
When Sukarno Sought the Bomb: Indonesian Nuclear Aspirations in the Mid-1960s

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Although Indonesia's aspirations have been largely forgotten today, in the mid-1960s, it sought to acquire and test nuclear weapons. Indonesian government officials began publicizing their intent to acquire an atom bomb shortly after the People's Republic of China (PRC) exploded its first nuclear device in October 1964. By July 1965, Indonesian President Sukarno was publicly vaunting his country's future nuclear status. However, Indonesia did not have the indigenous capability necessary to produce its own nuclear weapon, and as a result, it would have had to secure assistance from an established nuclear weapon state to achieve this goal.

Speculation on just how Indonesia would acquire the bomb centered on the prospect that Indonesia's leaders would request assistance from the PRC by exploiting the newly created Peking-Jakarta Axis.² Observers feared that Indonesia would ask China to explode an atom bomb in Indonesian territorial waters while allowing the Sukarno government to take credit for the test. Obviously, Indonesia failed to obtain the bomb from the PRC or from any other nuclear state. Yet, Sukarno succeeded in making his nuclear aspirations known to the world before a military coup led to his removal from office.

Sukarno's successor, General Suharto, agreed to international safeguards, thereby effectively ending concerns that Indonesia might go nuclear.

The purpose of this article is to tell the story of Indonesia's nuclear aspirations, study Sukarno's decision to support nuclear weapons, and identify variables that may explain why he professed to seek the bomb. The article opens by tracing the evolution of Indonesia's nuclear aspirations, from a US Atoms for Peace program of nuclear assistance that began in 1960, to Sukarno's declared intention to acquire an atom bomb in 1965. Drawing on both Indonesian and US archival materials, this article provides further details about Indonesian nuclear aspirations than may be found in the existing literature on Indonesian foreign policy.³

Following this history, the article evaluates the nature and the seriousness of Sukarno's "proliferation decision."⁴ It continues by identifying variables that may explain why Sukarno desired nuclear status for Indonesia. The discussion concludes with the suggestion that a variety of factors, both external and internal to Indonesia, influenced Sukarno to inform the world that Indonesia would become a nuclear weapon state. On balance, however, the analysis suggests that internal factors—

especially Sukarno's concerns about domestic political stability—played the greater role. The simple fact that Indonesia talked about the bomb is not widely known by today's nuclear proliferation specialists. Therefore, a closer examination of the Indonesian case may be helpful in understanding proliferation dynamics, especially in Asia.

EVOLUTION OF INDONESIA'S NUCLEAR ASPIRATIONS

In 1958, Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr. Subandrio wrote that his country "does not have atomic weapons or nuclear weapons" and "does not have interest in that direction."⁵ Subandrio's statement accurately represented the official Indonesian government position on nuclear weapons for the next six years. During this period, the Indonesian government created an Institute of Atomic Energy (or LTA, *Lembaga Tenaga Atom*) to supervise nuclear research and develop atomic energy.⁶ However, the LTA limited its efforts to planning and building reactors jointly with the United States and the Soviet Union to conduct research on peaceful uses of nuclear energy.⁷

Soviet nuclear assistance did not begin in earnest until 1965, when construction was started on a research reactor at Gadjadara Research Center in Yogyakarta. However, American nuclear assistance to Indonesia originated in June 1960, when the two countries signed a five-year, bilateral agreement under the Atoms for Peace program. Atoms for Peace was the centerpiece of US nonproliferation strategy from the 1950s through the 1970s.⁸ The program's purpose was to discourage the proliferation of nuclear weapons by shifting international attention from the development of weapons and toward the peaceful uses of atomic energy.⁹ Toward this goal, the program transferred nuclear technology and fissile material from the stockpiles of the nuclear states to the atomic energy programs of the non-nuclear weapon states.

The Indonesian agreement became effective on September 21, 1960, and under it the United States pledged cooperation in the civilian uses of atomic energy.¹⁰ To assist in this effort, the United States promised a \$350,000 grant toward the cost of a research reactor at Bandung once the facility was operational.¹¹ Additionally, the agreement permitted the US Agency for International Development to send \$141,000 to assist Indonesia in developing its atomic research program.¹²

The arrangement also included nonproliferation provisions that prohibited the use of transferred materials for weapons or military purposes. Specifically, the agreement stated that "no material...will be used for atomic weapons or for research on or development of atomic weapons."¹³

A small 250-kilowatt TRIGA-Mark II research reactor, purchased from the General Atomics Division of the American firm General Dynamics, became the nucleus of Indonesia's nuclear program during the early 1960s.¹⁴ President Sukarno and US Ambassador Howard P. Jones inaugurated the reactor's construction at the Bandung Institute of Technology on April 19, 1961.¹⁵ The facility conducted Indonesia's first successful nuclear reaction on October 17, 1964.¹⁶ By coincidence, this particular experiment occurred just one day after China exploded its first atom bomb.

Far from angering the Indonesian government, a signatory to the 1963 Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty,¹⁷ the Chinese nuclear test on October 16, 1964, was viewed quite favorably by many top Indonesian officials. Roeslan Abdulgani, minister of public relations, declared his government's view that China's new nuclear capability "would open the eyes of the West to the fact that from now on, their encirclement of the peoples of Asia and Africa would be of no avail."¹⁸ Minister for Revenues, Expenditures, and Supervision Hassan praised the Chinese test as "a matter worthy to be hailed not only by the Chinese people but by the Indonesian people as well."¹⁹ Many other ministers of the Indonesian government extended similar congratulations to the PRC through the Chinese ambassador in Jakarta.

Two factors may have contributed to such a surprising response from Indonesian officials: Chinese government statements about the bomb and Indonesian President Sukarno's enthusiasm toward the atom. Several times during 1963, the Chinese government made public statements declaring the benefits of nuclear weapons in socialist hands, once even calling on socialist countries to develop nuclear superiority.²⁰ Then immediately after the test, the PRC declared "the mastering of the nuclear weapon by China is a great encouragement to the revolutionary peoples of the world in their struggles and a great contribution to the cause of defending world peace."²¹ Admittedly, China's proclamations were made in the context of the Sino-Soviet split and before Chinese nuclear strategy had matured. Moreover, Indonesia was not a socialist country and none of the statements

indicated that China would lend nuclear support to other countries. Nonetheless, Indonesian officials may have been inclined to view favorably the October test because Chinese statements about nuclear weapons appeared to support, rather than oppose, the bomb in other countries' hands.

Not until July 1965 would Sukarno publicly declare his support for an Indonesian nuclear weapon, but as early as November 1964, the Indonesian president expressed his support for using newfound atomic knowledge to help Indonesia in a new revolution. Indonesia's first revolution had been waged against Dutch colonialism during the late 1940s. In the early 1960s, Sukarno sought to return Indonesia to revolution, but this time against the forces of colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism (known as NEOKLIM, *Neo-Kolonialis, Kolonialis, dan Imperialisme*) that he believed were being sustained by the Western powers in Southeast Asia.²² Sukarno's revolutionary fervor pervaded his view of almost all of the important developments within Indonesia, including the atom. In a presidential law regarding atomic energy passed on November 26, 1964, Sukarno stated that the materials for producing atomic energy and the materials for producing nuclear fuel are "important for the people and the nation in finishing the national revolution, and because of that should be possessed and mastered by the nation."²³ Sukarno's support for Indonesia's nuclear efforts in this context may have contributed to his government's positive view of the Chinese test.

