



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

POLITICS OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION: THE CASE OF ACEH
IN INDONESIA

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF HUMAN
SCIENCE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

KULLIYAH OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND
HUMAN SCIENCES INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC
UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

JULY 2000

ABSTRACT

This study examines the issue of politics of national integration in an attempt to explain the case of the Acehese separatism in Indonesia. Its focus is on the government's confrontation policy through the enforcement of DOM (*daerah Operasi Militer/military operation zone*) in Aceh during 1989-1999 period, to silence the idea of separatism propagated by *the GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka/ Free Aceh Movement)* in the region, as well as the impact of such policy on the Acehese attitude toward the GAM, *s-a-vn* the central government.

The data for this analysis are derived from major sources of non-survey data, namely press reports and standard biographical publication for the elite backgrounds and other government and non-government sources of aggregate data. Semi-structured interviews, analysis of students congress and recommendations of various conferences and written works were also used.

An examination of the case of the Acehese separatism *v,s-a-Ws* Indonesian national integration, shows a pattern of communal confrontation rather than integration. The reason for this confrontative attitude is found in the socio-religious, political and economic environments. Particularly, after the enforcement of a decade of military operation in Aceh, primarily because of the brutality of the government military force towards the civilians, the sense of solidarity among the Acehese has grown towards the cause of the CIAM. Consequently, the government has not only failed to eliminate the idea of separatism among the Acehese, but also escalated the *wdl* of the Acehese to be independent from Indonesia through a referendum or through military confrontation.

ملخص البحث

تعالج الدراسة مسألة الوحدة الوطنية بخصوص منطقة "أتشية" وإنفصالها عن إندونيسيا. تركز الدراسة على سياسة المواجهة التي استخدمتها الحكومة من خلال العمليات العسكرية في "أتشية" من 1989 - 1999 م لإسكات الفكرة الانفصالية التي روّجتها حركة "أتشية" الحرة و أثر هذه السياسة على سكان "أتشية" تجاه الحركة والحكومة معاً .

وقد جمعت المعلومات في هذه الدراسة من خلال التقارير الصحفية، و مكاتب عن السير الذاتية للقيادات، و التقارير الحكومية و غير الحكومية، و الكتب المنشورة و كذلك بعض المقابلات الشخصية، تحليل المؤتمرات الطلابية و مقترحات عدد من المؤتمرات.

قد تبين من الدراسة ان حركة "أتشية" الانفصالية تعتبر نزعة مواجهة و ليست نزعة واثام. وتعود جذور نزعة المواجهة هذه لأسباب اجتماعية دينية وسياسية واقتصادية بعد عقد من الزمن من العنق العسكري تجاه المدنيين. ولذا فقد اشتد تضامن سكان "أتشية" و إيمانهم بحركة "أتشية" الحرة. وهكذا فإن الحكومة المركزية لم تغفل فقط في استئصال الفكرة الانفصالية بل زادت سكان "أتشية" إيماناً بالفكر الانفصالي سواء عن طريق الإستفتاء او عن طريق المواجهة العسكرية

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised/ read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to the acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as thesis for the degree of Master of Human Science in Political Science.



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DECLARATION

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DEDICATED TO

My beloved Parents and those who are struggling for the cause of Islam, and the restoration of the rights and dignity of the Muslim Ummah in Aceh and all over the world

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to several persons who have been instrumental in the development of this study. I am particularly grateful to Professor Syed Serajul Islam, Professor Abdul Rashid Moten, Dr. Elfatih A Abdel Salam, Dr. Noore Alm Siddiquee and Br. Tunku Mohar Muktar for their supervision of this effort, continuous encouragement and the generous assistance I received from them throughout my graduate study at HUM. I am also heavily indebted, for their guidance, scholarly advice and keen interest in my work, without which this study would not have appeared in its present form. Though the final product has greatly benefited from their help, I am alone responsible for its contents as well as its shortcomings.

I also wish to thank all HUM staffs, especially the HFrM financial Sponsorship Unit and for its generous financial support. I have been most fortunate to receive during my study and the course of my research and writing in Aceh and Malaysia.

