4.

pepper, which attracted Europeans, initiated by the Portuguese, to Aceh. When Sultan Iskandar died in 1641, Aceh's "golden age" began to decline and sparked Dutch and British efforts to dominate the region.

The Dutch began their attempt to vanquish Aceh in 1873 and faced four decades of war. It is because of this continued resistance that the assertion was made that 'Aceh never surrendered its sovereignty to the Dutch'.<sup>14</sup> The war cost 37,500 Dutch lives and 70,000 Acehnese lives. At least four Dutch generals were killed during the battle and many of them were fired because of their failure.<sup>15</sup> The "foremost theories and tactician of the holy war" was Teungku Chik di Tiro of Pidie. By 1913, "the Dutch could at last be said to have conquered Aceh" and the last Sultan Aceh was exiled in 1907.<sup>16</sup> A small number of Acehnese continued with the guerilla war, but the struggle afterward was done politically by developing religious education institutions as well as political parties. The most prominent religious leader was Daud Beureuh, from Pidie.<sup>17</sup> Japan arrived in Aceh in 1941 to replace the Dutch and their occupation ended after Japan surrendered to the Allies in 1945.

The Indonesian declaration of independence was announced in Aceh on August 21, 1945. On one occasion, Teungku Umar Tiro, as the only heir and on behalf of Tiro's family, took an oath of allegiance to the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>18</sup> Facing the threat of a return of the Dutch to Aceh, as the Dutch did in Java, leaders in Aceh, including Daud Beureuh, issued a proclamation declaring the struggle against the Dutch to be a holy war, or *perang sabil*.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Christie, *Decolonization and Separatism in the Muslim Regions of Southeast Asia*, in A Modern History of South East Asia, p. 144.

<sup>15</sup> M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik* (Bond of Torn Heart), Yayasan Ulul Arham, Jakarta, 2002, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 8. In his book, Kell does not explain that the Sultan surrendered, Tippe, Syarifudin, *Aceh di Persimpangan Jalan* (Aceh at a Crossroads), Pustaka Cidesindo, 2000, p. 30, writes that "Sultan and Aceh's people had never given up the sovereignty of Aceh to the Dutch," while M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik* (Bond of Tored Heart), p. 16, writes that "the Dutch captured the Sultan's wives, which forced him to stop the armed struggle and he was willing to surrender on January 20, 1903."

<sup>17</sup> See Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, pp. 7-8.

<sup>18</sup> M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik* (Bond of Torn Heart), p. 23. Present GAM Leader, Hasan Tiro, is the heir of Tiro's family.

<sup>19</sup> Christie, *Decolonization and Separatism in the Muslim Regions of Southeast Asia*, p. 144.

## **B. THE REBELLIONS**

### **1. Introduction**

The history of rebellion in Aceh has lasted for decades, although not continuously in the form of overtly armed conflicts. Despite the fact that all events are interconnected, every period of rebellion has its own cause, actors, local as well as national influences, and the reaction of the central government to the rebellion. Therefore, I will discuss the past rebellions based on these factors and their impact.

### **2. The First Rebellion**

From 1946 onwards, the central government of the Republic of Indonesia could exercise little influence in Aceh, for the simple reason that from this time on, it was struggling to ensure its own survival in the face of increasing Dutch encroachment. Since the Dutch made no attempt to reoccupy Aceh, the region was, in effect, increasingly left to its own devices.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, Aceh's loyalty to the central government during this period was inspired precisely by the fact that it was free to run its own affairs without central interference, and the Acehnese furthermore expected that their region's "historical separateness and its contribution to the national revolution ... would be accorded due recognition in a future Indonesian state".<sup>21</sup>

Aceh had given abundant economic and political contributions to the central government in the nascent years of the independence of Indonesia. In his speech in front of an Aceh mass meeting on June 17, 1948, president Soekarno stated that Aceh is a resource region and appealed to the Acehnese to continue to assist Indonesia. Aceh bought two C-47 aircrafts as the first fleet of Indonesian Airways in 1948. The Acehnese also contributed five kilograms of gold to purchase government bonds and US\$500,000 to finance the Indonesian Armed Forces and to build government offices.<sup>22</sup> When the Dutch captured the capital city of Yogyakarta and seized the top leaders of the Republic Indonesia in 1949, an emergency government was established and the center of the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik* (Bond of Torn Heart), p. 34.

government was moved to Bukittinggi. As the Dutch also attacked Bukittinggi, the emergency government moved to Banda Aceh with the full support of the local government.

The first disappointment experienced by the Acehnese arose in 1953 as the central government cancelled the autonomous status of Aceh by unifying it into North Sumatra province. Until the end of 1952, Aceh had its own military force under the command of Daud Beureueh and equally, it had its own trading links that were independent of central government control. Absorbing Aceh into North Sumatra Province not only offended Aceh's *amour propre* [self esteem], but also destroyed the *de facto* network of self-government that had been operating in the late 1940s.<sup>23</sup> The regional grievances were based on a sense that Aceh, the hero of the revolutionary period, had been marginalized<sup>24</sup> and betrayed. As a result, a rebellion broke out in 1953 under the leadership of Daud Beureueh and it drew widespread popular support.<sup>25</sup> Daud Beureueh's leadership was very central since the Acehnese considered him a religious leader as well as a noble heir, besides being a formal official government leader. By the mid-1950s, the war in Aceh had settled down into the kind of stalemate where the forces of resistance often have an inherent advantage.<sup>26</sup> Unable to quell the revolt by force alone, in 1957 the central government made Aceh a separate province and two years later the province was given the status of "special region", which accorded it autonomy in the areas of religion, customary law, and education.<sup>27</sup> Although Kingsbury writes that "from 1950 until 1963 they claim their goal had been to secede"<sup>28</sup>, at least I found two reasons that do not support the rebel's claim. First, although that time was a perfect opportunity to undertake their secession, considering the weakness of the central government and the rigidity of the Acehnese in the struggle, di Tiro decided to declare Acehnese independence later in

<sup>23</sup> Christie, *Decolonization and Separatism in the Muslim Regions of Southeast Asia*, in *A Modern History of South East Asia*, p. 148.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Christie, *Decolonization and Separatism in the Muslim Regions of Southeast Asia*, in *A Modern History of South East Asia*, p. 150.

<sup>27</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Damien Kingsbury, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003: *Power Politics and the Indonesian Military*, p. 223.

1976. Second, although di Tiro was actively involved in the rebellion, Daud Beureueh was the most prominent figure of that time, in which Daud Beureueh chose to spend his old days as an ordinary citizen rather than continuing his armed struggle. Hence, a peaceful solution was reached by absorbing ex-rebels into the national armed forces or by giving them amnesty. The nine-year war costs 4,000 lives.<sup>29</sup> By 1962, however, the honorable surrender of Daud Beureueh brought the rebellion to an end.<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion, the first rebellion was merely driven by the feeling of injustice and undermining of the Acehnese as the central government merged Aceh with the North Sumatra province. I also believe that the willingness of the Acehnese to withdraw their weapons was also motivated by amnesty from the central government. This also shows the loyalty of the Acehnese to their local leader, not only to protract the war, but also to end the fight. The first rebellion ended peacefully as both sides did not have the capability nor demand to continue fighting while the amnesty provided by the central government was an invaluable incentive for the rebels to return to their normal lives.

### **3. The First GAM**

The development policy of Aceh changed dramatically when massive reserves of natural gas were developed in North Aceh in 1971. Prior to the discovery of natural gas, the economy of North Aceh had been based primarily on peasant agriculture and fish-farming, and the inhabitants were woefully unprepared for the arrival of a modern industrial complex.<sup>31</sup> To exploit them, Mobil, later ExxonMobil, invested several billion dollars in developing the gas fields, constructing a compression plant, and building roads, a port, and a new community for the plant's 5,000 to 6,000 permanent employees.

The beginning of the rebellion in Aceh in 1976 is linked to the province's resource wealth in two ways: the resource boom produced rapid development in, and migration towards, a very poor region, which created grievances that led to rebel support; and the province's wealth gave citizens an economic incentive to secede from Indonesia. There are several pieces of evidence that the rebel movement was in part motivated by

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<sup>29</sup> M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik* (Bond of Torn Heart), Yayasan Ulul Arham, Jakarta, 2002, p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> Christie, *Decolonization and Separatism in the Muslim Regions of Southeast Asia*, in *A Modern History of South East Asia*, p. 156.

<sup>31</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p.15.



resource exploitation. It emerged at the same time that Aceh's natural gas facility was coming on line. The facility, and the surrounding industrial complex, was the site of several of the group's initial military action, and the movement strongly denounced the central government for appropriating Aceh's resource wealth.

If in the first rebellion, di Tiro only assisted Daud Beureueh, this time he took full control of the rebellion. Di Tiro secretly returned to Aceh on October 30, 1976 and recruited a cadre of young intellectuals, attempted to gain Daud Beureueh's endorsement, and issued a unilateral "Declaration of Independence of Aceh-Sumatra".<sup>32</sup> From this point, he directly led his followers to armed insurrection toward the central government. Some authors suggest that di Tiro's movement was driven by anger and hatred as his proposal to take part in oil projects was rejected<sup>33</sup> and he claimed that his brother was "murdered by Javanese military intelligence 'doctors.'"<sup>34</sup> Although his popularity among his followers as well as many ordinary Acehnese was undeniable<sup>35</sup>, an Acehnese observer describes him as an opportunist.<sup>36</sup> Above all, I believe that he is absolutely the most important person who created and nurtured the GAM and has become one of the most wanted persons by the central government since then.

In its 1976-79 incarnations, the GAM was small and engaged in few military activities. It never controlled any territory, and estimates of its active membership range from two dozen to two hundred, and some of its fighters were apparently forced to join the movement. They possessed only a "few old guns and remnants from World War II", and extorted money from townspeople to support their efforts.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003; The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 243; and Ross, Michael L., Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 200, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 243.

<sup>35</sup> *The Star On-Line*, September 14, 2003, Andreas Harsono: "Starting from Kilometer Zero", Available at [<http://thestar.com.my/services/printerfriendly.asp?file=/2003/9/14/features/5941366.asp>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Fachry Ali, an Acehnese Observer's Comment on a TV Dialogue: "Dilema Tiro, GAM, dan Swedia" (The dilemma of Tiro, GAM, and Swedia); available at [<http://www.liputan6.com/fullnews/55857.html>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 15.

The central government's initial response was muted and became more robust after the GAM attacked pipeline personnel resulting in the death of an American. The Army Special Forces were sent to Aceh and di Tiro and the GAM then had to go on the run.<sup>38</sup> By the 1980s, the GAM had effectively disappeared. Its activities lasted barely two years and attracted only a handful of backers. It was chronically short of funds and arms, and was easily extinguished by government forces. Although Aceh was the site of an earlier rebellion, the GAM was unable to attract the support of the key backers of the previous movement. Many Acehnese may have resented the central government's appropriation of revenues from the LNG facility. Still, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Acehnese economy was doing extraordinarily well, which may have undercut the GAM's claims about Aceh's impoverishment.<sup>39</sup>

To summarize, although the exploitation of natural resources was in part inspired by the emergence of the first GAM, Hasan di Tiro was the most single key element that influenced the rebirth of rebellion during this period. Therefore, the first GAM was more motivated by the grievance factor of the individual Hasan di Tiro and the goal was obviously the independence of Aceh to be separated from Indonesia. It was not a time well suited to rebellion<sup>40</sup> because, on the one hand, di Tiro as well as his followers, did not have credible experience. On the other hand, the central government easily defeated the rebels since it was a very strong power politically, economically, and militarily.

#### **4. The Second GAM**

Although the GAM was unsuccessful in its first manifestation, it was never completely destroyed by Indonesian government forces. During the 1980s, a number of fighters remained in the forests of Aceh and the recruitment of both combatants and non-combatants continued.<sup>41</sup> From his exile in Sweden, di Tiro commanded his followers in

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<sup>38</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 200, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 243.

<sup>39</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 66.

Aceh by sending “recorded speeches and writings”. Furthermore, he searched for external political and military support and opened GAM offices in Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, the United States and Europe.<sup>42</sup>

From the outset, the GAM was more aggressive in 1989 than it had been in 1977, reflecting both its larger size, and the military training of its members. It also engaged in more symbolic activities, distributing leaflets and burning a school after the headmaster was told to stop teaching Pancasila, the official ideology of the Indonesian state. The GAM’s activities were more widespread geographically than they had been a decade earlier, but they were still concentrated along Aceh’s northeastern coast, in the districts of Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh. North Aceh was also the home of the natural gas and industrial facilities, near the town of Lhokseumawe, and both North Aceh and East Aceh had been sites of the 1988-89 anti-corruption protests. Many observers suggested that the rebellion was inspired by grievances around Lhokseumawe facilities, including disputes over the distribution of high-paying jobs and revenues, official corruption, and concerns about the un-Islamic behavior of non-Acehnese migrants. Estimates of the GAM’s strength in 1989-91 range from 200-750 active members. Although Libya had provided training, it did not offer the GAM any additional funds or weaponry. Some money was apparently raised among the Acehnese living in Malaysia. The GAM also stole, or perhaps, purchased, weapons from Indonesia security forces, obtaining some 200 automatic rifles and light machine guns by June 1990.<sup>43</sup>

Until mid-1990, the government responded to the attacks on its forces in a relatively low-key manner, relying solely on the troops already stationed in Aceh. The organization’s strength in some parts of North and East Aceh became apparent in August 1990, soon after the army had begun counterinsurgency operations in earnest. Prior to the large-scale deployment of Indonesian troops in Aceh in mid-1990, the GAM had been able to establish such a presence in part by exploiting a lack of governmental authority in rural areas. Local officials were out of touch with the village population, allowing the separatist movement to fill the resulting “vacuum” with both its people and its

<sup>42</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 244.

<sup>43</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, pp. 22-23.

propaganda. The GAM appears to have benefited not only from a paucity of civil authority but also from the active assistance of some village administrations. However, a far more serious threat to the Indonesian government, and an even greater boon for the GAM, came in the form of dissension in the Indonesian armed services themselves. As well as drawing the support of some village officials and members serving in the armed forces, the GAM appears to have had the active allegiance of deserters, discharged and retired servicemen, veterans of the Darul Islam struggle of the 1950s, and the people from all strata of Acehnese society.<sup>44</sup> A deserter with the rank of corporal named Robert disabled armed service members who were carrying out social activities and stole 18 rifles in 1989.<sup>45</sup> The Indonesian government has accused members of Banda Aceh's intelligentsia of being the "brains" behind the activities of the GAM, but it is questionable whether such people have been part of the movement's command structure or have given it their active support.<sup>46</sup>

The activities of the Free Aceh Movement provoked a brutal response from the Indonesian military. In July 1990, an estimated 6,000 troops were deployed in Aceh, bringing to around 12,000 the total number of soldiers in the province.<sup>47</sup> From this point forward, Aceh was regarded as a "DOM" (*Daerah Operasi Militer*, "area of military operations"), a designation that has no fixed definition or legal status but implies that the military has a heightened level of authority and can conduct its operations with impunity.<sup>48</sup> ABRI's [former name of TNI] strategy in Aceh centered on the use of "shock therapy," a campaign of terror designed to strike fear in the population and make them withdraw their support for the GAM. Although the separatists themselves were widely reported to have committed atrocities, there was "a vast difference in scale" between the two sides in this respect.<sup>49</sup> A report by Indonesian lawyers in November

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>45</sup> M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik* (Bond of Torn Heart), Yayasan Ulul Arham, Jakarta, 2002, p. 53.

<sup>46</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 68.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>48</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>49</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 74.