Whatever the sources of enthusiasm for the Chinese test, Indonesian leaders quickly developed the expectation that their country too could join the "nuclear club." Only a month after the Chinese test, Brigadier General Hartono, director of the Army Ordnance Department, became the first Indonesian official to express this new hope. On November 15, 1964, Hartono told the Indonesian news agency Antara that by 1965 Indonesia would probably be able to explode its own atom bomb.²⁴

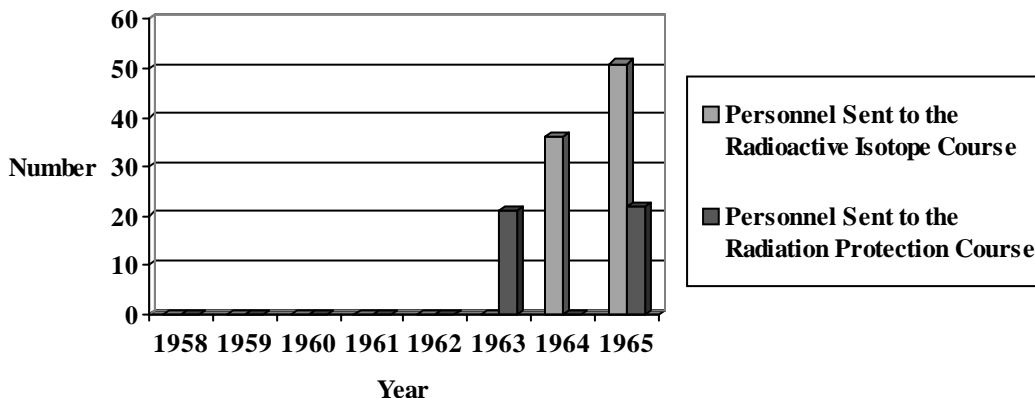
Hartono's claim received international press coverage and elicited reactions from several foreign governments. Tun Abdul Razak, neighboring Malaysia's deputy prime minister, doubted the Indonesian claim but indicated that he would make inquiries into the matter because, if true, "it is a serious threat."²⁵ In Australia, Defense Minister Shane Paltridge expressed his government's view that the possibility of an Indonesian nuclear weapon could not be viewed lightly despite the

absence of evidence supporting Hartono's assertion.²⁶ In the United States, the *New York Times* reported Hartono's boast as well as reactions from officials in the US Department of State and the US Atomic Energy Commission who called the claim "absurd" and "impossible."²⁷ According to these agencies, "Indonesia did not have the capability of refining atomic materials for an explosion or building of a device to set it off."²⁸

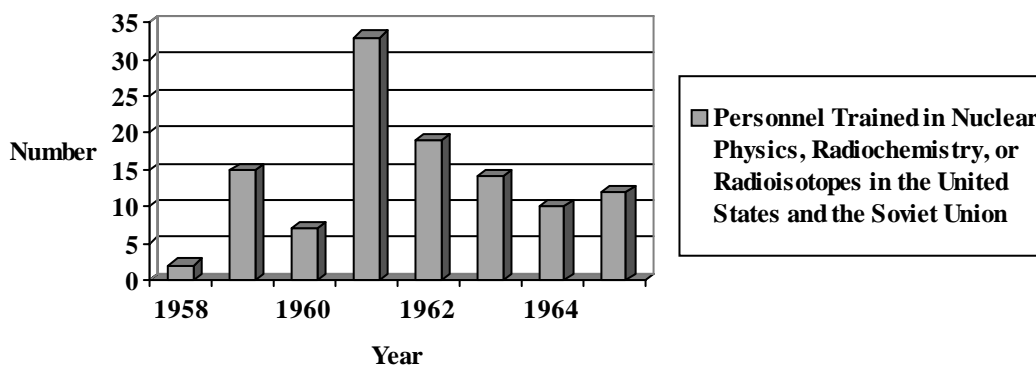
The American assessment was based on the knowledge that Indonesia's only nuclear capability was the TRIGA-Mark II and that the LTA was plagued by a shortage of competent staff.²⁹ Although the reactor at Bandung had recently conducted its first successful nuclear reaction, the Americans knew that the facility could not be used to build a nuclear weapon. In fact, the highly enriched uranium (HEU)-fueled reactor at Bandung was suitable only for research and training and, for two reasons, was not a viable source for fissile material (either plutonium-239 [Pu-239] or HEU) for a nuclear explosion.³⁰ First, the reactor was not capable of irradiating a large enough quantity of uranium fuel to generate sufficient Pu-239 for a bomb. Even if the reactor did produce some Pu-239, the Institute of Technology did not have a chemical reprocessing facility to separate plutonium from the unconverted uranium and other irradiation by-products. Second, the agreement with the United States prohibited Indonesia from possessing, at any one time, more than six kilograms (kg) of HEU enriched to 20 percent uranium-235 (U-235).³¹ Since international safeguards assume that at least 25 kg of HEU is necessary for an effective nuclear explosion (and weapons-grade uranium must be enriched to more than 90 percent U-235), this measure hindered the Indonesian government from secretly diverting fuel earmarked for the TRIGA-Mark II to a nuclear weapons program.³²

Moreover, the Americans knew that the Indonesian government lacked nuclear engineers to develop nuclear weapons. The shortage of trained personnel is illustrated by the fact that Dr. G.A. Siwabessy, who served as director of the LTA, was a medical doctor of radiology rather than a trained nuclear engineer. Additional evidence of Indonesia's limited human resources in the nuclear field can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, which depict the number of personnel sent for nuclear training, both domestically and abroad, between 1958 and 1965.

According to these figures, the Indonesian government trained less than 300 technicians in the eight years prior to announcing its nuclear aspirations to the world.

Figure 1: Nuclear Training Conducted in Indonesia, 1958-1965

Source: *Sepuluh Tahun Tenaga Atom di Indonesia, 5 Desember 1958-5 Desember 1968* (trans. by Robert M. Cornejo) (*Ten Years of Atomic Energy in Indonesia, December 5, 1958-December 5, 1968*) (Jakarta: Indonesian Atomic Energy Agency, 1968), p. 3.9.

Figure 2: Nuclear Training Received Outside Indonesia, 1958-1965

Source: *Sepuluh Tahun Tenaga Atom di Indonesia*, p. 3.10; and Daniel B. Poneman, "Indonesia," in James E. Katz and Onkar S. Marwah, eds., *Nuclear Power in Developing Countries* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982), p. 185.