A lasting debt of gratitude is owed to my beloved family, Habib Adams family, the family members of IKAPA, TARSA, and my colleagues who have given me continuous moral supports, which has become my strength and motivation to finish this work in its final form.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The concepts of national integration and nation building in the current literature on political development are used interchangeably. Rounaq Jahan in her study on *Pakistan failure in National Integration*, defines national integration as "the creation of a national political system which supersedes or incorporates all the regional subsystems" indicating that national integration is a multidimensional, complex and dynamic process. As suggested by Myron Weiner:

It [National integration] may involve five tasks: the creation of a sense of territorial nationality; the establishing of national central authority; the bridging of the elite-mass gap; the creation of a "minimum" value consensus; and the devising of integrative institutions and behavior.-

In line with this argument, Christian Drake suggests four different important interlocking elements of national integration which function separately, yet interact and generally mutually reinforce each other. The first are common historical and political experiences, which obviously act as a cohesive force. Second, sharing common socio-cultural attributes that provide citizens with a distinctive identity. Third, advanced infrastructure and telecommunication devices as the means to enhance the level of communication and interaction among diverse ethnic groups within the country. Finally, balanced economic development where the state should be able to evolve a perception that the standard of living is improving and there are some measures of equity in the allocation of economic resources and development schemes. Drake observes:

National integration depends on a fundamental balance among these four major historical-political, socio-cultural, interactions and economic component -dynamic equilibrium. If one component is neglected or become out of balance, disintegrative force may emerge and that can threaten a state's stability or even its continued existence."

The disintegrative force, as Drake argues, can be due to the perpetual crisis of distribution as a result of the mismanaging of resource allocation that deprives a segment of citizens of their due right, which gradually evolves to a stage of common grievance.

This grievance depends on the people's perception of *relative deprivation*, that is the perception of discrepancy between the standard of value expectation and the standard of value capabilities of any individual or community, as Ted Gurr explains in his theory of *relative deprivation*. Ted Gurr's study suggests that value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe, they are rightly entitled, while value capabilities are the goods and conditions that they are capable of getting and keeping. This argument parallels with Marx's hypothesis of *relative deprivation* which suggests that the worker will eventually evolve standards for their desired and expected need satisfaction. Insofar as there is a gap between "what the workers feel they should get and what they actually receive", they will eventually revolt until the gap is minimized or eliminated.

James A. Geschwender asserts that all patterns of temporal changes, which produce revolutionary activities, may be explained with the theory of *dissonance*. Objectively, sociopolitical change produces a state of mind in which individuals perceive that they are unjustly deprived of their due rights. It goes through three different stages. First, they evolve an image of the state of affairs. Next, they develop a belief that they are rightly entitled to that state of affairs. Lastly, they are aware of being deprived from that state of affairs. The combination of these three attitudes induces a state of dissonance and the only way to reduce the state of dissonance is by changing the environment so as to attain the desired state of affairs. This action frequently takes the form of social revolutionary activities." According to Ted Gurr, on principle, there are three basic alternatives for the group to choose: exit, voice, or loyalty. The groups who have autonomy will either demand for an exit that is complete separation, or for a broader autonomous authority, while those who voice through protest and demonstration, will focus their demand on status betterment. Finally, those who accept their situation and try to seize any opportunity available are the loyalists." He concludes that:

The global evidence suggests that there are two different kinds of dynamic factors which drive the political grievances of contemporary minorities. Firstly, political and economic disadvantages will motivate communal groups to demand greater access to the political system and greater economic opportunity. Whereas, a history of political autonomy leads groups to attempt for secession, ecological and demographic stress contributes mainly to demand for redress of grievances within the system; only secondarily do they reinforce demands for autonomy.¹⁰ Whatever may be the causes and types of the separatist movements, usually the response of a state depends on the political and cultural contexts of that particular society. Firstly, the state may adopt an "Accommodative Policy" that is to compromise with the demands of the separatist group. Secondly, the state may adopt a "Confrontative Policy" by enforcing martial law or a military operation to destroy every suspected stronghold of groups i.e. politics of violence and to force them to accept a settlement on the government's terms. Thirdly, the state may attempt through psychological, symbolic, and actual economic, political, and social policies to create an environment that will detract support from the separatist's political appeal. However, there is still a possibility that one of these policies may contribute to the success of the separatist movement too, as Scrawf Islam observes'. If the state uses excessive force rather than economic and political measures to curb the minority group, it will cause the group to feel more alienated and frustrated. The minority elite will exploit this to perpetuate sentiment to mobilize the masses to support the separatist movement.:

In the light of the above, the maintenance of national integration is a matter of particular concern in Indonesia because of the great diversity of both its geographical environment and its people. In recent years, the most crucial challenge has come from Aceh, the staunchest Muslim region of the outer island groups counting for less than 2% of the total population of Indonesia.⁴

The Acehnese have a long and proud history of resistance. For almost sixty years they thwarted colonial military power to "pacify" the region and to fully incorporate into their colonial empire. Although, the Acehnese agreed to support Indonesia's struggle for independence against the Dutch between 1945-1949, the government's failure to enforce Islam as the religion of the state soon led to the formation of an armed revolution, the *Darul Islam*, under Teungku' Muhammad Daud Beureueh. He did proclaim the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Aceh, but he did not demand secession." The revolution ended with a concession that Indonesia granted "Special Region" status to Aceh, giving the Acehnese control over education, religion (the implementation of some element of Islamic *Shari'ah*), and customary law.

The overthrow of Sukarno's regime by Suharto in 1965 was warmly welcomed by the *'Ulamas* of Aceh, primarily because of Suharto's anti-communist stance; that seemed to give a "new hope" for Islam in Indonesia. However, their optimism was brief as Suharto gradually formed a strong centralized government that brought all other countervailing sources of political power into its tight control. This political change was perceived by most of Acehnese political elite as a hindrance for their political, economic, and Islamic development." By the mid-1970s, blatantly unequal distribution of revenue drawn from the region's vast natural resources contributed to

the formation of the armed separatist movement, the GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*/Free Aceh Movement) in 1976.¹

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although, the nascent Acehnese separatist movement was easily crushed and most of its leading figures were driven to live overseas, the Acehnese witnessed the resurrection of the movement with the return of AGAM (*Angkatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* Forces of the Free Aceh Movement) late in 1989.¹ In response to the second phase of the Acehnese armed struggle, the government in Jakarta, upon the request of the then governor of Aceh Dr. Ibrahim Husain, deployed more than 12,000 combined troops from different units to the region. It turned Aceh into a military operation zone for a decade, in which there were reportedly high incidences of human rights violations conducted by the military against the civilians. This study, therefore, will attempt to answer the following three questions. Firstly, what are the reasons underlying the GAM? Secondly, what are the policies that the government of Indonesia adopts to crush this movement? Finally, what impact do these policies have on civilians' socio-religious, political and economic life?

PROBLEM JUSTIFICATION

The recently announced evidence of human rights violations in Aceh during the period 1989-1998, after

the enforcement of martial law in that predominantly Muslim special territory, has drawn the attention of world community. Yet, the irony of this is that there are still very few countries that have come forward to express sympathy

with the struggle of the Acehnese. What is wrong with the GAM? It is, therefore, essential to understand the primary objective of the movement and its failure to gain external support for their struggle. Apart from that, it is also necessary to investigate the impact of the government's aggressive policy against the lives of the Muslims in Aceh. Finally, it is to suggest some measures to prevent more killings and bloodshed in the region.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objectives of this study are as follows. Firstly, to explain briefly the relationship of Aceh and Indonesia in both the historical and contemporary settings in the light of the politics of national integration perspective. Secondly, to investigate specifically the causes for growing dissatisfaction of the Acehnese and the emergence of GAM. Thirdly, to explore the response of the Indonesian government to this movement and to assess the impact of such measures on its followers, as well as on the civilians' socio-religious, political and economic life. And finally, to suggest measures that future Indonesian government can adopt to deal with the movement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the process of investigating the politics of national integration focusing on the case of Aceh in Indonesia, a number of studies have been done. However, the following analysis reveals that none of the related literature has evaluated satisfactorily the impact of the military regimes' politics of violence on regional separatism. In addition, none of them have examined the side effects of the Indonesian military operation in Aceh during the period from 1989 to 1998, in the context of Indonesian politics of national integration.