1990 said that “the whole community” deplored the armed force’s actions, and that “their hatred and fear of ABRI” had reached a peak. Military personnel drafted in from outside Aceh were ignorant and neglectful of local customs and traditions, thus heightening the level of popular antipathy.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, over the last two years, an estimated 50,000 transmigrants, who came as part of Suharto’s [national] transmigration program in the 1980s and 1990s, were terrorized into leaving their homes in North, East, and Central Aceh. In September 1999, *The Jakarta Post* reported that thousands of Javanese transmigrants were fleeing North Aceh following harassment by the GAM including terrorization, extortion, and arson.<sup>51</sup>

Kell points out that one of the central elements of ABRI’s counterinsurgency strategy was the creation of village militias, which would help the army in its operations. In mid-1991, Ibrahim Hasan put their total strength at around 60,000 people. Rudimentary training was provided, but the Indonesian military took the precaution of arming the militiamen only with primitive weapons such as bamboo spears, not with firearms.<sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> Schulze explains that these militias were local defense groups of ethnically mixed villages and Javanese areas as they had been targeted by the GAM. These groups were established following the withdrawal of the non-organic TNI (the reinforcement of existing troops from outside the Aceh Province), which left the villagers feeling vulnerable.<sup>54</sup>

Village residents in Aceh were also drawn into the army’s “Integrated Territorial Activities Program,” a civic action operation described as part of ABRI’s “war for the people’s hearts”. Launched at the same time as the military onslaught in 1990, the program was concentrated in areas where the GAM had a strong presence, and consisted of the construction of village facilities and infrastructure. Rural development funds of a

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>51</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 261.

<sup>52</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 74.

<sup>53</sup> Kingsbury wrote that Aceh had about 10,000 militiamen operating under TNI instruction and used predominantly standard TNI-issue SS1 automatic assault weapons. Damien Kingsbury, *Routledge Curzon*, 2003: *Power Politics and the Indonesian Military*, p. 228.

<sup>54</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 263.

certain size were no longer put out to tender, but instead were handled directly by the military and local government authorities in charge of the program. A further element of these activities was “mental upgrading,” aimed at engendering a sense of national awareness and patriotism.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the Indonesian forces succeeded in their primary objective of neutralizing the military threat posed by the GAM.<sup>56</sup> The government’s response was successful in the short term. By the middle of 1991, the GAM’s activities were reduced to a minimum, and by the end of 1991, many of GAM’s field commanders had been captured or killed. However, the costs of the government’s response in human rights violations was immense, and the government’s brutality produced a deep-seated antipathy towards the government and heightened support for Acehese independence, and ultimately, contributed to the GAM’s third incarnation in 1999. Independent estimates of the death toll during the 1990-1992 period range from just under 2,000 to 10,000. The vast majority of deaths was caused by the government. Although human rights violations continued after 1993, only a handful of additional deaths were recorded.<sup>57</sup> According to the International Crisis Group, the number of casualties from the conflict between 1990 and 1998 was 1,000-3,000 killed, 900-1,400 missing and presumed dead, 500 maimed, and 700 dwellings torched.<sup>58</sup>

In sum, while in exile, Hasan di Tiro succeeded in recruiting, training, and developing a stronger second GAM using foreign assistance and diasporas with the objective of secession. The GAM received support from the Aceh population as a result of the resentment felt toward the central government and security forces, while previous factors, such as the scarcity of job opportunities and impoverishment became worse. The major cause of the population’s resentment was the injustice of revenue sharing, bad

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<sup>55</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehese Rebellion, 1989-1992*. Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, pp. 74, 75-76.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>57</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>58</sup> International Crisis Group Asia, Report No. 17, June 12, 2001, *Aceh: Why Military Won’t Bring Lasting Peace?*, p. 3.

performance, corruption, and the defection of the military, and anger related to military and police atrocities. The greed factor was not on the rebel's side, but on that of the government and military by keeping the economic incentives concerning Aceh resources.

## 5. The Third GAM

Although the GAM appeared to have been defeated militarily by the mid-1990s, the underlying economic and social grievances that made it popular had not been resolved by 1998. This was immediately evident, when, with the fall of Suharto, the Acehnese of diverse social backgrounds began to express their views openly again. Along with Aceh's reliance on natural resources, Aceh's conflict risk increased sharply in 1999, largely due to four developments: the economic crisis, a referendum on independence in East Timor, the proximity of the 1989 military operation, and the central government's decline in credibility.

East Timor's referendum was held in September 1999 and in the following month, there were massive rallies across Aceh in support of a similar referendum. In March 1999, Suharto's successor, B. J. Habibie, visited Aceh and pledged to aid the region's economy, to help children orphaned by the war against the GAM, and to establish a commission to examine human rights abuses by the security forces.<sup>59</sup> The promises went unfulfilled and only encouraged secessionist sentiment<sup>60</sup> and abated the central government's credibility.<sup>61</sup> The arrival of the Wahid presidency in October 1999 brought little relief even though the president declared that he would personally deal with the conflict in Aceh. Wahid had attended a ceremony only a month before his election in Aceh to launch the campaign for a referendum to give Aceh the option of independence or autonomy. Once in his office, however, he was prevailed upon to rescind that option.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 26.

<sup>60</sup> Mike Head, World Socialist Website, July 29, 1999; *A Military Massacre in Aceh*, Available at [<http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/jul1999/aceh-j29.shtml>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>61</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 26.

<sup>62</sup> International Crisis Group Asia, Report No. 17, June 12, 2001, *Aceh: Why Military Won't Bring Lasting Peace?*, p. 4.

The Acehnese, hence, had little reason to believe that the government's offer of regional autonomy would be kept. The discovery of a lot of evidence about the military's brutal legacy during the 1990-98 conflict made a renewed conflict more likely, due to widespread antipathy towards the Indonesian military. It also provided the GAM with a pool of willing recruits who aspired to take vengeance on the military.<sup>63</sup>

In early 1999, the GAM reappeared and began to grow more quickly than it ever had before. By July 1999, it reportedly had more than 800 men under arms, equipped with assault rifles and grenade launchers. Two years later, the GAM had 2-3,000 regular fighters, and an additional 12-24,000 militia members. It was reportedly in control of 80 percent of Aceh's villages. The main cause for the GAM's successful re-emergence may be the sharp change in public opinion about Aceh independence, caused by the factors outlined above: the economic crisis, which made independence and the retention of LNG revenues, seem more attractive, the revelations of human rights abuses, and the government's low credibility. This shift in public opinion made it easier for the GAM to recruit new members, and perhaps, to raise funds. At first, the GAM used force to conscript new members. Over time, however, it began successfully to recruit the children of people who had been killed or tortured by security forces under the DOM; offering them the opportunity to avenge their parents.<sup>64</sup>

The third GAM poses a greater threat to the central government as it has a more structured civilian administration and paramilitary organization and an ability to collect taxes. They divided Aceh into several bureaucratic and military regions with appointed leaders and commanders. The recruitment system for the paramilitary has been well established, which can be seen from three generations of fighters and the continuation of armed resistance even after the death of Panglima AGAM, the military wing of the GAM, on January 2002.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, in four Acehnese rebellions during the past 25 years, the central government was only able to resolve successfully the conflict during the first one. In the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>64</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 33.



last three stages of the GAM, the central government policies not only failed and worsened the conflicts, but also caused the GAM to grow stronger. Military-heavy options chosen by the central government were only able to eliminate lower level GAM members or sympathizers with a high cost impact of civilian casualties. On the other hand, the last negotiation offered by the government was misused by the GAM to strengthen their power. Additional factors leading to the re-emergence of the last stage of the GAM's boost in its spirit for struggle were unforeseen major changes in politics and the economy, which led to a national economic crisis, a less authoritarian central government, and East Timor independence.

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### **III. THEORIES ON GREED AND GRIEVANCE OF REBELLION AND THE RESOLUTION**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

A useful conceptual distinction in understanding the motivation of civil war is that between greed and grievance. Greed motivated conflicts mostly occur in resource-rich regions, where the adversaries try to occupy the resource. On the contrary, injustice, ethnic hatred, and revenge may cause grievance-motivated conflict. Understanding the cause of conflict in Aceh is crucial, as it will become a fundamental principle in determining how to resolve the dispute. In this chapter, I will discuss the conflict in Aceh by using a greed and grievance approach as a theoretical framework to address the conflict.

#### **B. GREED MOTIVES**

Collier finds that economic agendas appear to be central to understanding why civil wars begin. Conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance. If economic agendas are driving conflict, then it is likely that some groups are benefiting from conflict and that these groups, therefore, have some interest in initiating and sustaining it.<sup>65</sup> Accepting the findings of Collier and Hoeffler, Michael Ross studies the correlation between resource wealth and civil conflict and finds that resource extraction may contribute to civil conflict by offering rebels the opportunity to loot, and by creating grievances that exacerbate separatist tendencies.<sup>66</sup>

Colliers' finding corresponds with the ICG report which explains some possibilities of TNI economic interest in Aceh:

...For example, timber companies see advantage in employing former military officers to supervise their legal and illegal activities, and military

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<sup>65</sup> Paul Collier, The World Bank, April 10, 1999; Doing Well Out of War; NS-3042 Course Documents, Available on [[http://nps.blackboard.com/courses/1/NS3042\\_Mr/content/\\_105717\\_1/econagendas.pdf](http://nps.blackboard.com/courses/1/NS3042_Mr/content/_105717_1/econagendas.pdf)], p. 1, Accessed July 2003.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Ross, University of Michigan; *Natural Resources and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Case Studies*, p. 4.

backed businesses gain leverage in obtaining contracts because of the army presence and its ability to protect these business activities from other predatory forces.<sup>67</sup>

...ExxonMobil in Lhokseumawe, for example, pays the Indonesian state oil company, Pertamina, for limited logistical support to the approximately 1000 security forces assigned to protect the Arun gas fields. This support includes some vehicles, accommodation, food, water, fuel and a small stipend for individual soldiers. ... Continuing hostilities create an atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity. The vulnerability of the Lhokseumawe industrial complex and other industrial and commercial centres to attack by GAM makes their managers feel the need to seek additional security by paying local commanders to deploy soldiers to protect their enterprises. It can, therefore, be in the interest of the military if AGAM activity –within limits– continues in these areas.<sup>68</sup>

Michael Ross's finding about the rebel's opportunity to loot also corresponds to conflict reports in Aceh. It has been known that local taxes on individuals and business, crime, as well as the cultivation of marijuana and trade supports funding of the GAM. One of the GAM's *Panglima Sagoe*, who was captured by the military and police in a recent military operation, admitted that his members have raised funds by extorting money and collecting taxes from villagers.<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, Collier states that when the main grievances, inequality, political repression, and ethnic and religious divisions, are measured objectively, they provide no explanatory power in predicting rebellion. These objective grievances and hatreds simply cannot usually be the cause of violent conflict. They may well generate intense political conflict, but such conflict does not usually escalate into violent conflict. By contrast, economic characteristics, dependence on primary commodity exports, low average incomes, slow growth, and large diasporas, are all significant and powerful predictors of civil war.<sup>70</sup> Both Collier and Ross arguments can explain the cause of Aceh's conflict in different stages. In 1980s, Aceh's economy was stagnant, and Aceh's poverty rates were

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<sup>67</sup> *ICG Asia Report* No. 17, June 12, 2001, Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace, p. 12.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> *Serambi Indonesia*, June 4, 2003, "Panglima Sagoe mulai buka mulut (*Sagoe Commander Started to Speak*)", Available at [<http://indomedia.com/serambi/2003/06/040603h10.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>70</sup> Paul Collier, *Economic Causes of Civil Conflict*, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aal (eds), *Turbulence Peace*, United States Institute of Peace, 2001, p. 161.

among the lowest in the country,<sup>71</sup> Indonesia's national economy was dependent on natural resource exports with its resource exports-to-GDP ratio peaking at .252 in 1980,<sup>72</sup> and a large number of Acehnese lived in Malaysia. Therefore, Collier's argument emphasizing an economic factor may support the emergence of the second GAM. Ross's argument corresponds to the last development of the GAM as it gives GAM's members reason to loot as previously explained and as it also creates grievances that will be the next topic of discussion.

### C. GRIEVANCE MOTIVES

The greed of rebels is just one of many mechanisms that can account for a correlation between natural resources and conflict. There are many possible explanations between natural resources and conflict that do not imply that civil war is typically a result of greed. Natural resource dependence could, in fact, be associated with grievances rather than greed. Countries with middling levels of dependence on natural resources may be experiencing transitory inequality as part of the development process. Alternatively, extraction may produce grievances through forced migration. Or finally, natural resource wealth may be seen as more unjustly distributed than other wealth. Different explanations require different sorts of policy responses, beyond export diversification and cutting off rebel financing.<sup>73</sup>

A conflict emerges when members of one or more potential conflict parties develop a shared identity, generate a sense of grievance, form a goal that another party, being responsible for the grievance, is changed, and come to believe that they can bring about that change.<sup>74</sup> The first condition is that the parties to the conflict think of themselves as entities separate from each other.<sup>75</sup> The central government and the military believe that they guard the unity of the country and generally agree that the GAM is a separatist movement that must be crushed. Some Indonesian politicians

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<sup>71</sup> Michael Ross, University of Michigan, *Natural Resources and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Case Studies*, p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 24.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts, From Escalation to Resolution*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998, p. 91.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

analogize that the GAM is a naughty child in a family who should have his ear tweaked to behave properly, but some hawkish government officials insist that the GAM should be completely eradicated. The GAM's position is quite clear regarding its ideology as one of Acehnese nationalism and national liberation. It is ethnic and exclusive, drawing in particular on the Malay culture of its original support base, *suku* (tribe) Aceh, which is only one of nine *suku* in the province.<sup>76</sup> The GAM exclusiveness is also driven by pride and honor and has consequently "sought to differentiate itself from Indonesian nationalism in the fields of history and ethno-cultural identity".<sup>77</sup>

The second condition is that members of a possible adversary group feel aggrieved.<sup>78</sup> The GAM leadership, in particular Hasan di Tiro, has succeeded in indoctrinating his followers to portray Indonesian, and in particular Javanese, as a colonialist enemy. Human right abuses during past years helped the GAM leadership to create an enemy image of the Indonesian military. The GAM simply compare what the central government and military have done in Aceh with what the Dutch had done during colonial times and conclude that both are the same. Orphans and widows during years of conflict are easy to recruit for pursuing revenge to their fathers and husbands.

The third condition for a social conflict to arise is that members of the aggrieved conflict party develop goals opposing an adversary.<sup>79</sup> For the GAM leadership, the goal is fully and clearly articulated. That is, Aceh's independence, they believe, can be achieved by armed struggle. Despite some factionalizations within the GAM's organization and different thoughts of what kind of state Aceh would be, their common driving motivation for independence is disillusionment with Jakarta, hatred for Indonesia, and revenge.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003; The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 246.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts, From Escalation to Resolution*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998, p. 59.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 250.

The fourth condition is that members of the aggrieved party believe their actions can induce the other party to change.<sup>81</sup> The GAM always changes its tactics according to the conditions in the field. Besides directly attacking the central government and military targets, they have tried to attract and obtain support from the international community.

These four components are highly interdependent, affecting each other as a struggle becomes manifest. Each component is necessary, but none is sufficient by itself. Furthermore, various combinations of different levels of each can result in the initiation of a conflict. Together, they provide the impetus for at least one side to move against another, igniting a struggle.<sup>82</sup>

#### **D. OTHER INFLUENTIAL FACTORS**

##### **1. Environmental Scarcity**

Besides using greed and grievance as major explanations, I find that environmental factors cannot be ignored in explaining conflict in Aceh. Dixon develops a theory of the causal links between severe environmental scarcity and violence. He finds that environmental scarcity can contribute to civil violence, including insurgencies and ethnic clashes. Environmental scarcity is caused by the degradation and depletion of renewable resources, the increased demand for these resources, and/or their unequal distribution. These three sources of scarcity often interact and reinforce one another. Two kinds of interaction are particularly important: *resource capture* and *ecological marginalization*.<sup>83</sup>

Resource capture occurs when the degradation and depletion of a renewable resource interacts with population growth to encourage powerful groups within a society to shift resource distribution in their favor. These groups tighten their grip on the increasingly scarce resource and use this control to boost their wealth and power.<sup>84</sup> The central government policy from the 1970s until the 1990s was channeling almost all of the resource wealth to Jakarta. During the peak production of the natural gas facility, in

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<sup>81</sup> Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts, From Escalation to Resolution*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998, p. 59.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas F. Dixon, Homer, Princeton University Press, 1999, *Environmental, Scarcity, and Violence*, p. 177.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

fiscal year 1989-1999, only about five percent of total export revenue remained within Aceh,<sup>85</sup> and most of that was in the hands of mid-size enterprises owned mainly by non-indigenous Acehnese.<sup>86</sup>

Ecological marginalization occurs when unequal resource access combines with population growth to cause long-term migrations of people dependent on renewable resources for their livelihood.<sup>87</sup> Between 1974 and 1987, the district of North Aceh, which included PT Arun, Mobil's natural gas facility, rose in population from 490,000 to 750,000. Social amenities and infrastructures for workers and job-seekers were severely overstretched. Some 50,000 migrants from other parts of Indonesia had also come to Aceh, largely attracted by the oil and gas boom. Rapid urbanization, the incursion of the non-Acehnese, land seizures, pollution, and competition for jobs in the industrial sector all contributed to tensions that may have contributed to the GAM's 1989 incarnation.<sup>88</sup>

Dixon identifies three main kinds of conflict that might arise from environmental scarcity: simple-scarcity conflict, group-identity conflict, and insurgencies. Simple-scarcity conflict is an inter-state resource war motivated by one country's determination to seize another country's natural resources. The natural resources could be nonrenewable, such as oil, or renewable, such as agriculturally productive land, forests, river water, and fish.<sup>89</sup> The GAM under Hasan Tiro's indoctrination believes that they are citizens of the *State of Aceh* that was declared in 1976. Therefore, they are not part of Indonesia to which they refer as another country that came to Aceh to occupy the natural resources.