However, technicians trained in essentially unrelated tasks, such as the application of radioactive isotopes, were not necessarily qualified to build nuclear weapons. Thus, American officials estimated that there were probably no more than a dozen people in the country with any real competence in the nuclear field.³³ Despite this small pool, Hartono continued to advertise his country's nuclear potential, boasting that Indonesia "could immediately mobilize nuclear physicists to start working on the fabrication of a nuclear bomb."³⁴

Despite the American assessment, the technology received through the Atoms for Peace program increased international worries about Indonesia's actual nuclear

potential. The fact that the TRIGA-Mark II achieved criticality just one month prior to General Hartono's announcement made Indonesia's nuclear plans to some extent believable, even in the United States. The US Department of State was sensitive to the connection that was being made between the newly operational reactor and Indonesia's announced intent to explode an atom bomb. For instance, a telegram sent by the Department of State to the Jakarta Embassy stated the following in reference to the dedication ceremony for the TRIGA-Mark II scheduled to occur in early 1965:

We [are] concerned over possible repercussions [from the] scheduled February 8 reactor

dedication ceremony and concurrent turnover dollar check for US contribution [to the Indonesian nuclear program] to Indo embassy Washington. Last October's announcement that reactor had achieved criticality followed by Indo boast that nuclear weapons in sight sparked some adverse public and congressional comment here. Interest died down following Dept statements stressing harmless nature [of the] reactor and facts [of the] US commitment, but there remains public concern.³⁵

In the months after China's nuclear test and Brigadier General Hartono's proclamation, the Indonesian government moved closer to political alignment with the PRC. By January 1965, President Sukarno had informally allied Indonesia with China in the Peking-Jakarta Axis.³⁶ At the same time, the *New York Times* reported that the PRC was training Indonesian technicians at its nuclear plants, "presumably to meet Mr. Sukarno's ambitions to develop his own nuclear capability."³⁷ In February, Hartono announced that 200 Indonesian atomic scientists were conducting tests on the production of an atom bomb.³⁸ He also stated that the Army Ordnance Corps had been ordered to provide a "surprise" on the forthcoming Armed Forces Day, October 5.³⁹ While Hartono did not elaborate on the nature of the Armed Forces Day surprise, his statement seemed to indicate that October 5 was the target date for an Indonesian nuclear test.⁴⁰ These reports added to concern in the United States because Indonesia's continued assertions now appeared to threaten the test ban treaty that had entered into force in 1963.⁴¹

In the meantime, the US Department of State was seeking to deepen its understanding of Indonesia's nuclear weapon potential. American diplomats in Jakarta began asking their Indonesian contacts about Brigadier General Hartono and received confirmation that their earlier skeptical assessment was correct. In a confidential telegram from the American embassy, diplomats sent the following memorandum of conversation to Washington:

Rector of University Indonesia, Sumantri, in conversation with CAO [Cultural Affairs Officer] said Gen Hartono "doesn't know what he is talking about" in recent statements about Indonesia's up-coming nuclear capability. Sumantri, who last year toured China's atomic setup and initiated the Indonesian military collaboration with the Institute of Technology

Bandung, was a university classmate of Hartono's. He said that if Indonesia were to have such capability "it would have to be given to us."⁴²

This telegram reinforced the American belief that Indonesia's scientific and industrial capacities were too primitive to support an indigenous nuclear weapon capability. Thus, to American diplomats, it was becoming apparent that if Indonesia were to become a nuclear power, an outside party would have to contribute to the effort.

While the Americans were investigating Indonesia's nuclear potential, Sukarno demonstrated his belief in the growing importance of Indonesia's nuclear endeavors by upgrading the LTA to the level of a government department.⁴³ In March 1965, the LTA was reorganized and renamed the National Atomic Energy Agency (or BATAN, *Badan Tenaga Atom Nasional*).⁴⁴ Dr. G.A. Siwabessy, the director of the former LTA, remained in charge of BATAN and was promoted to the rank of cabinet minister.⁴⁵

Eight months after Hartono began his boasts, Sukarno finally declared his support for an Indonesian atom bomb to the world. During a speech to a Muslim movement congress held in Bandung on July 24, 1965, Sukarno announced that "God willing, Indonesia will shortly produce its own atom bomb."⁴⁶ Sukarno claimed that the bomb would serve to "guard our sovereignty, guard our homeland."⁴⁷ He stressed that Indonesia would not use the bomb aggressively against any nation, thereby disavowing any offensive use of the bomb in Indonesia's revolutionary struggle with the West. However, if Indonesia's independence were threatened by another nation, Sukarno asserted that "we are obligated to defend our homeland."⁴⁸

Sukarno's Bandung speech is the only indicator that he, as Indonesian president, made anything approaching a "proliferation decision." Taking into account Sukarno's penchant for "high-flown speeches and grandiose doctrines,"⁴⁹ his eight-month silence on Hartono's ambitious atom bomb proposal leads to the deduction that he was undecided prior to July. As J.A.C. Mackie observes, Sukarno was not a daring decisionmaker and "was cautious or even hesitant about committing himself firmly to any particular course of action if there were uncertainties ahead, especially in matters of domestic politics."⁵⁰ Given this tendency, Sukarno's strong declaration in July 1965 may mark that point in time when

Sukarno decided to pursue nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, there is no record available that reveals exactly when Sukarno made this decision, which officials were involved in making his decision, and what precisely this decision entailed. For example, did Sukarno decide to commit his country to becoming a nuclear weapon power or did he simply decide to add presidential support to Hartono's nuclear aspirations? These questions remain unanswered, and for that reason, we cannot conclude that Sukarno actually made a proliferation decision in the true sense. The most that can be concluded based on the available evidence is that Sukarno decided to publicly express his desire to make Indonesia a nuclear weapon state.

Sukarno's words encouraged Hartono to speak even more avidly in favor of the bomb and prompted other high-ranking Indonesian officials to join in a chorus of support. Hartono reiterated that Indonesia would test an atom bomb soon—possibly after the Asian-African Conference scheduled for October in Algiers.⁵¹ Speaker of the Indonesian Parliament Arudji Kartawinata stated that the explosion of an Indonesian atom bomb was certain to be welcomed by the Indonesian people.⁵² Even Foreign Minister Dr. Subandrio, who seven years earlier had disavowed any interest in nuclear weapons, voiced his support by asserting that “we have no objections that all nations and countries in the world have atomic and nuclear weapons.”⁵³

This increased pro-bomb rhetoric in Jakarta gained special attention from neighboring Malaysia and the Philippines, which were concerned that Indonesia aspired to become a regional hegemon. The US government sought to alleviate these fears by continuing to make public assurances that Indonesia could not produce its own nuclear weapon. However, confidentially, the US Department of State was investigating another path that Indonesia might secretly follow to become a nuclear weapon state. American officials were beginning to take Indonesian nuclear aspirations seriously, not because they believed the government could build atomic weapons indigenously, but because they believed Sukarno might gain access to nuclear weapons through China.