W. F. Wertheim (1969) in his book *Indonesian Society in Transition*, which is considered to be among the first works on the subject, attempts to interpret the causes of the Acehnese rebellion as the expression of perpetual conflict between the *Uleimas* and the *Uleibalangs* within Acehnese community. This interpretation is basically based on the assumption that Aceh's political development during the post-independence period is initially an expression of Aceh's past politics, dominated by the conflict between the two groups stated above. Wertheim asserts that during the post-independence period, the tension between these two groups continues due to the political condition after the revolution which shows no reversal of the past trend. He writes, "what had been preserved of the old aristocratic order had been integrated into the new social order."¹ Such unfavorable development again brings the *Uleimas-Uleibalangs* conflict to the fore, as the latter see the opportunity for revenge against the former who had outwitted them during the period of national revolution from 1945-1949. In this book, Wertheim overemphasizes the impact of the historical conflict between the *Uleimas* and the *Uleibalangs* within Acehnese politics, in which he considers it as the sole cause of the Acehnese rebellion. This indicates the narrow outlook of the author in analyzing the complex nature of the rebellion. Therefore, this work has failed to answer the question that if the rebellion is due to internal political conflict, why did the Acehnese wage rebellion against the central government? Thus, it shows that this work is irrelevant with respect to

the current political development during the Suharto military regime.

Ute d aGinghip or self-governing rule. It also refers to ananstoeriu who holds the title Of Tcuku. Thus, here t auach auffix " E in case ihe word is used asplural. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society m Transuion 12 revised ed.* (The Hague: W.Van Howie, 1969),165.

This line of argument is in conformity with the Ali Sastromidjojo (1953) governments response in *Ketzrangan dan Djawaban Pemerintah tentang Peristiwa !Thud Beureueh* [The Government Explanation and Answer towards Daud Beureuch's Event]. Prime Minister Ali rejects the opinion that the Aceh rebellion is associated with his governments failure to meet the Acebnese demands for autonomy. Rather, he believes that behind the Acebnese movement lies the conflict for political power between the '*lamas* and *(-leelhilang.c*. When the conflict reappears, the former as the dominant political elite feel that the latter is threatening their political authority, and that compel them to resort to seeking the support of the central government. Yet, the central government refuses to support them and instead let the conflict continue. As a result *the Ulamas* respond by demanding autonomy for Aceh₁ .

S.M Armin 119571, who was the former Governor of North Sumatra and a prominent writer on Acebnese poliics, also holds Ibis argument. In his hook . *1c•lutar Pcrtsnwa !fe•rdarah (It :lt/ah* [On the Bloody Affair in Aceh), he states that the real cause behind the Acclmese rebellion is not the demand for autonomy. but rather the perpetual conflict between the *Llamas* and the *l.Reebalangs*. In this regard, Amin doubts the fact that the religious factor contributes at all to the causes of therebellion, and he believes that the Acehnese leaders are only manipulating religion to gain popular support. These two books represent the stand of the central government that try to deny its political failure. *They* oversimplify a complex problem that trigger the

Kcinrntnan feuerangan R.1., *Kererangan etan Unamuhrrur Peanrrinterh tentang Perisdwa Mind Beureueh* [The Government Explanation aud Auswci towards [laud Beurcuch Event] (Jakarta: Kemeutnan 1cnerangan R.I., 19531.

The word Mich is wriuen in the classical spelling id **the Indonesian language and it is used** interchangeably with ihe word Aceh, ihe spelling ihat *was* undated in 1972.

"S. M. Anon, *Srkmar Pcnxtiwa lfcrrtarati dn ,40eh l u the Bloody Affair in Aceh*. (Jakarta: Socroeu gau N. V, 1956)

Acehnese rebellion. They do not represent the stand of the masses who are directly affected by the rebellion. Therefore, these works are irrelevant to the current development of the Free Aceh Movement.