Group-identity conflicts arise from the large-scale movements of populations that can be caused, in part, by environmental scarcity. As different ethnic and cultural groups are propelled together under stressful circumstances, inter-group hostility with a strong identity dynamic is often seen. Group-identity conflicts happen when a population leaves

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<sup>85</sup> See *Table 1*.

<sup>86</sup> Sylvia Tiwon, *Inside Indonesia* 62, April-June 1999; *From Heroes to Rebels*, Available at [<http://www.insideindonesia.org/edit62/sylvia1.htm>], Accessed September 2003 and November 2003.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas F. Dixon, Homer, Princeton University Press, 1999, *Environmental, Scarcity, and Violence*, p. 177.

<sup>88</sup> Michael L. Ross, Department of Political Science UCLA, November 7, 2002, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.



its land of insufficient resources in search of a new place. A clash of cultures can happen if the newcomers and the indigenous population cannot or will not accommodate each other.<sup>90</sup> In one instance of land appropriation, 400 families were moved to make way for the ASEAN Aceh Fertilizer plant, but the resettlement site quickly became deserted either because villagers failed to make the transition to new livelihoods or because promises of new land were not fulfilled.<sup>91</sup>

Insurgency occurs when a group who, through a combination of grievance and opportunity, challenge the ruling authority. Perceptual differences of the treatment of a particular group can bring about a group grievance. Grievance and opportunity can grow easily in a suppressed society and can be exacerbated by environmental scarcity. While economic hardship does not relate to violence, people will tend to act more violent when they feel there is an unfair economic balance favoring other groups. Frequently, middle income or elite groups, not the poorest group, will initiate the insurgency. This group challenges the ruling government because it cannot see any peaceful way to change the situation.<sup>92</sup> In Aceh's case, Hasan Tiro is the middle class or elite group's leader who initiates the GAM's rebellion and it is hard to imagine the foundation of the GAM without his efforts. However, Hasan Tiro has never tried to challenge the central government through political struggle, perhaps because, he had realized that the ruling regime might have acknowledged him as an enemy.

## **2. Creation of Enemy Images**

Acehnese had undergone decades of struggle against the Dutch. Even until the early years of Indonesian independence, they still had to fight along other provinces to prevent the return of the colonials and among themselves in competing for domestic power. The prolonged experience of struggle created an enemy image of colonialism within many Acehnese. Images of an enemy can form as a response to the persistently aggressive actions of another state or group. Once formed, enemy images tend to become

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-137.

<sup>91</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehnese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 16.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

deeply rooted and resistant to change, even when one adversary attempts to signal a change in intent. The images themselves then contribute autonomously to the perpetuation and to the intensification of conflict.<sup>93</sup>

During the 58 years of Indonesian independence, the Acehnese in general had only enjoyed peace for about 18 years (1949-1953 and 1962-1976). Other provinces, except Irian Jaya, have never experienced a conflict during these 58 years of independence. Therefore, Aceh has experienced peace for only one-third of the time since independence compared to other provinces. Hasan Tiro easily triggered perpetual conflict with the central government with many abuses during military campaigns to stereotype the Indonesian military as enemy images of colonialism. The GAM and AGAM statements are riddled with references to the Indonesian colonial forces, the Indonesian colonial state, the “plight of the Acehnese people who are still living under the boots of Indonesian colonialism,” and that “the current war in Aceh is against colonialism of the neo-colonialist regime of Indonesia.”<sup>94</sup>

#### **E. ADDRESSING THE CONFLICT**

As conflict in Aceh escalated into an unacceptable stage, in which the central government’s credibility as a legal authority was undermined, corrective action was unavoidable. The central government needed to launch an integrated operation in order to restore law and order in Aceh. On one occasion, the Coordinating Minister of Politic and Security said that there would be no more negotiations with the GAM. However, based on lessons learnt from the success and failure of previous policies in Aceh, the last policy was not sufficient to create a sustainable peace in this fragile region. Therefore, the central government must address a policy beyond the planned integrated operation.

By comparing the strength of the Indonesian military (40,000 troops and police force) and the GAM (5,000 fighters and supporters), I calculate that the military will be able to restore some law and order in Aceh, and by then, I assume that Aceh would be a post-conflict environment in need of reconstruction. A joint project of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Association of the United States Army issued a Task

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<sup>93</sup> Janice Gross Stein: Image, Identity, and the Resolution of Violent Conflict, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aal (eds), *Turbulence Peace*, United States Institute of Peace, 2001, p. 190.

<sup>94</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, p. 247.

Framework for post-conflict reconstruction. The framework tasks are organized around four distinct issues areas, or “pillars”: security, justice/reconciliation, social/economic well being, and governance/participation.<sup>95</sup> Some pillars have already been partially covered within the government’s integrated operation. However, the justice and reconciliation pillar has not been fully pursued and the implementation of other pillars needs to be adjusted. Despite the fact that the first rebellion and the last three stages of the GAM have various differences, the history of conflict in Aceh shows that the first rebellion could have been settled by reconciliation while the subsequent conflicts have dragged on until present day.

After violent outbursts, after campaigns that are episodes within an extended struggle, and after a struggle that is waged for decades, conflicts cease and there is an outcome. The outcome may be the basis of new fights but also the foundation for integrative relationships. The outcome of the last failed GAM-government negotiations obviously was a new clash between the GAM and the military and more casualties. I suggest that while sustaining military pressure, the central government should keep the option for the GAM to talk and reconcile open. The government’s offering must contain several benefits for the GAM, either politically or economically. At the same time, the government needs to prove its willingness to develop the rural community. This community development should include fighting impoverishment and unemployment, and taking care of widows and orphans of conflict victims.

The government and military would not be able to resolve the conflict in Aceh without the involvement of other areas of society. The government, military, and people have proven their ability to unite on several past important events, namely the struggle for independence and the fight against communism. Aceh’s reconstruction needs collaborative<sup>96</sup> action from all areas of the community, including the Acehnese and the private sectors.

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<sup>95</sup> *Post Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework*, May 2002, NS-3026/Prof. Karen Guttieri’s Course Material.

<sup>96</sup> I borrow the term *collaboration* from Strauss’ book, which means: “the process people employ when working together in a group, organization, or community to plan, create, solve problems, and make decisions, David Strauss, Berett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, *How to Make collaboration Work*, p. 5.

Though enemy images are stable, there are conditions that can bring about change in these images. Large amounts of contradictory data, especially when it occurs in large batches, are likely to trigger change. Incremental amounts of data over a period of time can also bring about an evolutionary change in attitudes towards the object of an enemy image.<sup>97</sup> When community development achieves favorable results, it will change the hostile image of the Indonesian government and military.

Furthermore, Stein offers three strategies for managing and reducing conflict.<sup>98</sup>

### **1. Irrevocable Commitment**

When leaders recognize that misperception and stereotyping govern their adversary's judgments as well as their own, they can try to reassure their adversary of their benign intentions and to create incentives for conflict reduction by making an irrevocable commitment.

### **2. Graduated Reduction in International Tension**

The initiator of this strategy announces the beginning of a series of steps to deescalate a conflict. After each step, the initiator offers the other side an opportunity to reciprocate in an unspecified manner. The strategy does not require the initiator to cease to act prudently if confronted by actions by the other side to exploit conciliation at the expense of the initial defensive capabilities.

### **3. Reciprocal Strategy with a Lag in Retaliation and Return to Conciliation**

This strategy involves hesitating before either retaliating or conciliating the action of the other side. By allowing a lag to impose itself between these actions, this strategy gives the other side an opportunity to correct initial misperception and to engage in learning.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

Whatever policy the government or military will take, the initial step would be to build trust between the government and military on the one hand, and the Acehnese or GAM on the other. If the government and military leaderships possess a strong will to pursue these goals and can be convinced to follow this path, they will be able to win the

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<sup>97</sup> Janice Gross Stein, *Image, Identity, and the Resolution of Violent Conflict*, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aal (eds), *Turbulence Peace*, United States Institute of Peace, 2001, pp. 196-197.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202 and NS-4235 Course Material by Professor Dombroski.

hearts and mind of the Acehnese. Moreover, it will be an added plus for reconciliation offered by the government to the rebels. Overall, collaborative action to develop a community will diminish the possible greed factor, while justice and reconciliation are delivered to end the grievance factor.

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## **IV. THE STRUCTURE OF THE GAM AND THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The ancient Sun Tzu says: “Know your enemies then you will be able to defeat them,”<sup>99</sup> while an old Indonesian proverb says: if you do not know each other, how can you love each other? The first is used to conquer and defeat an adversary, while the latter is used to create relationships and friendships. For years, conflict in Aceh has been more the former rather than the latter. During the history of this conflict, the central government seems to not necessarily understand the enemy, and then simply called the GAM rebels, GPK/B (*Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan/Bersenjata*=Security/Armed Disruptive Movements), separatists, and later terrorists. This chapter examines some aspects of the GAM, such as its charismatic leader, the organization, and the strategy, in which they are able to parallel the provincial and central government. This chapter also discusses the government policies from the beginnings of the conflict until its latest operation.

### **B. THE STRUCTURE OF THE GAM**

#### **1. Hasan di Tiro**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the most prominent figure in the GAM is Dr. Muhammad Hasan di Tiro, a descendent of the Tiro families. Tiro is a district located in the Pidie regency, in the northeastern part of Aceh. He was born in 1930 and was the grandson of Teuku Cik di Tiro, who was considered to be of a blue blood family in Aceh. The Acehnese honor Tiro’s descents with heroic prestige as the past six members of Tiro’s family were martyred in the struggle against Dutch colonialism. Hasan Tiro was educated in the United States at the Department of Public Law and Government, Columbia University and the Department of Political Philosophy and International Relations, Fordham University. His scholarly works include over two dozen books on the subjects of jurisprudence, history, politics, political sociology, and religion with a special concentration on his areas of interest of Southeast Asia and the

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<sup>99</sup> Sun-tzu, *The Art of War*, Copyright 1994 by Ralph D. Sawyer, Barnes & Noble Books, p. 179. The original passage is: “Thus it is said that one who knows the enemy and knows himself will not be endangered in a hundred engagements...”.

Muslim World.<sup>100</sup> He married an American woman with a son and this marriage, according to Ibrahim Alfian, an Acehnese scholar at the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, undermined his position as Walinegara of the Acehnese Kingdom.<sup>101</sup> Although he uses the title “Teungku,” reserved for respected men of Islam, Hasan di Tiro cannot by any reasonable measure be described as a religious leader.<sup>102</sup> His opinions differ from other ulamas in Aceh who issued a statement in October 15, 1945 to be loyal to the Indonesian Republic. His plea to Daud Beureueh, leader of the Aceh first rebellion in the 1950s, to support his armed struggle was also rejected. Hasan Tiro fought with the GAM in the jungle during the initial struggle, and later, has commanded the GAM in the field from his exile in Sweden. Obviously, even in his late 70s, Hasan Tiro is still a charismatic, powerful, and the most influential figure of the GAM.

## 2. Organization

Over the years, the GAM has succeeded in building its structure of civilian government and paramilitary organization. The organization model represents their strategy, trying to confront the central government authority at every level of command or bureaucracy. Similar to the structure of the present government, the lowest level of the GAM’s structure is a village led by a *geutjhik*, who is assisted by a *waki* (deputy) and counseled by four *tuha puët* (eldermen). The respective structures of the upper hierarchy are *mukim*, *sagoe*, and *nanggroe*, ultimately responsible to the *Wali Negara* (Head of State), which has been Hasan Tiro himself. This civilian structure is shadowed by an AGAM (*Angkatan GAM*=military wing of GAM) paramilitary structure. However, the exiled leadership is in overall command of the operations on the ground, which allows for the emergence of a by-pass mechanism from Sweden to the regional command (*panglima wilayah*) or vice versa. The GAM and AGAM/TNA (*Tentara Nasional Aceh*=Aceh National Armed Forces) can effectively be divided into four broad categories: the ideological hard-liners who favor military action, the ideological moderates who prefer dialog and referendum, the broken-hearted (*sakit hati*) GAM who want revenge, and the

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<sup>100</sup> Available at [[http://www.asnlf.com/asnlf\\_int/frame\\_ges\\_int/frame\\_int.htm](http://www.asnlf.com/asnlf_int/frame_ges_int/frame_int.htm)], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>101</sup> *The Star Online*, September 14, 2003; Andreas Harsono: “Starting from kilometer zero”, p. 9, Available at [<http://thestar.com.my/services/printerfriendly.asp?file=/2003/9/14/features/5941366.asp>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>102</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, *Rawan* is as *Rawan* Does: The Origins of Disorder in New Order Aceh,” p. 133. In his book, Nazaruddin differentiates between *ulama* (=religious scholar, usually chose offices which dealt with religious affairs) and *zuama* (=religious leader, normally engage in secular agencies), see: *The Republican Revolt*, pp. 7 and 339.



“economic” GAM who are driven by the desire for financial gain.<sup>103</sup> Being divided into categories does not mean that they fight separately. They are joined by a similar challenge: confront Indonesian authority.

### **3. Strategy**

Basically, the GAM has been using the principles of guerilla strategy and tactics. The GAM is very confident with these strategies and tactics as they know that it has worked for 27 years. Sun Tzu’s lessons relates to guerilla tactics and states: “All warfare is based on deception; if they are united, cause them to be separated; attack where they are unprepared; go forth where they will not expect it; if they are strong, avoid them.”<sup>104</sup> The GAM uses exactly the same tactic as stated by its commander and members:

When they advance, we retreat; when they leave, we return. When they grow tired or weak or careless, we attack. We don’t have to win the war, we only have to stop them from winning.<sup>105</sup>

The GAM’s insurgency is dedicated to the destruction of the existing political or social or economic system. Although not intended to win the war, the GAM insurgency actions have had certain obvious military objectives: to obtain weapons, ammunition and supplies, and to inflict casualties. Instead of winning the war, the GAM strategy focuses more on psychological and political objectives by weakening the morale of the government and its soldiers, strains the financial resources of the regime, and increases political pressure on it by creating widespread apprehension and dissatisfaction with the progress of a war in which there is no progress, and no end in sight. Besides mobilizing domestic support and learning from the success of East Timor, the GAM has pursued foreign and international support. According to its strategy and tactics, the GAM has been implementing several steps to achieve their objectives.

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<sup>103</sup> Kirsten E. Schulze, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 26, 2003, The Struggle for an Independent Aceh: The Ideology, Capacity, and Strategy of GAM, pp. 254-255.

<sup>104</sup> Sun-tzu, *The Art of War*, Copyright 1994 by Ralph D. Sawyer, Barnes & Noble Books, p. 168.