In light of the new cooperation between Peking and Jakarta, some diplomats speculated that China, in order to cement its political relationship with Indonesia, might conduct a nuclear test in the Indonesian archipelago and allow the Indonesians to take credit for it.⁵⁴ A secret telegram dated July 29 sent from the US embassy in

Jakarta indicates that American diplomats were evaluating the “...possibility [of] Chicoms [Chinese Communists] exploding atomic device on Indo territory...”⁵⁵ On October 1, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk brought this concern to the attention of Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko during a dinner meeting at the United Nations. According to a memorandum of this conversation, Rusk told Gromyko that “he did not believe Indonesia had any nuclear capability; if an explosion did occur in that area, we must conclude that it was of Chinese origin.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, Rusk emphasized that “he did think it possible that the Chinese would detonate a nuclear bomb in Indonesia.”⁵⁷

Evidently, the international news media reached the same conclusion as American officials had, because the idea of a Chinese connection was reported widely during the months of August and September 1965. In Britain, the *Sunday Times* reported that China was preparing an undersea nuclear explosion off the coast of the Indonesian province of West Irian on the island of New Guinea.⁵⁸ In the Philippines, the *Manila Daily Bulletin* reported that the next logical step for the PRC's nuclear weapon program was to conduct a marine test and that possibly, “Communist China may be helping Sukarno get the last laugh.”⁵⁹ In the United States, the *New York Times* reported that “Peking might set off a nuclear blast on one of Indonesia's 3000 islands but retain complete control of the test and the resources employed.”⁶⁰ Even the official Indonesian news agency Antara acknowledged the idea by reporting on Filipino speculation about an atomic blast. Antara reported that the Philippine Provincial Constabulary Intelligence expected the Chinese to explode an atom bomb underwater near West Irian.⁶¹

In the several decades since these reports, some scholars of Indonesian history have further considered the possibility of a Chinese-assisted nuclear explosion. Historians David Mazingo and J.A.C. Mackie discount Hartono and Sukarno's bomb rhetoric and instead focus on the Sino-Indonesian talks held in Peking from January 23 to January 28, 1965. The meetings were attended by a 42-member Indonesian delegation led by Foreign Minister Dr. Subandrio and a Chinese delegation led by Premier Chou En-Lai and Minister of Foreign Affairs Marshal Chen Yi.⁶² The joint statement issued at the conclusion of the talks is the only indication of what was agreed to by both parties. According to the statement, China and Indonesia agreed, “to strengthen their technical cooperation, expand their trade, develop mari-

time transportation between them and strengthen friendly contacts in the military field.”⁶³ Both Mozingo and Mackie identify the reference to “technical cooperation” as the main source of speculation that Chinese nuclear assistance might have been offered.

For his part, Mozingo believes such speculation occurred mainly because some of Indonesia’s civilian and military leaders “apparently regarded the alliance with China as a means of obtaining the necessary assistance for making a start in the nuclear direction,” and stated so publicly.⁶⁴ Mackie, however, suggests that perhaps the Chinese did discuss nuclear cooperation with the Indonesian delegation. As possible evidence, he cites the prominent part played during the talks by Wu Heng, who was believed to have been the head of nuclear affairs in the PRC’s Scientific and Technological Commission.⁶⁵

Mozingo and Mackie offer no first-hand evidence that China and Indonesia discussed nuclear assistance during the January 1965 meetings. More importantly, neither the Chinese nor the Indonesian records of the talks are available. We can therefore only speculate on what the Indonesian and Chinese officials discussed. Presumably though, actions were taken by the Chinese government that helped shape Indonesian expectations of nuclear assistance.

But what if diplomatic and scholarly speculations about a Sino-Indonesian nuclear dialogue are incorrect? How else would Indonesian government officials and the Indonesian president develop the expectation that their nation could become a nuclear power? One document (but only one) mentions the possibility that Indonesia sought the bomb from a nuclear power other than China. On August 3, 1965, the American defense attaché in Jakarta made the following classified report to the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington:

ARMA [army attaché] advised evening 2 Aug by extremely reliable source that Brig Gen Sabur, CG [commanding general] palace guard and person closest to Sukarno, left Jakarta morning 2 Aug for Paris on order [from] Sukarno to procure atomic bomb or device for Indos from French. According to source French already indicated to Sukarno willingness [to] sell bomb or device for eight hundred thousand dollars. Source [is] close friend of Sabur who told source purpose of trip.⁶⁶

The attaché continued by speculating that Sabur might have fabricated the story, but stressed that the American government “cannot overlook capabilities and present feelings toward US [by] that other great leader, de Gaulle.”⁶⁷ The report was forwarded to Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William Bundy who scribbled in the margin the ironic comment, “A Bargain!”⁶⁸ For Bundy, this report was unbelievable, and today the possibility of the French providing the bomb to the Indonesians remains implausible in the absence of further evidence. There is as of yet no evidence that Brigadier General Sabur traveled to Paris. However, even if Sukarno only considered asking the French for nuclear assistance, then this option cannot be ruled out as a possible source of encouragement to Sukarno and his government officials.

In any event, the plan to acquire an atom bomb apparently still seemed promising to Sukarno in late August. On August 24, Sukarno told a group of Japanese journalists that “Indonesia’s preparations to explode its first atom bomb are progressing smoothly without being affected by international events.”⁶⁹ In early September, Sukarno may have been further encouraged by a US government decision to continue peaceful nuclear assistance to Indonesia despite the government’s aspirations for nuclear weapons. For obvious reasons, the Johnson administration was reluctant to extend the original five-year agreement for cooperation in atomic energy with Indonesia that was set to expire in September 1965. According to the *New York Times*, the administration was “persuaded to continue the cooperation basically by the argument that there was no way to end the program without the Indonesians taking full control of it.”⁷⁰

By the end of September, however, Sukarno’s public boasts about the bomb ceased. Sukarno’s hope that China might test a nuclear weapon in Indonesian waters diminished on September 29 when PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi stated in a press conference that “as for the request for China’s help in the manufacture of atom bombs, this question is not realistic.”⁷¹ Instead, Chen expressed hope that African and Asian nations would develop their own nuclear weapons on a “do it yourself” basis.⁷² The US Central Intelligence Agency interpreted Chen’s comments as designed to “parry pressure from Jakarta for assistance in developing an Indonesian nuclear capability, or for a Chinese-supplied nuclear device to be exploded on Indonesian soil.”⁷³ Chen Yi’s statement is noteworthy because it remains the only di-

rect evidence from the PRC government that the Chinese considered providing nuclear assistance to Indonesia.