However, Ajip Rosidi (1986) , in his book *Sjaf-uddin Prcnriranegara l.ebnh Takut Kepada Allah* [Sjafruddin Prawiranegara Fears Allah Most] refutes this opinion He devotes a full chapter of the book to explain the root causes behind the Acehnese rebellion He argues that the reason of

the Acehese rebellion lies in the people being dissatisfied with and degraded by the central government, when the provincial status of Aceh was dissolved and integrated into the Province of North Sumatra in 1950. In addition to that, the religious factor also contributes to the causes of the rebellion when Sukarno fails to keep his promise which is to declare Islam as the State Religion. In this book, Ajip Rosidi manages to show the roots of the conflict that trigger rebellion, but he does not deal specifically with the response of the central government towards the rebellion as well as the impact of the government response on the civilians.

Herbert Feith (1968) in his book *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, asserts that the Acehese rebellion is the expression of the clash of state ideological foundation between Pancasila and Islam, which is closely associated with the political conflict at the national level. Particularly, this occurred after Ali Sastroamidjojo formed a new cabinet controlled by PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia "Indonesian Nationalist Party") that excluded the Muslim Political Party "Masyumi" from the cabinet in 1953. Insofar as Aceh loses its only ally in the center,

Ajip Rosidi, *Sjafnurlim Pergerakan Aceh dan Takutnya terhadap Islam*. 15

there is very little chance for the PLISA (Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh/All Aceh Ulama Association) to have bargaining power at the center. This unfavorable political development marks the victory of secular and nationalist parties, and strengthens Pancasila as state ideology. In this regard, the Acehese under PUSA leadership perceives that Indonesia has deviated from the primary goal of revolution for independence that is the establishment of an Islamic State of Indonesia, or at least to grant Aceh a special status as an Islamic province.²⁰ In this book, Feith overemphasizes the impact of political conflict at the central government on Aceh, but he does not deal with the impact of the central government response towards the rebellion and the civilians. Hence, the works of App and Feith are unable to provide a framework for understanding the recent development of the regional separatist movement in Aceh.

Eric F. Morris (1983) in his Ph.D. thesis *Islam and Politics in Aceh: A Study of Center-Periphery Relation in Indonesia*, poses the question, why have the Acehese so frequently assumed a position of defiance towards the central government? In an attempt to answer the question and to analyze the cause behind the Acehese rebellion, Morris asserts:

People, not region, act politically. Thus we need to ask who formulates identity symbols, who provides the "definition of the situation," and whomobilizes a group on the basis of this identity...in examining the emergence, maintenance and transformation of ethnic and regional identity symbols, attention must be focused on leadership who define the symbol.-

Berheri Penh, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* (New York: Cornell University

Press, ItoS). 30.31 Mlasyumi (Ma)hs Syura Muslim Indonesia/ **Indonesian Muslim Consultation Assembly**) was the syroug ally of ihe PUSA of Acch at ihe ceniralgovernmeny.

"Eric. E Morris, *Islam and /atines nn Arch A Stnd). of Center-Periphery Relations tn Indonesta* (Ph.D. Thesis. Macro Film: Cornell Uuiversiyy, i)53), 11.12

He argues that it is imperative to have a look at the initial consistent desire of the religious leaders, the *Ulamas*, that is to reform the Acehese community according to what Islam dictates as embodied in the *Shari'ah* which gives the Acehese a religious oriented identity. However, during the colonial period, there was another elite group, the *Uleebalangs*, who advocated the continuity of *adat* or indigenous customary law. During the transition period 1946, the contending visions came into open and violent conflict. Meanwhile, in the early 1970s, the dominant new political elite, the secular educated group in Aceh tried to elaborate a new "definition of situation" which contradicted with the *Ulamas* version. They redefine Aceh as "a disadvantaged ethnic minority in need for capital and expertise" which can only be obtained by cooperating with the central government. Morris further argues that though the appeal of religious reform is based on the idiom of Acehese renovation, the revivalist *Ulamas* extend their vision at the national level. This implies that the Muslim leaders maintain that they have the right to say something about Indonesia as a state, particularly on the issue of the Ideological foundations of Indonesia. Therefore, the central government encourages the emergence of other elite groups to formulate different identity symbols which undermined the '*Ulamas*' version. This "divide and rule" policy is similar to that of the Dutch, which created a new *Uleebalangs* or technocrats to counter the Mows aspiration. In this manner, Morris attempts to describe the relations between the contending Acehese elite groups and the center. He further claims that by manipulating the diehard conflict between **these** elite groups, by supporting one of the contending elite groups to counter the other, the