<sup>105</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 2, 2003; William Nessen, “On the Run in Aceh,” Available at [sfgate.com/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/11/02/CM280194.DTL], Accessed November 2003, Accessed November 2003.

**a. Destruct Political and Social Structure of the Existing Government**

The GAM uses intimidation and ultimatums to force people to not support the formal government. The GAM controlled or influenced 80% of the villages in Aceh in 2001<sup>106</sup> and tried to repeat a similar strategy in 2002. During the conflict, 150 village-level government employees were murdered, and another village head was killed even during the “Integrated Operation.”<sup>107</sup> In 2003, 76 village heads issued a written statement to resign from their jobs, because they had been warned and felt that their lives were threatened by the GAM<sup>108</sup>. The GAM assumes that the formal government education system has been corrupting the Acehnese younger generations and the only way to halt that process is by destroying schools. The GAM accused the TNI of committing the arson, but the police captured a suspect who confessed that he, along with 14 others, were ordered and would be paid by the GAM to burn the school.<sup>109</sup> Over the past four years, some 50 teachers have been killed and 200 others have been physically assaulted,<sup>110</sup> 603 schools were burned<sup>111</sup> and until this year, the assassination of teachers still occurred.<sup>112</sup>

**b. Destruct the Existing Economic System**

The GAM has been expressing their grievances about foreign companies operating in Aceh and consider the industrial complex to be their legal victim. This vulnerable target, spread over about 80 kilometers and operated by Pertamina and

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<sup>106</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, June 12, 2001, “Aceh: Why Military Force Won’t Bring Lasting Peace?”, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> *Kompas*, October 7, 2003, “Lagi, Kepala Desa di Aceh Tewas Ditembak,” Available at [<http://www.kompas.com>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>108</sup> *Kompas*, June 9, 2003, “76 Kepala Desa di Bireun Mundur (76 village heads in Bireun resign),” Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0306/09/utama/>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>109</sup> *Serambi Indonesia*, September 9, 2003, “Pembakar Sekolah dibawa ke lokasi (School-Burn Suspect is Brought to the location),” Available at [<http://indonesia.com/serambi/2003/09/050903h13.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>110</sup> *The Jakarta Post*, September 16, 2002, “50 Teachers Killed Recently in Aceh,” Available at [<http://www.thejakartapost.com/Archives/ArchivesDet2.asp?FileID=20020916.D07>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>111</sup> *IOM Banda Aceh*, Maps of IDPs, Camps and Burnt Schools in Aceh, Indonesia, Date: August 11, 2003. According this report 552 units have been repaired, Available at [[http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wMaps/IndonesiaMap+of+IDPs,+camps+and+burnt+schools+in+Aceh,+Indonesia,+IOM+Banda+Aceh,+11+August+2003,+pdf+130+kb+/\\$file/IDPs\\_Aceh\\_11Aug03.pdf](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wMaps/IndonesiaMap+of+IDPs,+camps+and+burnt+schools+in+Aceh,+Indonesia,+IOM+Banda+Aceh,+11+August+2003,+pdf+130+kb+/$file/IDPs_Aceh_11Aug03.pdf)], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, June 16, 2003: “Dua Guru di Aceh Barat Daya Tewas Ditembak (Two School Teachers in Southwest Aceh Were Shot To Death) and July 30, 2003: “Lagi, Guru Tewas Ditembak (Again, A School Teacher Was Shot To Death),” Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/utama/news/0306/16/205403.htm>] and [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0307/30/nasional/460970.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

ExxonMobil, including its employees, has been attacked for years. As a result, ExxonMobil had to stop its production in 2001 and has planned to move its operational office to Jakarta in 2003.

**c. *Assault on the Javanese in Aceh***

In mid-1999, the GAM forced at least 15,000 Javanese, some of whom had lived in Aceh since the 1970s, out of their homes.<sup>113</sup> In June 2001, violence in the ethnically mixed Aceh-Gayo-Javanese areas of Central Aceh, many of whom had been in Aceh for generations since the Dutch period, reached unprecedented levels with clashes between the GAM and local village defense groups. An estimated 64 people were killed over a two-week period, of whom 50 were Javanese, which also resulted in the burning of an estimated 1,000 houses.<sup>114</sup> Statements from all the GAM leadership, including their sympathizers on their websites, articulate their deep grievances toward the Javanese that is unlikely to be cured. Their words are colored with insults that tend to be racist. The grievance of the GAM leadership toward the Indonesians, and specifically towards the Javanese, trickles down to any GAM members and creates an acute enemy image of colonialism, in which the Javanese must be ousted or eliminated from their land.

**d. *Weaken the Morale of the Government and Its Soldiers***

Many government employees were also targeted, such as the domestic government owned television crew and legislature members. A large number of Acehese politicians and intellectuals have been killed over the past three years. One of them was Professor Dayan Dawood, head of the Syiah Kuala University in Banda Aceh, who was murdered in September 2001. Before his death, he received a letter from the GAM that demanded millions or he would be targeted.<sup>115</sup> The GAM has made it clear that politicians supporting Jakarta are siding with the enemy and are, therefore, considered legitimate targets.<sup>116</sup> The GAM has successfully overcome its shortage of troops by unpredicted assaults towards off-duty military personnel and police as well as their installation. By retreating to the remote jungle and mountainous areas, the GAM

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<sup>113</sup> Michael Ross, *Resources and Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 38.

<sup>114</sup> Schulze, p. 261.

<sup>115</sup> *Kompas*, September 8, 2001, "Dayan Dawood Did Complain About Life Threat", Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas%2Dcetak/0109/08/english/daya.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>116</sup> Schulze, p. 260.

forces over extend the military's lines so that its communications may be disrupted and small units picked off, one at a time, by locally superior GAM forces. During a four-month period of the integrated operation, 66 Indonesian soldiers and police were killed,<sup>117</sup> which means one casualty every two days.

***e. Increase Political Pressure Toward Existing Government***

The central government and the military often see students and NGO leaders, who have been outspoken in opposing military operations, as being tools of the GAM. The political groups seem to act side-by-side with armed struggle to oppose the central government. While the military wing confronts the soldier and police, these groups apply political pressure on the government and actively campaign to gain the support of the local population and Acehnese diasporas. The largest student organization is the Centre for an Aceh Referendum, known by its Indonesian acronym, *SIRA*. Formed in January 1999, apparently inspired by President Habibie's offer of a referendum to East Timor, the SIRA organized mass rallies in Banda Aceh in November 1999 and November 2000 to demand a referendum for Aceh. Although it seemed to be a more "democratic and just" way of resolving the conflict by determining the wishes of the people, the ultimate goal was the same as the referendum to include an independence option, which was also the goal of the GAM. Some individuals and organizations are still continuing the pressure on the government by rallying to commemorate the GAM's independence day<sup>118</sup> and supporting GAM's finances.<sup>119</sup> The largest component of the GAM's strategy aims to: first, raise the level of violence that will invite the international community to intervene, and second, violence by the security forces will confirm the validity of the GAM's narrative of the conflict and that Aceh's independence is the only solution.<sup>120</sup> The GAM has welcomed many foreign journalists who visited their compound and then

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<sup>117</sup> *HRW Report*, October 2003, "Aceh Under Martial Law: Can These Men Be Trusted to Prosecute This War?," Available at [<http://hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/indonesia1003.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>118</sup> *Kompas*, August 13, 2003 and October 13, 2003, in which a state court accused Cut Nurasyikin for commemorating GAM's independence day and sentenced Reza Pahlevi for organizing an illegal rally.

<sup>119</sup> *Kompas*, October 10, 2003, Teuku Adnansyah, Chairman of *Bintang Reformasi* Party Was Accused of Being a GAM Financial Donator.

<sup>120</sup> Schulze, p. 262.

report their struggles to attract the international community. The last journalist who visited the GAM was William Nessen, who stayed with the GAM for weeks and then was deported after being sentenced and charged with immigration offences.<sup>121</sup>

Ross's paper explains four strategies of the latest GAM. The first is a propaganda campaign that extols Aceh's glorious history and suggests a "miscount" comparison to Brunei. The second is to mobilize public opinion against the Indonesian government by denouncing, and possibly provoking, military repression. The third is to encourage villagers to move into refugee camps to create a refugee crisis that would draw international attention to Aceh, and the fourth is to drive the Javanese settlers out of Aceh.<sup>122</sup> Regarding the second strategy, a GAM commander made an important statement:

We know from experience how the security apparatus will respond [to our activities]. They will kill civilians and burn their homes. This makes the people more loyal to GAM. And the people in Jakarta and outside can see that we are serious about our struggle. This is part of the guerilla strategy.<sup>123</sup>

#### **4. Finance<sup>124</sup>**

The financing for GAM comes from taxes, government funding, humanitarian aid, Acehnese diasporas, and some criminal activities. Considering themselves to be a legitimate state in Aceh, the GAM feels that collecting taxes from the Acehnese, called *pajak nanggroe* (state tax), is licit. An estimated 20% of the central government's annual fund for village development is diverted from each original targeted projected and goes to the GAM.<sup>125</sup> These two sources have two likely explanations. First, it is only possible if there is cooperation between the GAM and the population, or second, the population must contribute as a result of being threatened by the GAM. The GAM was also suspected of siphoning off 50-70% from humanitarian assistance programs that poured

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<sup>121</sup> *BBC News*, August 6, 2003: "US reporter Tells of Life in Aceh", Available at [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3128265.stm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>122</sup> Michael Ross, *Resources and Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Schulze, pp. 257-258.

<sup>125</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 16, 2000; Anthony Reid: "Which Way Aceh?", Available at [<http://proquest.umi.com/>], Accessed September 2003.

into Aceh. Another source is contributions from the Acehnese diasporas living in Malaysia, who number at least 5,000 in Kuala Lumpur alone, including as well Singapore and Europe. There are also finances derived from kidnapping for ransom, extortion, general crime, and the profits from the cultivation of marijuana and trade.<sup>126</sup>

## **5. Arms<sup>127</sup>**

Most observers estimate that the AGAM has between 1,000 and 1,500 modern firearms and a few grenade launchers, and even fewer rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and perhaps, one or two 60mm mortars.<sup>128</sup> The GAM claims it has the experience available to make explosives and has used mechanical as well as electronic triggers, including cell phones.<sup>129</sup> This claim should be accurate as a GAM member, Tengku Wahab testified and was ordered to the Labuhan Deli area in Medan to disrupt local security in March 31, 2003.<sup>130</sup> The GAM purchases its armaments mainly from illegal traders. In 2001 and 2002, Thai police seized 68 AK47, 5 RPD machine guns, several grenades, and thousands of AK47 bullets on their way to Aceh.<sup>131</sup> The number of such that have been successfully smuggled can be much more considering the vast sea shore in the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean surrounding Aceh. Adequate surveillance of the straights, a traditional avenue of transit between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, was almost impossible. In addition, according to an official from the ASNLF (Acheh-Sumatra National Liberation Front=GAM's own official name), it was not always necessary to buy guns smuggled from overseas. Although difficult to clarify, it was quite possible, he said, to buy Indonesian-made small arms direct from the defense department's own factory, PT Pindad, in Bandung, Java, through corrupt generals.<sup>132</sup>

## **6. International Support**

In his speech on November 13, 1991, Hasan Tiro explicitly stated that the avenue for solution in Aceh is the United Nation or United States intervention to sponsor a

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<sup>126</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, June 12, 2001; "Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace?", p. 8.

<sup>127</sup> Schulze, p. 258.

<sup>128</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, June 12, 2001; "Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace?", p. 7.

<sup>129</sup> Schulze, p. 258.

<sup>130</sup> *Kompas*, April 25, 2003, "Polda Sumut tetapkan lima tersangka peledakan bom (North Sumatra Police Determined 5 Bomb Suspects), Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>131</sup> Schulze, p. 258.

<sup>132</sup> Damien Kingsbury, RoutledgeCurzon, 2003: *Power Politics and the Indonesian Military*, p. 209.

plebiscite for Aceh's freedom.<sup>133</sup> However, after decades of struggle, the GAM has not received enough support from the international community as they had expected. About 800 Acehnese are believed to have been trained in Libya in the mid to late 1980s and Hasan Tiro stayed there as well to teach the GAM's version of history and politics.<sup>134</sup> Support from Libya from President Muammar Khadafi to the GAM formally ended when President Megawati visited Tripoli in September 2003, in which Khadafi said that he backs Indonesian unity and will not help any rebels.<sup>135</sup> A further 115 GAM members have reportedly been trained in the Philippines by Muslim guerillas in Mindanao and some have also reportedly been trained in Afghanistan.<sup>136</sup> Thus far, the GAM leaderships have enjoyed their freedom in Sweden, where Indonesian authorities have not been able to charge them. Moreover, some human right agencies and independent journalists in the United States, Australia, and Europe have supported the GAM by attacking every government policy.

## **C. THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

### **1. Military Options**

Military operations always cause victims on both sides in addition to civilian casualties caught in the middle. There are also always physical as well as psychological damages, displaced persons, and the loss of properties. Since the first rebellion in Aceh, the military option has never been absent from government policies. The success of the military option has varied from time to time, but there have always been casualties and damages. The number of casualties is contested but seems to range between 1,500 and 10,000 killed. These data do not include all the cases of rape and torture or reflect the trauma and fear of the population. Most Indonesians, particularly the military, cannot grasp these facts by simply stating that it was the consequences of war. However, President Habibie admitted the mistakes of the past and promised to redress them. Even General Wiranto, then Minister for Defense and Security and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, was forced to acknowledge these excesses on 7 August 1998 by

<sup>133</sup> Available at [[http://www.asnlf.com/asnlf\\_int/frame\\_ges\\_int/frame\\_int.htm](http://www.asnlf.com/asnlf_int/frame_ges_int/frame_int.htm)], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>134</sup> Schulze, pp. 244-245, The number of "Libyan Graduates" varies related to different sources: 5,000 (di Tiro), 1,500 (Malik Mahmud), 700-800 (observers), 583-595 (Indonesian military).

<sup>135</sup> *Kompas*, September 27, 2003, "Megawati: Khadafy menentang pemberontakan di (Reject Rebellion In) Indonesia, Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>136</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, June 12, 2001; "Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace?", p. 3.

apologizing and withdrawing the Area of Military Operations (DOM) status and ordered the withdrawal of all troops from outside Aceh by the end of the month.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, in the history of Aceh, the military operation has always left a legacy of violence, casualties, and traumatized victims on both sides as well as civilian victims. After the failure of negotiations in May this year in Tokyo, the government policy was to launch an “Integrated Operation”, a security approach supposed to be balanced or followed by humanitarian efforts, law enforcement, and governance. However, the use of military force seems to dominate the operation, while only small part of the other components are implemented. The military proposed a budget of 1.23 trillion *rupiahs* for six months of operation<sup>138</sup>, or around one-tenth of the annual military budget, and since May, it has cost the lives of 304 civilians, 63 soldiers and police, and 839 GAM.<sup>139</sup>

## 2. Negotiations and Peace Talks

Throughout the history of Aceh’s conflict, negotiations took place during the first and the last rebellions. Negotiations during the first rebellion took almost five years before a full settlement was attained in 1962. Several attempts to negotiate and construct a peace agreement, however, failed during the last rebellion.