Indonesia's aspirations to become a nuclear weapon state ended on October 1, 1965. On this day, a group of dissident Indonesian army and air force officers, along with members of the Indonesian Communist Party (or PKI, *Partai Komunis Indonesia*), abducted and murdered six senior army generals, including the top army commander.⁷⁴ The officers and PKI members announced themselves on local radio as the "September 30 Movement" and claimed that their purpose was to save President Sukarno and the Republic of Indonesia from a coup by the generals.⁷⁵ Within two days, however, Major General Suharto, commander of Indonesian Armed Forces' strategic reserve, assumed command of the army and suppressed the September 30 Movement.⁷⁶ The subsequent backlash against the PKI resulted in the massacre of approximately 500,000 Indonesian Communists and Indonesians suspected of being Communists.⁷⁷

The aborted coup also discredited Sukarno and ended the possibility of an Indonesian atom bomb. On March 11, 1966, Sukarno was forced to transfer presidential power to General Suharto.⁷⁸ The idea of an Indonesian bomb had been so closely tied to Sukarno and his vision of a new Indonesian revolution that there was no real chance that Indonesia's new leader would pursue nuclear weapons. In 1967, the Suharto government formally agreed to international safeguards of sensitive nuclear materials and equipment received from the United States, thereby eliminating any suspicion that it still intended to become a nuclear weapon state.⁷⁹ Today, Indonesia continues to abide by that agreement in its operation of the TRIGA-Mark II reactor as well as two newer research reactors. Interestingly, the Indonesian government has yet to move beyond the planning stages for a nuclear power plant.

EXPLANATIONS FOR INDONESIA'S NUCLEAR ASPIRATIONS

One possible explanation for Indonesia's nuclear aspirations follows the traditional premise that countries seek the atom bomb for national security reasons.⁸⁰ During the mid-1960s, Sukarno identified two moves by Western powers in Southeast Asia as potentially dangerous to his country's security: Britain's ongoing support for the Federation of Malaysia and US deployment of combat troops to Vietnam. These external threats, as

perceived by Sukarno, suggest that he pursued the bomb to strengthen Indonesia's defense.

Sukarno viewed the formation of the Federation of Malaysia on September 16, 1963, as a threat to his vision of an Indonesian socialist revolution against NEOKLIM.⁸¹ The federation was formed when Malaya, independent from the British since 1957, merged with the former British colonies of Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei.⁸² The latter three colonies occupied the western and northern fringes of the island of Borneo while the Indonesian province of Kalimantan occupied the southern two-thirds of Borneo. The British, who encouraged the union, believed this realignment would be in Indonesia's interest because it was in essence an effort to de-colonize the area.⁸³ Sukarno, however, reached the opposite conclusion and viewed the proposal as a neocolonialist plot to "surround" Indonesia.⁸⁴ Many Indonesian army officers initially agreed with their president and considered the formation of Malaysia "as a means of prolonging British influence" in the region.⁸⁵ Their opinions were formed from the perception that the federation was a "British project" designed to create a "puppet state" to perpetuate neocolonialism in the region.⁸⁶

In late 1963, Sukarno declared his intent to "Crush Malaysia" and initiated an undeclared war dubbed the "Konfrontasi" against the British and Malaysian troops in Borneo. Sukarno intended the Konfrontasi to support his goals of driving the United Kingdom from Southeast Asia and eliminating the neocolonialist threat to Indonesia.⁸⁷ The Konfrontasi continued for three years, although it was effectively over in two years when Suharto began to take power away from Sukarno in late 1965.

Not surprisingly, Sukarno also perceived America's increased involvement in Vietnam as a threat to his country's security. The United States escalated its intervention in Southeast Asia in early 1965, when President Johnson, responding to the continuing Communist threat in Vietnam, committed conventional military forces on an open-ended basis. On February 25, Johnson approved the deployment of two battalions of US Marines to South Vietnam.⁸⁸ At the same time, Johnson ordered sustained bombing attacks on North Vietnam in "Operation Rolling Thunder."⁸⁹ By March, the United States was committed to a large, conventional war in Southeast Asia. According to Jay Taylor, America's troop deployment and bombing offensive in Vietnam "had a major, if nega-

tive, effect on the momentous events in Indonesia.”⁹⁰ Among Indonesians, the war supported the belief that US imperialism was their principal enemy.⁹¹ For his part, Sukarno viewed the Americans as a threat to Indonesia’s alignment with the PRC and a danger to his hope for a new Indonesian revolution.⁹²

Despite British and American assurances that they were not threats to Indonesia’s security, Sukarno continued to view the Western powers as menaces throughout the mid-1960s. But did these perceived threats cause him to develop nuclear aspirations? Specifically, is there a correlation between the emergence of these threats and Sukarno’s decision to pursue nuclear weapons? The main evidence in support of an affirmative answer to these questions comes from public comments made by Sukarno on the potential uses of the bomb. For example, on the day that Sukarno first publicly supported an Indonesian nuclear capability in July 1965, he stated that the atom bomb would be used if Indonesia were attacked.⁹³ Later that summer, Sukarno sent a message to delegates at the World Conference against Atom and Hydrogen Bombs being held in Tokyo in which he characterized the American and British nuclear capabilities as a threat to Indonesia’s security. Sukarno argued that “nuclear arms in the hands of the new emerging forces are to safeguard peace and liberty, whereas nuclear weapons in the hands of imperialists are to cause disaster and domination.”⁹⁴ According to Sukarno, the people of the new emerging forces “have to strengthen their defense with atomic weapons.”⁹⁵ These statements suggest that Sukarno’s support for an Indonesian bomb was, in part, a response to perceived threats from the British and the Americans.

However, there is also evidence to counter the notion that Sukarno seriously believed that Britain and the United States presented an imminent danger to Indonesia’s security. For example, during the same period when Sukarno sought to label the Western powers as threats, the British were removing their military forces “East of the Suez” and the Americans were providing nuclear energy assistance to Indonesia under the Atoms for Peace program. British, American, and even some Indonesian leaders did not overlook these facts and believed that Sukarno was greatly exaggerating the threat his country faced from the West. In fact, during 1964 and 1965, Indonesian army leaders began to disagree with Sukarno’s policy of *Konfrontasi* and attempted to obstruct its effective implementation.⁹⁶

However, even if Sukarno’s fears were false or disproportionate, many Indonesians probably agreed that their country’s security was at risk from the West. Not only were Indonesians witnessing American and British military intervention in Vietnam and Borneo during the mid-1960s, but many Indonesians had also observed first-hand the US attempt to subvert their government during the late 1950s.⁹⁷ In this context, Sukarno’s pursuit of nuclear weapons could be used to support the argument that states seek nuclear weapons because of external threats to their security. Such an argument would be framed as follows: acting out of fear, Sukarno sought the bomb to deter the conventional threat posed by US and British expeditionary forces in the region.

While Sukarno preferred the world to believe that external threats to Indonesia’s security caused him to seek the bomb, these dubious threats alone provide an insufficient explanation, particularly because internal challenges to Sukarno’s authority offer much more compelling reasons for his nuclear aspirations. Given the intense power struggle in Indonesian domestic politics at that time, it seems more likely that Sukarno pursued nuclear weapons primarily to serve domestic purposes. During the mid-1960s, Indonesian domestic politics were beset by a struggle between Sukarno, the PKI, and the army. According to Harold Crouch, Indonesian politics in 1965 “had become more polarized than ever before as President Sukarno aligned himself more openly with the PKI against the army leadership.” In response, army leaders began “to consider taking more active measures to protect their position.”⁹⁸ In these circumstances, Sukarno may have hoped the prestige of nuclear weapons would help him maintain the support of the Indonesian army and also help increase domestic stability.