term *Shariah*; refers not only to the Islamic Law *Bududi*, but it also refers to the whole teaching of Islam ordained in the Quran and Sunnah. For they believed that when the faithful attain unity and harmony as true Muslims, any practice of particularism of **sectarianism, kinship, and locality, certainly** could be overcome
"Ihnl, 15

central government maintains its control over Aceh. Although Morris also discusses in short the emergence of the GAM, he is focusing on the early stage of the insurgency. Though it is irrelevant for this study, it provides a useful historical background for it.

David Brown (1994) in his book *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia* further explains the impact of neo-patrimonialism in Indonesia on Acehese communalism during the 'Old Order' and the 'Impact of New Order' on factionalism in Aceh. He shares a similar view with Morris when he analyzes the case of Acehese rebellion during the Old Order as well as the emergence of the Free Aceh Movement during the New Order. Brown focuses on how the politics of the central government in maintaining her control over Aceh. The government took advantage of the perpetual conflict of force within the Acehese community between the new *CNC rbalangs* (secular educated technocrats) and the *Ulamas* by supporting one of the elite groups, so that a cohesive Acehese grouping can never be realized.

Brown and Morris draw similar conclusions on the central-periphery relations. However, Brown focuses more on the success of the central government in creating a strong patron-client relation with the secular-educated elite in Aceh, in which the central government uses the latter as its agent and creates rivalry with

the *'Ulamas*. However, the secular elite failed to realize the goal of Acehese regional development such as minimizing the growing gap between Aceh's contribution to the Indonesian

The Old Order is the period of auicled democrats undo the president of Sukarno. **1959.1968.**" hit New Older is referred to the period of *Tanta Li*, t.,nu,cracy under **Suhartos regime, 1968-**

1998.

David Browu, *The State and Ethmc Penuer in Sourt,,,,,n Iliia* (London: **Routledge**, 1990, **135-157**).

economy and Jakarta's contribution to Aceh's economy. Thus, the perpetuation of unbalanced economic development, which is reinforced by political discrimination, has led to the emergence of the third Acehese political elite group that initiated a separatist movement, the GAM." In this hook, Brown highlights the causes of the emergence of the Movement, but he does not deal with the question of what sort of response the central government takes against the movement. Although his work is irrelevant but it provides a brief political background for this study.

M. A. Nawawi in his conception of "regional stagnancy" in his Ph.D. thesis (1968) entitled *Regionalism and Regional Cab t m Indonesia*. Nawawi goes a step further and posits "particularism" and "stagnation" as the causes of regional sentiment. Prior to the study of the Aceh case, Nawawi argues that the *'lams* rebellion in 1953 was based on "moral disgust and economic statpcwon" This particular case is apparent when the provincial status of Aceh is liquidated to integrate it with the North-Sumatra province. The *'ilama.s* of IUSA perceives negative influences as being brought by the influx of many Javanese Dutch-educated technocrats to Aceh, and by the adoption of Dutch Law which undermines the Islamic Court which has been present since the Japanese occupation. Under these circumstances, Teungku Daud Beureueh perceives that Indonesia is ruled by Hindu-Javanism wearing the clothes of nationalism. Hence, being threatened by the slow but sure inflow of alien influence, the *'lamas* of PUSA believe that it is necessary to resume the provincial status of Aceh for maintaining its distinct Islamic character. The integration of Aceh into the North-Sumatra province

"The alienated professional holds the view that undeideseluputeni au **Accla is due to the unjust policy of** the Indonesian government, and Aceh can only be des doped by **separating iyselr completely from** Indonesia. See Ibid.