### a. *Peace Settlement in the First Rebellion*

During the first rebellion, although the peace formula offered by the Aceh Regimental Commander Sjammaun Gaharu initially angered the rebel leader Daud Beureueh, he allowed his followers to discuss the formula and continue the negotiations. The negotiations produced the Lam Teh Agreement in mid-April 1957, in which both parties agreed to cease military and hostile movements while talks towards a permanent settlement were under way.<sup>140</sup> The Acehese insurgency was eventually brought to an end through a combination of security measures and negotiations, ending in an agreement in May 1959 that conferred special status on Aceh, *daerah istimewa*, autonomy in matters

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> *Kompas*, May 12, 2003, “TNI Minta Tambahan Dana Untuk Operasi di Aceh”, Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/utama/news/0305/12/090031.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>139</sup> *Kompas*, September 24, 2003, “Pengakuan TNI soal 304 korban sipil kemajuan sikap TNI,” Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0309/24/nasional/578191.htm>]. Data from *Koalisi NGO HAM* (NGO Coalition for Human Rights) are 82 civilians, 53 TNI/police, and 220 GAM, Available at [<http://www.koalisi-ham.org/>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>140</sup> Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985, *The Republican Revolt*, p. 263.



of religion, *adat* (customary) law, and education.<sup>141</sup> More than 12,000 *Darul Islam* soldiers, bringing with them more than 1,000 arms, had returned by December 1961.<sup>142</sup> Many ex-rebels in Aceh were recruited into the local military units, while many of the civil servants returned to their previous departments.<sup>143</sup> Even the Commander of the Aceh Islamic Armed Forces, Colonel Hasan Saleh, rejoined the Indonesian Armed Forces and retained the rank of colonel.<sup>144</sup>

**b. Negotiation Under President Wahid**

The initiative to talk with the GAM came from President Wahid's administration by inviting the HDC (Henri Dunant Center), a Geneva-based non-governmental organization. The result, on 12 May 2000, was the "Joint Understanding on a Humanitarian Pause for Aceh" that went into effect in June for three months, which was extended in September until January 2001. A monitoring team, composed of people chosen by each side and approved by the other, was created and was supposed to investigate violations.<sup>145</sup> This agreement eventually dissolved due to two factors. First, each side accused the other of violations and the monitoring team was unable to address the violations. Second, there was a dispute between the central government and the GAM over the topics that should be discussed during the negotiations. As violence escalated, President Wahid resisted declaring a state of emergency, but issued Presidential Instruction (*Inpres*) No. 4 on 11 April 2001 instead. Supposed to be a six-point plan for ending the conflict, including measures to address political, economic, social, legal, public order, security, and information aspects, the *Inpres* ended up being little more than a green light for a new round of military operations.<sup>146</sup> At that time, it had been known that the relationship between President Wahid and the military was not harmonious.

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<sup>141</sup> Schulze, p. 242.

<sup>142</sup> Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt*, p. 310.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>144</sup> M. Djali Yusuf, *Perekat Hati yang Tercabik* (Bond of Torn Heart), p. 50.

<sup>145</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, February 27, 2003; "Aceh: A Fragile Peace?", p. 2.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

*c. Negotiation Under President Megawati*<sup>147</sup>

The Megawati government took office on 23 July 2001 and throughout late 2001 and early 2002, major military operations continued in Aceh, even as the government pursued new approaches to dialogue. Three sets of discussions took place in Geneva, in February, May, and December 2002. Both sides again accepted the HDC and four foreign advisers were added<sup>148</sup> as mediators. The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) was to start with a two-month confidence building phase from 9 December 2002 to 9 February 2003, in which both parties requested that “no party undertake any action which is inconsistent with this Agreement and may jeopardize the future security and welfare of the people of Aceh”. A Joint Security Committee (JSC) was established on 20 December 2002 with a mandate to monitor the security situations and investigate violations followed by a deployment of Thai and Filipino soldiers as observers. Moreover, on 3 December, a group of donors, co-chaired by Japan, the United States, the European Union, and the World Bank, met in Tokyo for the Preparatory Conference on Peace and Reconstruction in Aceh, anticipating a positive outcome of the new round.

Yet, the general effect of the signing of the Agreement had been widespread optimism verging on euphoria throughout the entire province, because the Agreement is already perceived to be a peace agreement. There was a dramatic reduction in the incidence of killings in the province. These positive developments could have gained tremendous momentum, but unfortunately, that did not happen. Instead, the process became bogged down, and at one point, it became difficult to see how it could still go forward.<sup>149</sup>

Indeed, both parties interpreted the negotiations differently. First, the GAM was looking for a formula in which the present acceptance of autonomy would leave open the possibility for future independence, while the Indonesian side wanted a commitment to autonomy, not as a starting point but as the end point. Second, the GAM

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-12.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. The four advisers are former Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan, retired Gen. Anthony Zinni from the US, the former Yugoslav foreign minister and ambassador to Jakarta Budimir Loncar, and Lord Avebury from Britain.

<sup>149</sup> Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, *The Aceh Conflict: The Long Road to Peace*, Available at [[http://www.thejakartapost.com/long\\_road.asp](http://www.thejakartapost.com/long_road.asp)], Accessed October 2003.

and military interpreted the term relocation of troops differently. The GAM understood the term relocation to mean dismantling all military posts, while government negotiators saw “relocation” as only moving posts in peace zones further away if they were too close to the GAM posts. Even the provincial military commander, Major General Djali Yusuf, implied that “relocation” was simply a question of changing their posture from offensive to defensive. Third, during the 2004 elections, government officials maintained that elections would be held in Aceh under national law, while the GAM prefers to interpret “election” as a “referendum”.

It did not take long before the Indonesian military and the GAM accused each other of cease-fire violations. There were press reports of civilians intimidating members of the Joint Security Committee, a charge that the military denied.<sup>150</sup> Non-governmental sources, local parliamentarians, and pro-independence supporters reported in late January 2003 that the GAM was conducting a public disinformation campaign to promote a public perception that the final result of the implementation of the agreement would be independence for Aceh, and the GAM had reestablished administrative control over villages that military operations had forced them to leave in 2001.<sup>151</sup>

The government registered a strong protest and demanded a meeting with the Joint Council, which is composed of high officials of the government, the GAM, and the HDC. There were disputes then about the time and place of the meeting. When both parties finally agreed to meet in Tokyo on 17-18 May 2003, the result was not unexpected: the Joint Council in Tokyo failed to reach an agreement. In his remarks, the Indonesian representative Wiryono Sastrohandoyo stated:

.....let me reiterate and make clear my government's firm position, that it is absolutely imperative that the purpose of this meeting is to secure the explicit statement of GAM to accept fully the NAD Law within the framework of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia, and therefore abandon its effort for independence of Aceh from the Republic of Indonesia, and it will begin to place all of its weapons, ammunitions and ordnance, without delay, in accordance with the procedure laid down in

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, February 27, 2003, “Aceh: A Fragile Peace?”, p. 12.

the COHA. If GAM is willing to explicitly pronounce its statement regarding these basic points, then we can proceed to discuss and agree on how to resume the implementation of COHA.<sup>152</sup>

On the other hand, the GAM spokesman, Baktiar Abdullah, stated that the most difficult thing is to be forced to accept autonomy, to dismiss the GAM, and to dismiss the TNA. Aceh has its own history, and they are ready to fight against colonialism, while Zaini Abdullah added that they prefer to die than live under colonialism, and that is the character of Aceh's nation.<sup>153</sup>

As the negotiations failed, on 6 May, President Megawati announced what many Acehnese had been dreading: an “integrated operation” in which the restoration of security would be combined with humanitarian, law enforcement, and governance elements.<sup>154</sup>

### **3. Autonomy**

The autonomy granted for Aceh in the 1950s, in fact, was never implemented as the central government had tightly held its power. In 1999, President Habibie's government designed decentralization laws (Laws No. 22 and 25 of 1999) that gave all of Indonesia's regional and local governments extensive powers and enables them to retain much of the income from the natural resources in their own region. In addition, Aceh was given Law No. 44 of 1999 that affirmed Aceh's right to organize its own religious, cultural, and educational affairs.<sup>155</sup>

In August 2001, President Megawati signed a law that granted “special autonomy” to Aceh (Law No. 18 of 2001), giving Aceh control of 70 percent of its oil and gas revenues for eight years, after which the arrangement would be subject to review. It would also partially implement Islamic law in Aceh, establish Islamic courts, introduce direct elections for the province's governor, and give the governor greater control over

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<sup>152</sup> *Remarks by Ambassador S. Wiryo at the Joint Council Meeting on the Resumption of Dialogue with GAM in Tokyo, 18 May 2003*, Available at [[www.kbri-canberra.org.au/s\\_issues/aceh/articles/030518tokyo.htm](http://www.kbri-canberra.org.au/s_issues/aceh/articles/030518tokyo.htm)], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>153</sup> *Kompas*, May 20, 2003, “Pertemuan RI-GAM Tokyo gagal capai kesepakatan (RI-GAM Meeting Failed to Reach Consensus)”.

<sup>154</sup> *ICG Indonesia Briefing Paper*, May 9, 2003, “Aceh: Why the Military Options Still Won't Work?”, p. 2.

<sup>155</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, June 27, 2001, “Aceh: Can Autonomy Stem the Conflict?”, p. 5.

the Acehese police.<sup>156</sup> In nominal (current price) terms, the sum of the total revenues accruing to the provincial and municipal governments is estimated to increase by over 150% between 1999/2000 and 2001.<sup>157</sup> While this law provides enormous opportunities for the future development of Aceh, three critical challenges must be overcome to achieve the full implementation of the law.<sup>158</sup>

The first obstacle is a lack of provincial regulations to implement the law, e.g., direct elections of the governor, regents, and mayors. This law can only begin to be fully effective after the enactment of the multiplicity of provincial regulations, called *Qanuns* in Aceh. However, the *Qanun*, in order to define the details of the direct election, has not yet been passed by the provincial parliament.

The second obstacle regarding the special autonomy package is the uncertainty over the roles of the governor and the regents. The existing autonomy law (No. 22/1999) gives principal authority to regents and mayors in managing financial and administrative affairs, whereas the Law No. 18/2001 gives some of this power to the governor. This uncertainty needs to be resolved through consultation leading to the enactment of the appropriate *Qanuns*.

The third challenge is to find ways to accommodate regional aspirations such as those of the GAM in the formal political system. The law on political parties does not recognize a regional party as a contestant in the general election. Thus, the fact that the GAM's support base is in Aceh limits its opportunity to form a political party and contest an election. It is difficult to imagine that the GAM would join existing national parties. The latest autonomy law does not address this issue either. Moreover, Article 12 of this law says that one requirement for a person to be nominated as a governor candidate is that he or she had never been a foreign citizen. In addition, Indonesian election law says only citizens can vote. This obstacle blocks the opportunity of the GAM's leaders to participate in any political activities, because all of the GAM's top leaders hold foreign citizenship. The nominal leader, Hasan di Tiro, is a Swedish citizen, the GAM's Foreign

<sup>156</sup> Michael L. Ross, *Resources and Rebellions in Aceh, Indonesia*, p. 39.

<sup>157</sup> See Dr. Arthur J. Mann, IRIS (Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector) Consultant, 2001, *Indonesia: Fiscal Decentralization and Revenue Projections for the Province of Aceh 2001-2005*, p. 32.

<sup>158</sup> *The World Bank*, January 2003, Brief for the Consultative Group on Indonesia: Promoting Peaceful Development in Aceh, pp. 21-23.

Minister Zaini Abdullah is a Malaysian citizen, and the GAM's Prime Minister Malik Mahmud is actually a Singaporean citizen. The government gave the Acehnese the chance to elect their own leader, but outlawed the elections of "brothers" from outside the country.

The first obstacle can be resolved at the provincial level, while the central government must take action to resolve the other two obstacles. Provincial leaders in both the executive and legislative branches must work closely with the central government and the national parliament. Transparency is essential to avoid both the reality and the appearance of closed decision-making by political elites.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The leadership, organization, and strategy of the GAM indicate that they are driven more by grievance than economic motives. The leadership sturdily insists on its goal for independence and consistently uses its propaganda of a glorious history, a prosperous future, and the hated enemy image. The core organization in exile is solid and untouchable and in the field is flexible according to territory occupation. They use any possible strategy, from conventional guerilla tactics to political mobilization, or the manipulation of the Acehnese population if necessary. In fact, based on numbers and armaments, the GAM is unable to win a military contest with the government. The GAM, can, however, make the Indonesian government's effort to crush it painful and costly.<sup>159</sup> On the other hand, since the first GAM, albeit there was some improvement in the last operation, government policies have not significantly changed. Until the present operation, the military operation has dominated government policies and the efforts to address other aspects of the Integrated Operation have not demonstrated better results. Therefore, the security approach in terms of military operations is necessary to confront the escalation of separatist movements and to establish law and order in Aceh. Nevertheless, the military itself is not sufficient to resolve the conflict in Aceh, and therefore, more than military operations are needed, and by then also, it will be beyond the military's capability.

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<sup>159</sup> Barbara S. Harvey, Center for Strategic Studies of The CAN Corporation, September 2002, *The Future of Indonesia as a Unitary State: Separatism and Decentralization*, p. 16.

## **V. GOVERNMENT OPTIONS TO ADDRESS THE CONFLICT IN ACEH**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Over time, the conflict in Aceh has become more complex, has multiple-interrelated causes, and beyond the capability of a single institution to resolve. It is a kind of vicious circle that is difficult to sever, in which one aspect depends on another. The Government's latest options were the launching of an "Integrated Operation" consisting of humanitarian aid, law enforcement, consolidation of government components, and the restoration of security. As part of this operation, the government declared Aceh a military emergency region for a six month period starting in May 19, 2003. This chapter will partly discuss this government option regarding the post-conflict reconstruction framework of security, reconciliation, socio-economic rehabilitation, governance/participation, as well as other possible options.

### **B. USE OF FORCE TO RESTORE SECURITY**

A state has the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Of course, force is not the only means at the state's disposal, but force is a means specific to the state.<sup>160</sup> Therefore, military force is an important means to confront an armed struggle in Aceh that threatens the unity of Indonesia. With the failure of mediation and negotiations in Tokyo in May 2003, the use of military force was then unavoidable. No government in the world will tolerate a guerilla movement on its soil. The TNI should provide security in Aceh as it is a prerequisite for the implementation of other programs. Unfortunately, previous experiences have demonstrated that the military operation has always had undesirable results. When confronted with the GAM during its first and second phases, the TNI succeeded in providing security only for a short time and eventually produced a stronger GAM. During DOM, the TNI exacerbated the existing problem with human right violations. Under the Security and Defense Law, one of the TNI's duties is to uphold the integrity and sovereignty of Indonesia. I assume that the TNI still places this duty above any other interests. Therefore, as the success of resolving the conflict in Aceh will risk the integrity of Indonesia, the TNI should pursue every

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<sup>160</sup> Max Weber, *Politic as a Vocation*, p. 1, NS-3023/Prof. Ziblatt's Course Materials.

effort to bring a sustainable peace to Aceh. In her article, Sidney Jones writes that the military will need to avoid repeating the mistakes it has made in the past in conducting security operations, if it is going to have any chance of rebuilding credibility and trust in Aceh.<sup>161</sup> I will discuss some of her suggestions below while stating my own opinion which is different from the others.

### **1. Improve Soldiers and Police Professionalism**

Improving professionalism can be done with initial training as well as subsequent education. Soldiers must know how, when, why, and who they are to shoot. They must know how to defeat their enemy, protect the mission and themselves. They must understand the rules of engagement. They should understand the law of war, humanity as well as state and military laws. Every field commander is responsible for explaining the overall goal of the operation as well as the strategy and tactics to every single soldier. I assume that every TNI soldier has acknowledged all of those resources. However, every soldier deployed to Aceh must receive specific explanations about the background of the conflict in Aceh and the socio-cultural beliefs of the Acehnese. Without relaxing their awareness in the battlefield, they must be reminded that one of their jobs is to protect civilians, and therefore, shooting or behaving harshly towards them must be forbidden and any such actions reported. They must also acknowledge that they will be taken to military court if they violate the law and break the military code of conduct (*Sapta Marga*=Seven Ways) or the soldier's oath (*Sumpah Prajurit*). Similarly, the police must be retrained about specific issues related to special knowledge about Aceh. The Army Chief of Staff explained that discipline issues caused 70% of army casualties during the conflict.<sup>162</sup> Inspired by that result and in striving for professionalism, the Army has been preparing ten army-raider battalions.<sup>163</sup>

The TNI leadership has emphasized the importance of the good conduct of soldier on several occasions. During his visit to Aceh, the TNI Commander, General Endriartono Sutarto, described a soldier that extorts money illegally from citizens as a

<sup>161</sup> *ICG Indonesia*: "Avoid Past Mistakes If Military Option Inevitable; Comment by Sidney Jones in the Jakarta Post, Available at [<http://www.intl-crisis-group.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=959>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>162</sup> *Kompas*, August 27, 2003, "KSAD: 70% Korban Pertempuran Akibat Disiplin Rendah," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/utama/news/0308/27/221901.htm>], Accessed September 2003

<sup>163</sup> *Kompas*, July 26, 2003, "Siap, 10 Batalyon Raiders," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0307/26/nasional/455006.htm>], Accessed September 2003.



traitor.<sup>164</sup> Previously, the Aceh Military Emergency Commander stated that he would punish the TNI and police members as well as civil servants who supported timber and marijuana smuggling from Aceh or were involved in bringing illegal commodities from Sabang Freeport to Aceh.<sup>165</sup> The messages from the leaderships are very clear that they will not tolerate any violations by their subordinates.