For Sukarno, maintaining army support for his regime was crucial since the army posed the only real domestic threat to his planned Indonesian socialist revolution. By 1965, however, Sukarno was rapidly losing the support of Indonesia’s army leaders. Many top officers bitterly opposed Sukarno’s increasingly pro-China stance as well as his tacit support for the creation of a “Fifth Force.”⁹⁹ The Fifth Force was a proposal by PKI leaders to create a formal group of armed peasants and workers to augment the existing four branches of the Indonesian Armed Forces (or ABRI, *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*): the army, navy, air force, and the police.¹⁰⁰ Leaders in the army viewed this proposal as an effort to neutralize their power and pressed Sukarno to quash the

idea immediately.¹⁰¹ Sukarno, however, exacerbated the military's dissatisfaction by gradually accepting the idea as the year progressed.¹⁰²

By the middle of 1965, the Fifth Force had become the focus of a bitter debate between Sukarno and the PKI on one side, and the army's conservative leaders on the other. Sukarno's full acceptance of the Fifth Force idea in August created a dangerous rift between him and the military.¹⁰³ Interestingly, during this same period, Sukarno stepped up his public support for nuclear weapons. In light of these circumstances, Jay Taylor suggests that "Sukarno may have held out the prospect of a Chinese-provided nuclear explosion and the consequent enhancement of army and air force prestige as a device to dislodge the generals from their strong opposition both to the PKI Fifth Force and to the alliance with China."¹⁰⁴ In other words, Sukarno exploited the possibility of acquiring the bomb to garner support for his agenda from ABRI leaders.

Sukarno may also have leveraged the prestige of nuclear weapons to sustain the stability of his country. Stability has always been fundamental to Indonesian national security because of the size and diversity of the state. In the mid-1960s, Indonesia was already one of the world's most populous countries. When the state was formed 20 years earlier, it joined together four major ethnic groups, four major religions, 16 major language groups as well as hundreds of smaller *kaum* (clan or ethnic group), each with a unique language or dialect.¹⁰⁵ The population included the world's largest number of Muslims in one country and a financially strong non-Muslim, Chinese minority, while its territory encompassed thousands of islands spread throughout the southwest Pacific Rim.¹⁰⁶ Without political stability, maintaining the unity of such a large and diverse country would be difficult at best.

One of Sukarno's solutions to the problem of maintaining stability at home was to rally the people behind the promise of regional leadership. This promise was appealing because there was a strong desire among Indonesians for a regional role inspired by their successful 1945-1949 revolution for independence from the Dutch and derived from their sense of geographic importance. According to Michael Leifer, "a consciousness of vast territorial scale, an immense population, extensive natural resources, as well as a strategic location, produced the conviction that Indonesia was entitled to play a leading role in the management of regional

order within South-East Asia."¹⁰⁷ From the viewpoint of the army, according to Harold Crouch, officers "regarded Indonesia as the natural leader of Southeast Asia."¹⁰⁸

To fulfill this promise, Sukarno had to provide his people with evidence that he would make Indonesia the regional power they hoped for. As such, his decision to publicly support an Indonesian atom bomb may have been part of his plan to foster the belief that Indonesia would become a regional power. This view is supported by the observations of American diplomats, who noted, "there does seem little doubt that Indo political [leaders and the] public likes [sic] to hear about [the] great military power they are supposedly developing and evidently many are beginning to believe it."¹⁰⁹ Evidently, Sukarno sought to focus public attention on the prestige of nuclear weapons, associate such plans with his leadership, and thereby fulfill his own political interest in maintaining domestic stability. Sukarno's nuclear aspirations thus support the argument that states seek nuclear weapons because of domestic political considerations.

CONCLUSION

The Indonesian case is important because it is relatively unknown and examining it may therefore shed new light on proliferation theory, especially as it applies to Asia. In general, we can conclude that Sukarno and his leaders talked about the bomb during the mid-1960s and that a variety of factors, both external and internal to Indonesia, may have influenced the president's decision to profess to support the bomb. One variable that may have contributed to the development of Sukarno's nuclear aspirations was a perceived threat to Indonesia's security from the West. Sukarno viewed British support for the new Federation of Malaysia and American involvement in Vietnam as neocolonialist efforts to lay siege to Indonesia. Another variable that likely influenced Sukarno's decision even more was the domestic political situation. The mid-1960s were a turbulent period in Indonesia's history and Sukarno probably promoted the idea of an Indonesian bomb in an attempt to sway the tide of domestic events in his favor. Together, both of these factors illustrate that there is no simple explanation for Indonesian nuclear aspirations.

What we cannot determine from the Indonesian case is whether China ever agreed to support Indonesian nuclear aspirations or whether Sukarno actually intended to commit his country to becoming a nuclear weapon

state. For these questions to be answered, Chinese and Indonesian government records from the mid-1960s will have to be examined. Unfortunately, these records remain closed not only in China, but also in Indonesia where the events of 1965 are still kept relatively secret by those key participants still living.

KEY EVENTS

1958: Foreign Minister Dr. Subandrio disavows Indonesia's interest in nuclear weapons.

December 5, 1958: Indonesian government creates Institute of Atomic Energy (LTA) to supervise nuclear research and develop atomic energy.

June 8, 1960: United States and Indonesia sign an agreement to cooperate in the civil uses of atomic energy.

September 21, 1960: US-Indonesian agreement becomes effective.

April 19, 1961: Construction inaugurated on TRIGA-Mark II research reactor at Bandung.

October 7, 1963: Indonesia signs 1963 Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in Moscow.

October 16, 1964: China explodes its first atom bomb.

October 17, 1964: Indonesia conducts its first nuclear reaction at Bandung research reactor.

November 15, 1964: Brigadier General Hartono announces that Indonesia plans to explode an atom bomb during 1965.

November 26, 1964: President Sukarno signs law that stipulates Indonesia's use of atomic energy.

January 28, 1965: China-Indonesia cooperation agreement initiates the Peking-Jakarta Axis.

February 2, 1965: Hartono announces that 200 scientists are conducting tests on the production of an atom bomb; indicates the possibility of an Armed Forces Day surprise on October 5, 1965.

March 1965: The LTA is reorganized and renamed the National Atomic Energy Agency (BATAN).

July 24, 1965: Sukarno declares his support for an Indonesian atom bomb; pro-bomb rhetoric in Jakarta increases.

August 1965: US Department of State speculates that China is preparing to explode an atom bomb in Indonesian waters and will let Sukarno take credit; international news media reports this possibility.

August 3, 1965: US defense attaché in Jakarta reports that Sukarno has sent one of his generals to France to buy a bomb.

September 8, 1965: Johnson administration decides to continue peaceful nuclear assistance to Indonesia despite Sukarno's expressed aspirations for the bomb.

September 29, 1965: PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi declines Indonesia's request for assistance in acquiring an atom bomb.

October 1, 1965: US Secretary of State Rusk expresses concern over Indonesian nuclear aspirations to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko.

October 1, 1965: Aborted coup in Indonesia discredits Sukarno and ends possibility of an Indonesian bomb.

October 5, 1965: Armed Forces Day passes without an atom bomb test.

March 11, 1966: Sukarno transfers power to General Suharto.

June 19, 1967: Indonesia signs formal safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

¹ The author would like to thank a number of people who provided helpful comments and support for this article including Michael Barletta, Mary Callahan, James Wirtz, Jim Walsh, Brad Roberts, Catherine Montie, and Ben Abel.

² The Peking-Jakarta Axis is the term coined by scholars to describe the informal alliance formed in early 1965, between the governments of Indonesia and the People's of Republic of China. The axis was not based on a treaty, but rather on a series of agreements to cooperate in areas such as trade and technology. Fundamental to the development of this axis was the two governments' shared interest in driving Western imperialism from Southeast Asia. See Jay Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia* (New York: Praeger, 1976), pp. 82-84.

³ Indonesian nuclear aspirations are mentioned in several major studies of Indonesian foreign policy, but with few details. For example, see Michael Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), p. 105; Sheldon W. Simon, *The Broken Triangle: Peking, Djakarta, and the PKI* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1969), p. 69; David Mazingo, *Chinese Policy Toward Indonesia, 1949-1967* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 211-212; and J.A.C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963-1966* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 287-288. The most comprehensive examination of Indonesian nuclear aspirations is contained in Jay Taylor's study of Chinese foreign policy. See Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, pp. 104-108.

⁴ According to Stephen Meyer, a "proliferation decision" is an explicit government decision to transform a latent nuclear capability into an operational nuclear weapons capability. This decision usually follows a "capability decision" to develop the indigenous technological and industrial capacity to support a nuclear weapons program. The term "proliferation decision" is therefore used liberally in the case of Indonesia since Sukarno's decision to pursue the bomb was not preceded by the development of an indigenous nuclear capability. See Stephen M. Meyer, *The Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 5-6.

⁵ Soebandrio, G.A. Siwabessy, and Soemarno Sosroatmodjo (trans. by Robert M. Cornejo), *Pengaruh Tenaga Atom Atau Tenaga Nuclear Dalam Hubungan Antar Negara* (Influence of Atomic Energy or Nuclear Energy in International Relations) (Jakarta: Ministry of Information, 1958), p. 9.

⁶ Daniel B. Poneman, "Indonesia," in James E. Katz and Onkar S. Marwah, eds., *Nuclear Power in Developing Countries* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982), p. 183.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 185. American nuclear efforts began in 1961, with construction of a TRIGA-Mark II research reactor at Bandung.

⁸ Peter R. Lavoy, "Learning and the Evolution of Cooperation in US and Soviet Nuclear Nonproliferation Activities," in George W. Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock, eds., *Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), p. 754.

⁹ McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival* (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 287.

¹⁰ Department of State, "Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy," June 8, 1960, TIAS no. 4557, *United States Treaties and Other International Agreements*, vol. 11, pt. 2.

¹¹ "Indonesia," *Nuclear Power* 6 (June 1961), p. 56.

¹² Poneman, "Indonesia," p. 185.

¹³ Department of State, "Agreement for Cooperation between the United States and Indonesia."

¹⁴ Poneman, "Indonesia," p. 185. The name TRIGA-Mark II stands for Training Research Isotope production General Atomic-type Mark II.

¹⁵ "Bandung Atomic Reactor in Operation," *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), October 20, 1964, p. 6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Indonesia signed the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) on October 7, 1963, in Moscow. The LTBT outlawed nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, underwater, or outer space, but did not restrict underground testing.

¹⁸ "World Acclaims China's Nuclear Success," *Peking Review* 43 (1964), p. 10.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 192-194. According to Lewis and Xue, such declarations supported one of the main themes of China's evolving nuclear strategy, namely that a socialist country such as China required nuclear weapons to defend against imperialism.

²¹ "China Successfully Explodes Its First Atom Bomb," *Peking Review*, 42 (1964), p. iii.

²² Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, *Modern Indonesia: A History Since 1945* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1995), p. 87.

²³ "Undang-Undang No. 31 Tahun 1964 tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Pokok Tenaga Atom, Presiden Republik Indonesia" (trans. by Robert M. Cornejo), (Law Number 31 for 1964 Regarding the Stipulations for Atomic Energy Principles, President of the Republic of Indonesia), para. 1, art. 5, ch. 2, in *Sepuluh Tahun Tenaga Atom di Indonesia, 5 Desember 1958-5 Desember 1968* (Ten Years of Atomic Energy in Indonesia, December 5, 1958-December 5, 1968) (Jakarta: Indonesian Atomic Energy Agency, 1968), p. A1.4.

²⁴ "Indonesia to Explode Atom Bomb in 1965?" *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), November 16, 1964, p. 7.

²⁵ "Razak Doubts Indonesia has Guided Missiles," *Indonesian Observer* (Jakarta), November 17, 1964, p. 1.

²⁶ "Australian, US Comment on Indonesian A-Bomb," *Indonesian Observer* (Jakarta), November 18, 1964, p. 1.

²⁷ "Indonesia Asserts She Plans A-Bomb," *New York Times*, November 16, 1964, p. 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Poneman, "Indonesia," p. 184.

³⁰ "Indonesia Talks Big About Nuclear Club," *Business Week*, February 6, 1965, p. 32. The TRIGA-Mark II uses fuel enriched to 20 percent uranium-235.

³¹ Department of State, "Agreement for Cooperation between the United States and Indonesia."

³² US Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Technologies Underlying Weapons of Mass Destruction*, OTA-BP-ISC-115 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 174.

³³ "Indonesia Talks Big About Nuclear Club," p. 32.

³⁴ "Guided Missiles to be Launched Next March," *Indonesian Observer* (Jakarta), December 23, 1964, p. 1.

³⁵ Department of State, "Outgoing Telegram from Department of State," January 29, 1965, *LBJ National Security Files, Asia & the Pacific: 1963-1969*, Indonesia Cables on microfilm, reel 7, frame 0354.

³⁶ The informal Peking-Jakarta Axis began on January 28, 1965, when the Chinese and Indonesian foreign ministers signed an economic and technical cooperation agreement and pledged to strengthen friendly military contacts. See "China-Indonesia Joint Statement," *Peking Review* 6 (1965), p. 8.

³⁷ Tad Szulc, "Jakarta Build-up Linked to Peking," *New York Times*, January 8, 1965, p. 2. However, the details of Chinese nuclear training provided to Indonesia remain unclear.

³⁸ "Army Maintenance Corps to Produce High Quality Guided Missile," *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), February 2, 1965, p. 6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ "Indonesia Talks Big About Nuclear Club," p. 32.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Department of State, "Incoming Telegram from American Embassy Jakarta," February 10, 1965, *LBJ National Security Files, Asia & the Pacific: 1963-1969*, Indonesia Cables on microfilm, reel 7, frame 0368.

⁴³ Poneman, "Indonesia," p. 186.