The role of the individual soldier and police as the main actor in the field is obvious. In addition, to be able to perform their duties to the best of their abilities, they should have the appropriate equipment. In a guerilla war, the enemy may confront them in unpredictable ways during the day or night. Therefore, a soldier and the police in a combat area should be equipped with a bulletproof jacket and helmet, an infrared guided rifle for precision aim, and personal night goggles and binoculars for night operations. Troops should be able to communicate clearly and easily among themselves as well as with their unit or command post with the slightest possibility of the communications being jammed or intercepted. Although an effort was made to obtain this goal by ordering 5,000 SS-2 rifles from Pindad,<sup>166</sup> in fact, the TNI has lacked modern weapons due to the limited budget of the military.

Will skillful and well-equipped soldiers and police guarantee their peak performance? I believe it will not unless their basic needs are fulfilled. They need to be paid adequately to cover their expenses and to take care of their families. How can troops concentrate on their tasks if, at the same time, they have to think about their families? The low salary of military personnel, in addition to the police and civil servants, has always been mentioned in many articles discussing the Indonesian Armed Forces. In 1996, Lowrey writes:

The reality is that most government employees in Indonesia live beyond their visible means of support. Historically, allowing them to pursue extra income, whether by moonlighting, by exploiting government assets or by

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<sup>164</sup> *Kompas*, October 16, 2003, "Panglima TNI: Pengkhianat Bila Oknum TNI Pungli," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>165</sup> *Kompas*, October 2, 2003, "Akan Ditindak, Aparat TNI/Polri yang terlibat Mafia Penyelundupan," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>166</sup> *Kompas*, September 11, 2003, "TNI akan pakai senjata SS-2," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0309/11/nasional/557820.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

graft and corruption, has been accepted as the way people are rewarded for services to the ruler, but the practice causes problems in a number of ways.<sup>167</sup>

Kingsbury raises the same issue by stating that “salaries for junior TNI personnel do not adequately cover their living costs, especially for those with families.”<sup>168</sup> *Kompas* also articulated about the minimum salary and compensation for soldiers in the battlefield when the government decided to purchase Russian warplanes this year.<sup>169</sup> An insufficient budget for the military was even reported in 1957, when the military commander of North Sumatra smuggled out thousands of tons of rubber and coffee from the port of Teluk Nibung. The smuggling was said to be justified by the concern of local military leaders about their soldiers’ state of welfare, for which funds from Jakarta were quite inadequate.<sup>170</sup> Albeit the denials from many in the TNI leadership, I believe that professionalisation generally is hampered by low pay rates and by conditions which meet basic human needs but often fail to satisfy grander personal aspirations<sup>171</sup> as well as an inadequate military budget. For almost the last decade, the TNI has received an insufficient budget, and in fiscal year 2003, the government can only provide one-third of the defense budget proposed by the TNI. The TNI’s low annual budget for years has been eroding its general performance as well as individual capability as part of the entire system. Therefore, the shortfall of the budget has curbed the demand to improve soldier and police professionalism.

## **2. Reduce Troops As Soon As Possible**

Theoretically, once the security in certain districts or regencies has been established, troops shall be withdrawn immediately and leave the duties to the police. The problem in Aceh, and generally for the Indonesian police, is that there are not enough police. In a normal situation, soldiers are usually added to reinforce the police. Since Aceh is under martial law, it is likely that soldiers will be more dominant than the police. However, with the progress of security in most of Aceh, wherever a

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<sup>167</sup> Robert Lowrey, Allen and Unwind, 1996, *The Armed Forces of Indonesia*, p. 132.

<sup>168</sup> Damien Kingsbury, *The Political Economy of the TNI*, p. 191.

<sup>169</sup> *Kompas*, June 13, 2003, “Sukhoi dan Mimimnya Uang Operasi Prajurit.

<sup>170</sup> Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt*, p. 257.

<sup>171</sup> Robert Lowrey, Allen and Unwind, 1996, *The Armed Forces of Indonesia*, p. 133.

region is classified as a white area, reducing the number of troops to a minimal number is a wise decision as it would economically decrease the cost of war and reduce the temptations of troops towards misconduct due to prolonged duties.

### **3. Publish Rules of Engagement**

Civilians, not just soldiers, should clearly understand what the rules of engagement are, and these should be published in the national and local media and disseminated as widely as possible through other means.<sup>172</sup> The TNI leadership should support and implement this idea, so civilians are able to evaluate the contents and to file a complaint or report if soldiers do not follow the appropriate rules. Assisted by the International Red Cross (IRC), the TNI headquarters published a pocket guidance book for field operations concerning human rights and international law.<sup>173</sup> The TNI may seek further cooperation with the IRC to produce and distribute the rules of engagement.

### **4. Do Not Use Civilian Auxiliaries or Militias**

In local terms, civilians used by the military are called *cuak*, while those used by the GAM are known as *cantoi*. As reported by *Kontras*, many *cuaks* have been executed while many others have been isolated, as they became enemies of the GAM and their victim's families,<sup>174</sup> but at the same time, *Kontras* did not report any data about *cantoi*. *Kompas* reported *cantoi* participated in the present operations as two high school students were captured by the military, which they claimed were GAM informants.<sup>175</sup> Although the GAM has reportedly used informants to receive advanced warnings of attacks, the TNI should not do the same. Not only does this encourage abuse but it also creates long-term problems with post-conflict reconciliation.<sup>176</sup> I discuss some issues about the militias in Chapter II as well. The ICG worried that the TNI would establish militias in Aceh again as they reported the presence of militias in Aceh in 1990.<sup>177</sup> Kingsbury, who

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<sup>172</sup> *ICG Indonesia*, "Avoid Past Mistakes if Military Option Inevitable; Comment by Sidney Jones in the Jakarta Post."

<sup>173</sup> *Kompas*, June 13, 2003, "Antara Nyawa dan Penjara," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0306/13/sorotan/367899.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>174</sup> *Kontras*, No. 116 Tahun II, 20-27 December 2000, "Merekrut Cuak, Menuai Mayat," Available at [<http://www.indonesia.com/serambi/kontras/116/lap2.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>175</sup> *Kompas*, October 25, 2003, "Kepala Dinas Pendidikan Pidie Ditahan", Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *ICG Asia Report*, June 12, 2001, "Aceh: Why Military Force Won't Bring Lasting Peace?", p. 19.

himself made a field trip to Aceh,<sup>178</sup> stated that the militia was trained by the Army Special Forces and armed with SS-1 rifles<sup>179</sup>, while Schulze explains this differently.<sup>180</sup> Stating that those militias are not armed with weapons, Kell explains that the purpose of the militias was to accompany the army, in which the ordinary villagers would participate in sweeps of areas believed to be inhabited by guerillas.<sup>181</sup> A different definition about the term “militia” seems to have caused foreign journalists as well as some NGOs and government to perceive the situation differently. Journalists and NGOs feel the militias in Aceh were trained and used by the TNI to fight the GAM. On the other hand, training and supervising a neighborhood to protect their property and their lives from any threat are part of the general duty of the TNI. It is logical thinking and it is understandable if a community decides to protect their own neighborhood and property as long as they do not violate the law, for instance, by possessing firearms. According to *Radio Nederland*, a person from a community in Takengon, among other things, stated:

We do not have any relationship and do not want to be related with ABRI. Like you, we only want peace. We have never taught, armed, or used by TNI. Journalists only worsen us.

The Army even burned their firearms on one occasion.<sup>182</sup> Nevertheless, under the law, protecting the people is the primary job of the TNI and police as well as is training and preparing the people for defending the country.

## 5. Budget Transparencies

It is necessary to ensure that the budget and operating expenses for military operations are fully transparent to root out possible corruption in the security forces.<sup>183</sup> Although Indonesia has Law No. 31 of 1999 about anti-corruption and recently the House of Representatives have been preparing a draft for the Law of Corruption Eradication, corruption is widespread in Indonesia. The lack of transparency is one cause of the very

<sup>178</sup> He does not specify exactly when he made his trip to Aceh, but I believe that he traveled sometimes between 2001 and 2003.

<sup>179</sup> Damien Kingsbury, *Power Politics and the Indonesian Military*, pp. 107 and 228.

<sup>180</sup> See *Chapter II*, p. 11.

<sup>181</sup> Tim Kell, *The Roots of Acehese Rebellion, 1989-1992*, p. 75.

<sup>182</sup> Joss Wibisono, June 27, 2003, “Milisi Aceh Tengah, Lain Sejarahnya, tapi Sama Fungsinya”, Available at [<http://www.rnw.nl/ranesi/html/milisi.html>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>183</sup> *ICG Indonesia*: “Avoid Past Mistakes If Military Option Inevitable, Comment by Sidney Jones in the Jakarta Post.”

high incidence of corruption in Indonesia and a foreign report places Indonesia 88 out of 102 countries.<sup>184</sup> Teten Masduki, coordinator of the Indonesian Corruption Watch, said that at every level, whether it is bureaucratic, political or judicial, corruption is the day-to-day means to make money.<sup>185</sup> Kwik Kian Gie, Minister of National Development Plan, stated that KKN, the Indonesian acronym for corruption, collusion, and nepotism, is the root of all evils. Corruption has become more rampant, brutal, and destructive. KKN continues to steal and spread into the minds of the population as well as their culture, lifestyle, and values. Therefore, eradicating KKN must be done immediately not only by rhetoric and slogans, but through a tangible plan of action. He proposed a carrot and stick method to fight KKN. The carrot is an incentive in terms of sufficient net income for all state employees, while the stick is a more robust punishment as far as the death penalty is concerned. The anti-KKN program can only succeed, he added, if it is started at the highest level of leadership.<sup>186</sup> The TNI may also face such a problem. The BPK (*Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan*=State Audit Agency) reported a large financial misappropriation by almost all state institutions, including the TNI.<sup>187</sup> Therefore, it is unlikely for there to be transparency in the budget and operating expenses for the military operations in Aceh. In fact, the TNI has a good chance to lead a war against corruption and encourage budget transparency in Aceh since the TNI Commander acts as the highest authority in the military emergency region and holds both the military and civilians accountable.

## **6. Prosecute Violators of the Law and Military Code of Conduct and Soldier's Oath**

In the beginning of the latest operation, the TNI leaderships stated that they would behave different from the previous leadership. To an extent, a commitment made by the TNI leadership has implemented this policy in the field. Three soldiers from Battalion

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<sup>184</sup> *Kompas*, November 1, 2003, "Indeks Pertumbuhan RI rendah," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0311/01/utama/662236.htm>], Accessed November 2003.

<sup>185</sup> *Go Asia Pacific Breaking News*, "International Report Puts Indonesia High on List of Corrupt Nations," Available at [[http://abc.net.au/asiapacific/news/GoAsiaPacificBNA\\_961878.htm](http://abc.net.au/asiapacific/news/GoAsiaPacificBNA_961878.htm)], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>186</sup> *Kompas*, October 4 and 19, 2003, "Kwik: Korupsi Tambah Ganas dan Brutal" and "Kwik, KKN Sumber Segala Permasalahan," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/>] and [<http://www.kompas.com/utama/news/0310/19/040724.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>187</sup> *Tempo*, September 17, 2002, "BPK Temukan Penyimpangan APBN Sebesar Rp.985, 621 Triliun," Available at [<http://www.tempo.co.id/news/2002/9/17/1,1,5,id.html>], Accessed October 2003.

144 were sent to prison by a military court on June 11, 2003, for beating villagers in Lawang, Bireuen<sup>188</sup> and three from Battalion 411 were fired and sentenced to jail on July 19, 2003 after being found guilty of rape in Alue Lhok, North Aceh.<sup>189</sup> The TNI Commander stated that he will administratively sanction Battalion Commanders who cannot control and discipline their subordinates.<sup>190</sup> A joint investigation team established by the Military Emergency authority has sanctioned police and soldiers at checkpoint posts for asking for ‘pocket money’.<sup>191</sup> The investigation and prosecution of the misconduct of soldiers must be augmented in order to erase some of the TNI’s bad reputation that it gained in the past and to successfully win the hearts and minds of the Acehnese.

#### **7. Keep Conduct of Military Operations Subject to Regular and Frequent Review by Civilians**

The Indonesian House Representative (*DPR-RI*) has several rights that it is able to invoke to perform their tasks and exercise their authority. Among these rights are the right of interpellation to the president, the right of inquiry, and the right of summons or subpoena. In June of this year, Committee I of the *DPR-RI* established a Working Committee that called a number of government officials, mainly the Indonesian Minister of Industry and Trade, to explain the government’s decision to counter-trade military aircraft with Russia. Therefore, whenever necessary, the *DPR-RI* can do the same thing in the case of military operations in Aceh by holding the Indonesian Armed Force accountable for its actions.

#### **8. Use of Mobil Brigade (*Brimob*)**

The *Brimob* was accused of having the unenviable reputation towards abusive behavior and its members tend to be younger, with less training and experience, than soldiers, and their commanders appear unable to prevent their preying on civilians when

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<sup>188</sup> *Kompas*, June 13, 2003, “Dilema Seorang Prajurit,” Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0306/13/nasional/367899.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>189</sup> *Tempo Interaktif*, June 19, 2003, “Tiga Prajurit TNI Divonis Penjara dan Dipecat”, Available at [<http://www.tempo.co.id/harian/fokus/2007/2,1,71,id.html>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>190</sup> *Kompas*, September 20, 2003, “Akan Diadili, 12 Prajurit Penganiaya,” Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0309/20/nasional/573285.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>191</sup> *Kompas*, October 26, 2003, “Tim PDMD NAD Tilang Pelaku Pungli”, Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

they are not engaged in combat.<sup>192</sup> I suggest that this accusation might be true for some units of the *Brimob*, but not for all. Despite the fact that the *Brimob* has weaknesses, it possesses strengths as well. The *Brimob*'s overall strength consists of 10,000<sup>193</sup> and its role and capability in counter-insurgency cannot be undermined and therefore, their presence is still needed to augment the TNI. I may agree to reduce their participation in the operation, but I do not support the idea of excluding them all as it will significantly weaken the strength of the government forces. By implementing a more robust sanction toward disobedient troops, I believe that the *Brimob* would perform better.

### **9. Access for Journalists and Independent Observers**

On June 16, 2003, the Indonesian government issued Presidential Decree No. 43 of 2003, which states in Section 2 that first, international and local NGO are not allowed to conduct any activities against the goals of the State of Emergency with the status of Martial Law in the NAD Province. Second, any humanitarian assistance coming from other countries, world organizations, both foreign as well as national in the NAD Province, are to be coordinated by the Coordinating Minister for Public Welfare on behalf of the President as the Central Military Emergency Authority.<sup>194</sup> Repeating the steps suggested by Sidney Jones, a Human Rights Watch paper organization recommends and asks for immediate and unimpeded access throughout Aceh.<sup>195</sup>

The government is unlikely to accept these recommendations anytime soon. The government policy to restrict independent journalists is not new to Indonesian history and is driven by past experiences. The first reason, I believe, is that the government and military simply cannot protect the life of foreigners and journalists in such a conflicted area as Aceh. The death of five television newsmen in Balibo, East Timor on October 16, 1975 had a great impact, even decades afterwards. One of the cameramen was Brian Peters, a Briton working for a Sydney-based television company. Brian's loss was

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<sup>192</sup> ICG *Indonesia*, "Avoid Past Mistakes If Military Option Inevitable; Comment by Sidney Jones in the Jakarta Post.

<sup>193</sup> Robert Lowrey, *The Armed Forces of Indonesia*, p. 111.