⁴⁴ *Sepuluh Tahun Tenaga Atom di Indonesia*, p. A5.4.

⁴⁵ Poneman, "Indonesia," p. 187.

⁴⁶ Sukarno (trans. by Robert M. Cornejo), "Amanat PJM Presiden Sukarno pada Kongres Muhammadiyah di Bandung, 24 Djuli 1965" (Speech to the Muhammadiyah Congress in Bandung, July 24, 1965), in *Sukarno: Selected Speeches 1958-1966*, collection of Professor Angus McIntyre, LaTrobe University, Bundoora Campus, Australia.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ J.A.C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963-1966*, p. 91. For further discussion of Sukarno's personality and leadership, see C.L.M. Penders, *The Life and Times of Sukarno* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974) and J.D. Legge, *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (London: The Penguin Press, 1972).
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ "Roket-Roket & Peluru-Peluru Kendali kita siap utk hantjurkan Singapura" (trans. by Robert M. Cornejo) (Our Rockets and Guided Missiles Ready to Smash Singapore), *Angkatan Bersendjata* (Jakarta), July 28, 1965, p. 1.
- ⁵² "Bom Atom Indonesia" (trans. by Robert M. Cornejo) (Indonesian Atom Bomb), *Angkatan Bersendjata* (Jakarta), August 10, 1965, p. 1.
- ⁵³ "No Objections All Countries Have Atom and Nuclear Bombs," *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), August 4, 1965, p. 9.
- ⁵⁴ Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, p. 105.
- ⁵⁵ Department of State, "Incoming Telegram from American Embassy Jakarta," July 29, 1965, *LBJ National Security Files, Asia & the Pacific: 1963-1969*, Indonesia Cables on microfilm, reel 7, frame 0784.
- ⁵⁶ Department of State, "Memorandum of Conversation during USSR Foreign Minister Gromyko's Dinner for Secretary Rusk," October 1, 1965, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, vol. XI, p. 250.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Richard Hughes, "China May Set Off Undersea A-Bomb," *Sunday Times* (London), September 12, 1965, p. 2.
- ⁵⁹ "Atom Bomb Possible for Indonesia?" *Manila Daily Bulletin*, August 25, 1965, p. 2.
- ⁶⁰ Seymour Topping, "Sukarno Acts with China to Outflank West in Asia," *New York Times*, August 25, 1965, p. 3.
- ⁶¹ "Philippines Herald on Possibility of Indonesia's Possessing Nuclear Device," *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), September 11, 1965, p. 6.
- ⁶² Mazingo, *Chinese Policy Toward Indonesia, 1949-1967*, p. 211.
- ⁶³ "China-Indonesia Joint Statement," p. 8.
- ⁶⁴ Mazingo, *Chinese Policy Toward Indonesia, 1949-1967*, p. 212.
- ⁶⁵ Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963-1966*, pp. 287-288.
- ⁶⁶ Department of Defense, "National Military Command Center Message," August 3, 1965, *LBJ National Security Files, Asia & the Pacific: 1963-1969*, Indonesia Cables on microfilm, reel 7, frame 0869.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ "President Sukarno on Indonesia's Atom Bomb," *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), August 24, 1965, p. 15.
- ⁷⁰ John W. Finney, "US Continues Atom Aid," *New York Times*, September 9, 1965, p. 15.
- ⁷¹ Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, p. 107.
- ⁷² Central Intelligence Agency, "Intelligence Memorandum, Chen Yi's Press Conference," October 1, 1965, *LBJ National Security Files, First Supplement, Asia & the Pacific: 1963-1969*, Indonesia Cables on microfilm, reel 3, frame 0516.
- ⁷³ Ibid.
- ⁷⁴ Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, p. 106. There are several interpretations of the aborted coup of October 1, 1965. One theory is that the coup was an internal military affair and did not involve the PKI. For this view, see Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965 Coup in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1971). Another theory identifies PKI leaders as the masterminds behind the coup. For this view, see Paul F. Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears: Fifty Years of US-Indonesian Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 213-219. The most neutral account of the coup is found in Harold Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 97-134.
- ⁷⁵ Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, p. 213.
- ⁷⁶ Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, p. 106.
- ⁷⁷ Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, p. 106.
- ⁷⁸ William H. Frederick and Robert L. Worden, eds., *Indonesia: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 57.
- ⁷⁹ Poneman, "Indonesia," p. 186. On June 19, 1967, Indonesian Ambassa-
- dor to Austria and the IAEA Laili Rusad, IAEA Director General Eklund, and US Ambassador Henry D. Smyth signed an IAEA safeguard agreement.
- ⁸⁰ Scott Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of A Bomb," *International Security* 21 (Winter 1996/97). Sagan reviews existing explanations for nuclear proliferation and observes that external security threats continue to be the dominant explanation. He then contrasts this approach with explanations based on domestic politics and the role of ideas. In this section, I compare security and domestic politics explanations. In the Indonesian case, ideas are not a separate variable but instead form part of the security explanation, as Sukarno's anti-imperialist ideology shaped his perception of external threats to Indonesia.
- ⁸¹ Frederick and Worden, *Indonesia: A Country Study*, p. 53.
- ⁸² Cribb and Brown, *Modern Indonesia*, p. 86.
- ⁸³ Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears*, p. 179.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 180.
- ⁸⁵ Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, p. 59.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 57.
- ⁸⁷ Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, p. 83.
- ⁸⁸ Ralph B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War: Volume II, The Struggle for South-East Asia, 1961-65* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 375.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 374.
- ⁹⁰ Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, p. 119.
- ⁹¹ Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War*, p. 313.
- ⁹² Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, pp. 118-119.
- ⁹³ "Indonesia to Produce Own Atom Bomb Shortly," *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), July 24, 1965, p. 13.
- ⁹⁴ "World Confab Against A & H Bombs Accepts Indonesian Proposals," *Antara Home News* (Jakarta), August 2, 1965, p. 8.
- ⁹⁵ Department of State, "Outgoing Telegram from Department of State," July 29, 1965.
- ⁹⁶ Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, p. 73.
- ⁹⁷ See Audrey R. and George McT. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy* (New York: The New Press, 1995). The Kahins provide an excellent account of American involvement in an Indonesian military attempt to overthrow the Sukarno government during the late 1950s. Military commanders from Indonesia's outer islands started the rebellion because they were dissatisfied with the Java-based government's increasing control of the military. The United States covertly supported the outer island commanders in an effort to replace and transform Indonesia's political leadership. According to the Kahins' sources, the unsuccessful plot resulted in a civil war and led to over 10,000 casualties on the government side and 22,000 casualties on the rebel side.
- ⁹⁸ Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, p. 107. See Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 94-96.
- ⁹⁹ Frederick and Worden, *Indonesia: A Country Study*, p. 54.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia*, p. 111.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., p. 112.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 114.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 107.
- ¹⁰⁵ Frederick and Worden, *Indonesia: A Country Study*, p. xxx.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁷ Leifer, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy*, p. xiv.
- ¹⁰⁸ Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, p. 59.
- ¹⁰⁹ Department of State, "Outgoing Telegram from Department of State," July 29, 1965.