<sup>194</sup> President of the Republic of Indonesia Presidential Decree No. 43 Year 2003, Unofficial Translation, available at [<http://www.kbri-canberra.org.au/regulasi/keppres432003e.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>195</sup> Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, September 2003, "*Aceh Under Martial Law: Unnecessary and Dangerous Restrictions on International Humanitarian Access*," Available at [<http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/aceh0903-bck.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

dreadful for his family and inspired his sister to investigate and take some actions that influenced the British government's policy towards Indonesia in 1998.<sup>196</sup> On September 6, 2000, in a riot in Atambua, near the border of East Timor, two UNHCR workers were murdered. In its report, *Tapol*, a UK-based NGO called for the dismissal of the regional TNI commander and that more responsibility is given to the TNI leadership in East Timor.<sup>197</sup> In Aceh, Indonesian soldiers due to miscommunication between themselves shot a couple of German tourists. The man was killed and the woman wounded.<sup>198</sup> An American journalist was reported to have illegally entered the GAM camp for weeks and was trapped between the two conflicting parties.<sup>199</sup> The two cases in East Timor demonstrated the TNI's inability to protect foreigners in the conflicted area might become a serious problem in the future. The other two cases in Aceh reminded the TNI that the safest way to deal with the foreigners in the conflicted area is to restrict them despite the fact that it might restrict their freedom.

Although security is necessary and paramount as a precondition before the subsequent phase of reconstruction, unfortunately, the TNI has never gained an outright foothold in Aceh. In every phase, the GAM has always been able to disperse and hide in the jungle and mountainous areas and then reorganize into a better structure. After East Timor independence, the GAM has inherited moral strength realizing that the TNI was "defeated", as they had to withdraw from East Timor and many of the TNI and police members have been facing human rights tribunal court. The GAM also calculated that the central government has been suffering economically due to the 1998 economic crisis and the legacy of a huge amount of debt inherited from the previous government. The GAM had also received greater support from the population. Moreover, they felt that the Indonesian TNI and police was morally worse as some of them were undisciplined and

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<sup>196</sup> Maureen Tolfree, Balibo: The Cover-up that Led to Genocide, in Paul Hainsworth and Stephen McClosky (eds.), I. B. Tauris, 2000, *The East Timor Question*, Chapter 4.

<sup>197</sup> *Tapol*, Bulletin Online 159, September 2000, "TNI-Backed Militias Murder UNHCR Workers," Available at [<http://tapol.gn.apc.org/159NTNI.HTM>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>198</sup> *CNN.com*, June 5, 2003, "German Tourists Shot in Aceh," Available at [<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/06/04/indo.germans/>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>199</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 2, 2003, William Nessen: "On the Run in Aceh," Available at [[sfgate.com/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/11/02/CM280194.DTL](http://sfgate.com/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2003/11/02/CM280194.DTL)], Accessed November 2003.



even the GAM could purchase weapons from some of them. The GAM leadership was very confident by saying that they had fought for 27 years, so why should they give up at this time?

On the other hand, the results from the TNI's last operation were tremendous. They succeeded in reoccupying hundreds of villages that were previously controlled by the GAM. Many GAM members were shot, captured, or surrendered as were their supporters and sympathizers. The TNI has been able to perform better by punishing some of its soldiers who violated the law during the operation. The central government was trying to demonstrate that they have not yet been economically bankrupt by purchasing some military aircraft from Russia. Above all, Indonesian politicians and the majority of the population have the same and strong commitment about the unity of Indonesia and not allowing Aceh to secede.

Overall, both sides have their weaknesses albeit they have claims to success. For a long time in the future, however, I believe that neither side has a chance of winning the war. The GAM has not received any support from the international community.<sup>200</sup> Domestic support also has been decreasing after some of the captured or surrendered GAM members stated that the GAM also violated human rights. Their propaganda of future wealth similar to Brunei was proven false. On the other hand, the capability of the TNI to maintain their performance for a long time is in doubt. The financial cost of war and the budget needed for reconstruction will cause problems for the government. Over time, low salaries and unfinished conflict will easily lead to troop misconduct. After almost five months of military operations, no high ranking officer of the GAM has been captured.

Therefore, both sides will experience hardship in continuing the conflict. However, the GAM has a greater advantage as they do not need to conquer the military to win the war. All they need is to just keep on existing and wait until the military and government ease or collapse.

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<sup>200</sup> GAM trained its fighters at Libya in the 1980s but recently President Khadaffy supports Indonesian unity. GAM unanimously stated that they have been acknowledged by Vanuatu in addition to receiving a lot of support from individuals and human rights organizations.

## **B. RECONCILIATION**

The government and military should realize that they have no chance of winning the war by merely pursuing military options. By understanding this reality, then they need to seek other options in addressing the conflict. In the first place, I propose reconciliation with the GAM. Reconciliation is a long-term process and requires strong will as well as the sincerity and desire to sacrifice personal or group interests. It took years in South Africa and required five years to calm down the first rebellion in Aceh.

The last negotiations between the GAM and the government failed because the government asked the GAM to lay down its weapons and surrender. This was totally rejected by the GAM and they insisted on continuing to fight. In fact, reconciliation between the government and the GAM is unlikely to happen as long as the GAM insists on its demand to secede and be independent. Although both sides seemed to have a contradictory demand, I assume that the ultimate goal is the same. I believe that both sides want to bring peace and welfare to Aceh. The Indonesian government states that goal in its Constitution of 1945, and although there have been many deviations and weaknesses in the implementation, at least there has been a transition to progress. Examples are the decentralization and autonomy given to some provinces, and specifically the *syariah* law in Aceh amid several discrepancies in the implementation. The military has also been trying to improve their conduct, although this has not been completely perfect.

The failed negotiations might be caused by not enough incentives for the GAM to surrender. The government only asked them to lay down their weapons and accept autonomy, and the GAM saw no benefit for themselves. I propose an end to the conflict by offering incentives to the GAM, both to the leadership in exile and to the GAM members in the field.

Two absolute prerequisites for this policy are first, an irrevocable commitment from the government, in this case for the President to end the hostilities with Hasan Tiro as the top leader of the GAM, and second, the government should initiate several steps to begin building trust.

## 1. End the Leadership Hostilities

Not many leaders were able to pursue this attitude. In 1997, President Sadat of Egypt took a dramatic step when he decided to go to Jerusalem and speak to the Knesset of the Egyptian terms for peace. President Sadat had learned that his long hostilities with Israel would not give Egypt a victory. Therefore, he adopted a strategy to end hostilities with Israel by changing the enemy images of the Israelis.<sup>201</sup> Recognizing that black resistance to the white power monopoly would only increase, President de Klerk of South Africa, despite his conservative reputation, began the process of ending apartheid in 1990.<sup>202</sup> His successor, President Nelson Mandela, established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that grants amnesty to those who confess their roles in full during the apartheid era.<sup>203</sup> Both F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

To begin to settle the first rebellion, the military commander in Aceh took steps to establish personal contacts with the rebel leaders at the end of December 1956, although this was also part of his personal strategy within the internal political and military struggle. In February 1957, he publicly announced his formula settlement called the Wise and Principal Policy, in which he “wisely” offered the rebels an opportunity to “return to the fold of the motherland”, while reserving for the government the “principle” to use force if necessary.<sup>204</sup>

The will and wisdom of the Indonesian leadership to end hostilities, as the Egyptian and South African leaderships had done, are needed to change the image of all Acehnese as well as the GAM leadership toward the central government from the colonial era to nation-brotherhood. The proposal basically offers the GAM leadership amnesty and restores their citizenship. Restoring their citizenship means returning their political rights as well as their duty to uphold Indonesian law. The government should

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<sup>201</sup> Janice Gross Stein: Image, Identity, and the Resolution of Violent Conflict, in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aal (eds), *Turbulence Peace*, United States Institute of Peace, 2001, p. 201.

<sup>202</sup> *Encyclopedia.com*, de Klerk, F. W., Available at [<http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/d1/deK1lerk.asp>], Accessed November 2003.

<sup>203</sup> *South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Available at [<http://www.facts.com/icof/south.htm>], Accessed November 2003.

<sup>204</sup> Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt*, p. 260.

establish a direct dialogue with Hasan Tiro and offer him an opportunity to return and live in his homeland, and if possible, to cooperate with Aceh's development. A group of Acehnese *ulama* and scholars may be chosen to represent the Acehnese society to convince Hasan Tiro to accept this offer. Some points that can be used as convincing factors are the reality that the GAM has only half a chance in winning the war because of their lack of international support, the Acehnese have been suffering for so long, and the government, to some extent, has fulfilled the Acehnese demand for autonomy and *syariah* law. This decision, however, does not need to ease the military and police operations in the field, which is required to return security and law and order to Aceh. The GAM leadership is expected to reject the proposal, but the offering should be consistent. This policy will demonstrate to the international community that the government always welcomes dialogue and peaceful opportunities, without giving up the state's duty to security.

## **2. Building Trust**

Granting amnesty or a reduced sentence to the ex-GAM members is a good step towards building trust. This will create an image that putting people on trial and punishing rebellion and their supporters is the government's responsibility that must be upheld. In the field, any GAM that has been captured and then sentenced should be given amnesty later, while GAM who surrender must be given amnesty instantly. The consequences of this amnesty is giving the same chance to Indonesian troops or police members who committed human rights violations in the past as long as they confess their past abusive action and apologize individually to their victims. In addition, the state should be responsible for supporting the victims until they can sustain life on their own. Another incentive that can be pursued is buying any weapons given by GAM members. Consequently, the military and police must apply the maximum penalty toward its members who sell or give weapons to the GAM. Absorbing ex-GAM members into the TNI or police members can be taken into consideration as well but with some requirements.

Since the operation began, many ex-GAM members have been trained to achieve enough skills to start a normal life in civilian society<sup>205</sup> and any GAM middle leadership who surrendered was not considered enemies by the government, but common citizens.<sup>206</sup> These policies as well as how the government treated them after they surrendered should be consistently announced and disseminated through leaflets and any means possible so as to reach GAM members still living in the jungle.

Although this policy is very difficult, I am sure that this is the only way to end conflict in Aceh. Twenty seven years of conflict in Aceh have proven that both sides have been reaping nothing except hatred, grievances, hundreds of thousands of victims, and a society in ruins. The process may take a long time, but this policy must be initiated immediately to start building trust between two sides.

### **C. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REHABILITATION**

Often accompanying the establishment of security, social and economic rehabilitation well-being entails protecting the population from starvation, disease, and the elements. The first step addresses fundamental needs for the affected population by providing emergency relief, and as the situation stabilizes, attention shifts from humanitarian relief to long-term social and economic development.<sup>207</sup> By design, the Integrated Operation should provide humanitarian aid to the war-torn Acehnese. Even before the military operation started, there were 6,000 refugees in Bireuen and just a week after the commencement of the operation, the number of refugees had doubled. Some of these people instantly left their homes as they were afraid of the impact of armed conflict between the GAM and the military. Some were asked to move to refugee camps by authorities to prevent civilian casualties and as part of the anti-insurgency tactic to separate ordinary people from the rebels. The GAM possibly forced some others to flee as part of their tactics I mentioned in previous chapters. These internally displaced

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<sup>205</sup> *Kompas*, July 24 and November 3, 2003: “GAM Pembuat Tahu” and “Sebanyak 1.242 Anggota Gerakan Separatis Aceh Jalani Proses Hukum,” available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0307/24/nasional/450511.htm>] and [<http://www.kompas.com/utama/news/0311/03/012512.htm>], Accessed November 2003.

<sup>206</sup> Two GAM members, identified as Tengku Amri Wahab and Dailami surrendered and were well treated by the military (*Kompas*, May 13 and November 1, 2003). They were categorized by the military as high-ranking leaders. The GAM, however, denied that they were important persons.

<sup>207</sup> *Post Conflict Reconstruction Task Framework*, May 2002, NS-3026/Professor Karen Guttieri Course Material.

persons (IDPs) have to face many classic refugee problems. Half of the 2,414 IDPs who live in Reuleut Timur were reported to be suffering from scabies, acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, and five of them were sent to the hospital and died later.<sup>208</sup> Thousands of canned foods for refugees in Blang Pidie had expired<sup>209</sup> and twelve refugees in South Aceh died from health problems.<sup>210</sup> From the last report, at least 10,425 IDPs still lived in refugee camps located in eight regions.<sup>211</sup> It has not yet been clearly stated when these IDPs could return home since it depends on the security situation in their neighborhoods. The government has to support their needs as long as they stay in the IDP camps and this requires a huge amount of money.

Besides humanitarian problems, other challenges for the government are poverty and unemployment. The Governor of NAD Province stated that 40% or 1.6 million of the NAD population live in poverty and the number of unemployed is approximately 176,000 or 8% of the 2.2 million work force.<sup>212</sup> Poverty and unemployment in Aceh caused by the economic crisis was quite high before and the latest operation significantly worsened the condition. In the years 2000, 2001, and 2002, the poverty numbers in Aceh were 1,101,368 (26.50%), 1,223,704 (30.43%), and 1,409,828 (33.84%) respectively.<sup>213</sup> Although security might be the primary reason, the decline of the social condition indicates that the government development program could not confront the problems that arose. Most of the provincial government development program does not address the poor people, does not have a tangible outcome, and lacks accountability.

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<sup>208</sup> *Kompas*, August 22, 2003, "Ekonomi Aceh bak Kerakap Tumbuh di Batu," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0308/22/daerah/490501.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>209</sup> *Kompas*, October 24, 2003, "Makanan Pengungsi telah Kedaluwarsa," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>210</sup> *Kompas*, October 30, 2003, "12 Pengungsi Trumon Meninggal," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>211</sup> *Kompas*, October 6, 2003, "Sedikitnya 10,425 warga NAD masih hidup dalam pengungsian," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>212</sup> *Kompas*, October 29, 2003, "Meningkat, Pengangguran dan Kemiskinan di Aceh," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>213</sup> Koalisi NGO HAM Aceh Position Paper tentang *Menyelamatkan Perdamaian atau Menghentikan Demiliterisasi*, Available at [[http://www.koalisi-ham.org/position\\_paper\\_5\\_hal\\_2.htm](http://www.koalisi-ham.org/position_paper_5_hal_2.htm)], Accessed October 2003.

Beginning this year, the provincial government stated that the development program under the name *Gema Assalam* will be observed by NGOs and the budget will be channeled directly to the community (*kemukiman*). The allocation of 16-targeted *kemukiman* will vary between 500m to 1b rupiahs and the fund will be available as soon as the provincial government receives a proposal from each *kemukiman*.<sup>214</sup> It does not state, however, which NGO will observe the project and where it is possible to access the accountability of the report. The provincial government's willingness to be transparent is being questioned since there were 392 unresolved corruption cases in FY 2002.<sup>215</sup>

In the beginning of the Integrated Operation, the provincial government questioned the budget allocated by the central government for the humanitarian program, which only provided 500 billion rupiah. The provincial government stated that the budget was extremely insufficient in restoring normal civilian life in Aceh even after the provincial annual budget of 6 trillion rupiah was added.<sup>216</sup> In comparison, at the donor countries meeting in Bali on 21-23 January 2003, the CGI proposed 31 trillion rupiah for Aceh's reconstruction.<sup>217</sup> The provincial government also articulated its lack of funds to rebuild hundreds of burned schools.<sup>218</sup>

With problems of corruption and a lack of accountability as well as a shortage of funds, the central and provincial government must radically change their policies to be successful in reconstructing Aceh. One possible option is to implement a model of community-based development with some assumptions and some principles. The first assumption is security and the second assumption is the limits placed on the military and government. Development can only be done if security is assured. The military authority divides the security level of a region into black, grey, and white areas representing the level of security. Therefore, development should be started at the white region, which

<sup>214</sup> *Serambi Indonesia*, September 17, 2003, "Dana Gema Assalam Tahap II Rp.24 M," Available at [<http://indonesia.com/serambi/2003/09/170903h11.htm>].

<sup>215</sup> *Masyarakat Transparansi Indonesia*, January 2003, "392 Kasus Korupsi di Aceh Belum Diproses Hukum," Available at [[http://www.transparansi.or.id/berita/berita-januari2003/berita5\\_020103.html](http://www.transparansi.or.id/berita/berita-januari2003/berita5_020103.html)], Accessed November 2003.

<sup>216</sup> *Kompas*, May 9, 2003, "Tak Cukup, Dana Untuk Operasi Kemanusiaan," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/utama/news/0305/09/130320.htm>], Accessed September 2003.

<sup>217</sup> Koalisi NGO HAM Aceh Position Paper tentang *Menyelamatkan Perdamaian atau Menghentikan Demilitarisasi*, Available at [[http://www.koalisi-ham.org/posisi\\_paper\\_5\\_hal\\_2.htm](http://www.koalisi-ham.org/posisi_paper_5_hal_2.htm)], Accessed October 2003.

<sup>218</sup> *Kompas*, November 1, 2003, "Tak Cukup Dana untuk Bangun Sekolah Terbakar," Available at [<http://www.kompas.co.id/kompas-cetak/0311/01/nasional/662350.htm>], Accessed November 2003.

represents the least threat. As mentioned later, the provincial government faces an enormous job that needs extra effort to persevere while the military is very busy handling the security aspect. Therefore, leaving some part of their duties to the neighborhood probably will ease their job loads.

Meanwhile, the first principle is including Acehnese society in the development process based on a belief that the Acehnese have the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Using existing societal and cultural factors, this principle will ensure that the development goals correspond to the needs of the community.

The second principle is utilizing and seeking every available fund wherever it comes from, either from individuals, the private sector, aid agencies as well as an allocated budget from the government. I believe that Islamic organizations can be convinced to provide funds for community development in Aceh as it is the largest Moslem province in Indonesia. Two possible organizations are *Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*, the first and second largest Moslem organizations with more than 60 and 30 million members respectively. While the community benefits from development programs, both organizations may be interested in enlarging their influence as the basis of their political parties. Another option is *Republika*, an Islamic newspaper, which has a poverty relief program called *Dompot Dhuafa*, which raises funds from individual donors and which are then granted or soft-loaned to the targeted poor community. Examples of the private sector that is possibly willing to participate are the *Media Indonesia* and *Metro TV* companies, which are owned by an Acehnese named Surya Palloh. He may be interested in taking part not only because Aceh is his home province, but also to raise his popularity as a presidential candidate from the *Golkar* party in the 2004 elections. The enthusiasm to donate could be seen on one occasion in Jakarta during a fundraiser for Aceh when an individual instantly donated 3 billion rupiah.<sup>219</sup> The third principle is using a bottom up approach, in which development will be based on the consensus of the neighborhood and enhanced by broader participation. In this case, the government role is providing or finding a technical assistant needed to support the program. If the government follows this principle, the past mistakes, where the indigenous population

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<sup>219</sup> *Serambi Indonesia* On-Line, September 17, 2003, "Manusia tanpa nama sumbang Aceh Rp.3M," Available at [<http://www.indonesia.com/serambi/2003/09/170903h3.htm>], Accessed September 2003.



had to migrate because of industrial development, will be prevented. In addition, the government can also provide a wider network for marketing the products. The fourth principle is starting the development at the village level as the very bottom of the society. Working in a smaller scale environment would reduce the risk of failure, since only a small amount of funds is needed. It is easier to protect the project from a security standpoint, and hopefully it will bring more tangible results in a shorter period of time. An excellent example of these four principles was carried out in the Menggamat sub-district of South Aceh. Sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund Leuser Project (WWF-LP), the Menggamat community, including village and religious leaders, formed a community conservation forest (CCF) to prevent uncontrolled or illegal logging in their area. Under WWF-LP facilitation and assistance, the CCF succeeded not only in changing their habits and involvement in illicit logging, but it also stopped the vicious circle of illegal logging business networks and prevented further uncontrolled logging. Under technical assistance and environment knowledge given by WWF-LP, the villagers acknowledged and understood that by maintaining their forest and utilizing forest resources in a more manageable manner, they have a better future. They are still able to acquire sufficient incomes while preserving the forest that will give them an everlasting economical source.<sup>220</sup>

The last principle is accountability, which will assure that the allocated budget is well planned and properly managed. An accountability report should be published and open to the public using available media coverage.

#### **D. GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

In general, Aceh faces many of the same characteristics and challenges of regional government and development evident across Indonesia after decentralization. Responsibilities over resources and the delivery of services increased significantly for provincial and local governments.<sup>221</sup> Moreover, the Aceh provincial government has to cope with humanitarian issues, economic problems, infrastructure reconstruction, the

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<sup>220</sup> John F. McCarthy, Center for International Forestry Research, Occasional Paper No. 31, October 2000, *Wild Logging: The Rise and Fall of Logging Networks and Biodiversity Conservation Projects on Sumatra's Rainforest Frontier*.

<sup>221</sup> *The World Bank*, January 2003, Brief for the Consultative Group on Indonesia: Promoting Peaceful Development in Aceh, p. 21.

implementation of autonomy and the *syariah* law. On the other hand, people expected their government to address all the responsibilities and problems quickly. Therefore, the duties of the provincial government are great and may be so great that it could really be beyond its capability. To cope with these enormous duties, the provincial government must be willing to seek cooperation with other societies. The Regional Emergency Military authority should encourage the provincial government to obtain more participation from society. On the decision making level, there are plenty of international organizations, NGOs, and Acehnese as well as national scholars or universities who work and do research on Aceh. On the field level, place an advisor in the community-based development project to provide a broader view of the economic prospects. Presidential Decree No. 43 of 2003 does not completely halt the involvement of international organizations or NGOs. The provincial government as well as the military need to build trust with international organizations and NGO, which is not such an easy task as it seems. In his statement, the Regional Military Commander said that he sees the National Commission for Human Rights as a “threat”. He sees it as a possibility that the military members who are treated like heroes today could be brought in front of a humanitarian court at some future date by the Commission.<sup>222</sup> The international organizations do not want to deliver aid through government channels as they are afraid the funds could be diverted elsewhere. The differences among the stakeholders should be discussed to find a compromise in pursuing the greater goal of Aceh’s sustainable peace, and certainly for the military and the government, the future of Indonesia’s unity. Establishing a joint team that will investigate any single complaint or report about violations of the law or human rights can bridge differences between the military and human rights organizations. International donors can negotiate with the government, for instance, by delivering aid in the form of goods, not money. They can also propose an individual contractor that they trusted to implement the rehabilitation project. The very basic viewpoint, and possibly the most difficult for human rights organizations, is that they have to recognize Indonesian authority in Aceh. In this case, the government may cooperate with organizations that accept this viewpoint and not cooperate with those who oppose this viewpoint until they can overcome their resistance.

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<sup>222</sup> *Kompas*, November 11, 2003, “Komnas HAM ancaman PDMD,” Available at [<http://www.kompas.co.id/kompas-cetak/0311/01/nasional/662329.htm>], Accessed November 2003.

Besides democratic values, people in a province such as Aceh with a Moslem majority, are dreaming of a leader able to implement Islamic teachings under Prophet Muhammad's exemplar and his close companions. The leadership in Aceh should remember the first statement of Abu Bakar after he was elected as the First Caliph:

I have been given authority over you but I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me, and if I do ill, then put me right. Truth consists in loyalty and falsehood in treachery. The weak among you shall be strong in my eyes until I secure his right if God will; and the strong among you shall be weak in my eyes until I wrest the right from him.... Obey me as long as I obey God and His apostle, and if I disobey them you owe me no obedience.<sup>223</sup>

Thus, the leadership must have a critique-sensitive attitude and pay attention to whatever people say about their services and performance. Many verses in the Qur'an state that people must take care of orphans and the poor, and the National Constitution of 1945 also states that the government is responsible for the poor and the neglected people. The leadership in Aceh should uphold this principle since 40% of the Acehnese are categorized as poor and thousands are victims of previous and recent conflicts. Therefore, if the leadership in Aceh is able to care for ordinary Acehnese, I believe a sustainable peace will be easier and quicker to be achieved.

#### **E. CONCLUSION**

Previous policies had failed to end the protracted conflict in Aceh and I believe that they would not prevail in the future either. The government should continuously enhance the Integrated Operation launched in May 19, 2003 for better performance as well as seeking other options to resolve the conflict. The most desirable is reconciliation between the leadership and offering incentives for the GAM in the field to create a peace settlement. At the same time, the government and military must collaborate with other parts of society as well as negotiate with any aid organizations to work together because it is just not possible to do this alone. Community-based development is the most suitable for social and economic rehabilitation as it will engender broader participation and promote good and transparent governance.

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<sup>223</sup> Karen Armstrong, Harper Collins, 1992, *Muhammad, A Biography of the Prophet*, p. 258.

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## VI. CONCLUSION

Indonesia's future is highly uncertain. Besides armed separatism in its most western and eastern territories, the sitting government is facing so many problems, beginning with poverty, unemployment, a huge debt, ethnic clashes, corruption, deforestation, resources smuggling, illegal fishing, and the newest challenge of terrorism. One possible scenario for Indonesia's future is disintegration. Although there is an argument that the separation of Aceh and Irian Jaya would not lead to the domino effect of disintegrating the entire Indonesian territory, most Indonesians have a different perception. For them, disintegration actually started with the independence of East Timor. The parliament rejected President Habibie's accountability report after East Timor achieved independence for this reason and the parliament also agreed to launch a military operation in Aceh. Nevertheless, the government as well as the military must learn from past lessons on how to deal with the conflict in Aceh.

### A. SUMMARY

The hardened resolve of the Acehnese struggle during the colonial period was motivated by their pre-colonial history of a glorious kingdom and having self-determination. The same reason motivated their demand for autonomy after Indonesian independence and caused the first rebellion in Aceh that lasted for almost nine years. The central government quelled the first rebellion by restoring autonomy to Aceh supported and enforced by a "wise and principle" policy of Aceh's regional military commander. The first rebellion was clearly driven by the Acehnese feeling of disappointment with the central government's policy. In the 1970s, the central government exploited natural resources and built a multi-billion dollar industrial complex in Aceh. The central government receives a large amount of revenue from Aceh. However, rapid development has created resentment as many of the indigenous population had to migrate from their own land. Later on, the development had a negative impact due to environment pollution and unfair employment. Hasan Tiro claiming that he is a legal heir to the Acehnese kingdom and a supporter of the first rebellion, unilaterally declared Acehnese independence in 1976 and initiated the first GAM rebellion. The first GAM marked a protracted conflict in Aceh for the next 27 years. For more than two decades, the GAM

leadership had always been able to modify their strategy and improve their struggle. Beginning with a relatively small armed forces and some support from the local population, eventually the GAM III enjoyed more backing. The GAM's fundamental strategy is to exploit the weaknesses of the Indonesian government and military. The GAM leadership uses the poor governance of the central and provincial administration along with its incapability and the lack of discipline of its soldiers and police, as an effective means to fan the resentment of their local and foreign followers and supporters. This feeling of harboring grievances within the GAM leadership has easily trickled down to their core soldiers to sustain their struggle and spirit because of the shortcomings of their opponents. On the other hand, the government and military had never learned from their flawed past. Their strategies have never changed from a mainly military operation. The Indonesian economic crisis at the end of the 1990s and East Timor's independence exacerbated the weaknesses of the central government and military, and once again, strengthened the GAM struggle.

Indonesia has entered a transitional phase from authoritarian regime to a more democratic government and this transition also affected the government's policy in Aceh. Peace talks had been initiated though all failed. Another approach, such as economic development, was also introduced. As the GAM's struggle began to escalate more, another security approach was then unavoidable. The foundation of operations in the economic and governance sectors requires the restoration of a secure environment and law and order. The latest integration was designed to achieve such a goal. However, the last efforts were hampered by a lack of military capabilities as well as the incapacitation of the government, both economically and politically. Economically, Indonesia has not been able to lessen the impact of the past economic crisis. Politically, the desire to fix the government's internal weaknesses has not been very strong, for instance, in fighting corruption. Therefore, although there has been some improvement in government and military policy, unless there is a significant change for the better in the government's performance, a successful end to the long-lasting conflict in Aceh is unlikely.

## **B. RECOMMENDATION**

With the latest development of the GAM and the failure of past negotiations, a military option as part of an integrated operation was necessary as a paramount prerequisite for further rehabilitation and reconstruction. However, since the conflict in Aceh was driven more by hatred, these options will not be sufficient to restore a sustainable peace in Aceh as it is unable to change the image of the central government and rectify the grievances.

First of all, the government and military must be able to alleviate their own weaknesses by creating a better management strategy for good governance and establishing more professional police and soldiers. The military has made some improvements in this direction. Soldiers and police have received training in human rights, and those who violate these rights have been tried and punished. However, many complaints from human rights organizations has been logged that were also quoted by foreign journalists. I recommend using these complaints as inputs to investigate and clarify the facts in the field and choose any independent organization with which to work. If the military does not want to cooperate with any organization, at least correct it internally to improve professionalism and maintain discipline among the soldiers. This is part of winning the war, and is necessary to avoid a careless and unaware attitude. Some troops and police have also been given a strong warning about not extorting civilians or committing other illegal economic activities. As Minister Kwik Kian Gie proposed, one solution is to improve the structure of the soldiers' wage system that is beyond the reach of the military authorities. The military may improve a soldier's welfare by allocating more money from the budget to support the soldiers and their families posted on the frontlines, such as in Aceh. This can be done by reducing non-combat activities or by temporarily deactivating non-crucial forces based on comprehensive and reliable evaluated strategies and tactics for the short and long term.

Improvements have also been made in governance by investigating and prosecuting civil servants who misused the development or humanitarian aid budget. As the highest authority in the emergency military region, the Aceh regional military commander must direct the provincial civilian government accountability policies, especially in budget and development, so as to avoid the ineffective use of limited

finances and build credibility. It is necessary to establish a development program based on the principles of including the Acehnese in the decision making process, the bottom up approach, seeking any available financial sources, and requiring a more tangible outcome in the short term as well as accountability.

Training of ex-GAM members in various skills in preparation for returning them to civilian society should be coordinated as part of the entire development program of unemployment and economic empowerment.

Better policies in military performance, governance, and economic development are proposed to raise the credibility of the government and military, and furthermore, to win the hearts and minds of the Acehnese. Even these steps do not seem sufficient to attract the leadership and the main core of the GAM armed forces. I suggest reconciliation with more incentives to establish a sustainable peace between the government and military on the one hand, and the GAM leadership and its field soldiers on the other. A reconciliation program must be initiated with an irrevocable commitment by the president to end the hostilities with the GAM leader Hasan Tiro. The subsequent steps are to grant amnesty and restore the citizenship for the GAM leadership in exile, direct amnesty for GAMs who surrender, material incentives for returning weapons, and reduced sentences for punished GAM members. The government may start to implement these policies by releasing the ex-GAM negotiators from the last peace talks. For whatever reason, capturing the negotiators sent a very strong image of colonialism since the Dutch had practiced similar tactics during the colonial era.

Policies of reconciliation, economic development, good governance, and more professional soldiers and police does not mean the end of military operations. Military operations are always needed whenever the threat exists. If the GAM activities seem to have decreased recently, it is just part of their strategies and tactics. I suggest that the government as well as the military avoid arrogance and an over-confident attitude as it will only create unawareness. The statement of the Governor of Aceh<sup>224</sup> that it is impossible for Aceh to secede from the Republic of Indonesia reminds me of the same statement made by Lieutenant General Benny Moerdani, an Indonesian Armed Forces

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<sup>224</sup> *Kompas*, October 26, 2003, "Aceh tak mungkin lepas dari NKRI," Available at [<http://www.kompas.com/index.htm>], Accessed October 2003.



Commander at that time, that there is no independence for East Timor. In fact, East Timor is an independent country now, while in Aceh, the government and military have not been able to solve the conflict in Aceh, either militarily or politically. Aceh and the Acehnese need more tangible outcomes instead of rhetoric.

Therefore, understanding the nature of the GAM's struggle leads the government and military to basically fight against themselves for not doing the wrong thing while protecting civilians rather than threatening them. If the government and military do not change their strategy and behavior, they cannot implement a proper strategy to win the war. Whenever the military cannot win the war, even though they do not lose either, the GAM can claim victory.

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