"M.A. Nawawi, *Regionatism and Regional Cabatht in Indonesia* (**Unpublished. Ph.D. Thesis:** Princeton University, 1901).

generates a strong negative impact on the Acehese economy, as their full right of autonomy in terms of external trading is consequently restricted and it leads to economic stagnation. The Acehese feel that the central government has treated them in a step-motherly fashion and therefore, they wage a rebellion against the central government. Nawawi's thesis simply emphasizes the causes of the Acehese rebellion, which are emanated from political and economic discrimination. However, he does not deal with the reaction of the central government towards the rebellion.

Nazaruddin Slamsuddin (1985) in his book. *[The Republican Revolt: A Study of the :Acehese Rebellion,*

analyzes central-regional relations in which he stresses the response of the central government towards the rebellion. He asserts that the central government has adopted an accommodative policy that is meant to meet the demand of the revolutionist. However, in another article. *Issues and Politics of Region in Indonesia. Evaluating the Aceh Experience*, a m (1984) Nazaruddin Investigates the second regionalism in Aceh, under the influence of the GAM under the leadership of Teungku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro. He argues that the root of the conflict stems from three factors. Firstly, the failures of the former New Order regime to realize the autonomous status of Aceh and to put into practice the *Shari'ah*. Secondly, the regime's close relationship with Christian groups, which gives the latter many opportunities to "proselytize" in the Aceh region. Finally, the region is treated like a "stepchild" by the central government. The government only develops good infrastructure that linked Amin - the newly found reserved natural gas area - and North

After the complete surrender of the Japanese, de facto sea control imposed by the Dutch, the Acehnese continued to have trading relations with peninsular Malaya

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Nazaruddin Stamsuddin, *The Republican Way in A (in) Study of the Acehese Rebellion (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Studies, 1985), 12*

Sumatra, which indicates that Suharto's regime only has an interest in LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) in Arun. This fact angers the Acehnese and turns their support to the cause for the establishment of the Independent State of Aceh that Hasan Muhammad daim propagates." In the first hook that is based on his thesis, Nazaruddin emphasizes the response of the central government towards the rebellion, in which he believes that the rebellion is ended due to the willingness of the central government to respond positively towards the demands of the revolutionists. However, he does not analyze the side effects of the government policy, which has actually initiated another series of Acehnese separatist movement. In his latter work, Nazaruddin focuses on the causes of the emergence of the Free Aceh Movement, which he considers as a movement based on regional sentiment. His works, therefore, have provided the historical background of the study of the current political developments in Aceh.

In his book *Politics of Islam in Southeast Asia* (INO), Lukman "Lukman", asserts that the struggle of (GAM or in his terms ASNLF (Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front) is a continuation of the Acehnese struggle against colonial powers, which he defines as the Indonesian-Javanese dominated government. It is a continuous struggle for self-determination justified by the international declaration of human rights. Yet, the Indonesian government alleges ASNLF to be an Islamic fundamentalist revolution, so as to contain support from the international community for the latter. Lukman further asserts that it is not true by constitution that the ASNLF talks about the Islamic State of Aceh, but he believes that their struggle is for the

Nazaruddin Stamsuddin. "Issues and Politics of Region in Indonesia: Evaluating the Acehese Experience," in L. Joo-Jock and Vams (eds), *Asian Journal of Southeast Asia*, 124.

Acehnese rights as free people. In short, GAM is a historical struggle of the Acehnese for their independence from outside powers. Lukman presents a very radical view on this issue. He focuses on the historical fact that the Free Aceh Movement is an incremental struggle against colonial power. His work is descriptive in nature, and to some extent will largely be adopted for the discussion on historical background for this study.

Tim Kell (1995), in his book *The Roots of Aceh Rebellion, 1959-1992*, investigates the roots of the rebellion. Kell claims that the insurgency is due to the central government's failure to initiate a change in governmental system from the unitary to a federal system whereby distribution of political power is possible between the center and outer island ethnic groups. Hasan Muhammad claims federalism as the best system to govern Indonesia. The absence of the fundamental change in power distribution compels Tiro to initiate a movement of independence for the outer islands, signifying Indonesia as a camouflage nation-state of Javanese colonialism inherited from the Dutch. Perceiving that the Javanese was destroying the Acehnese political, social and cultural heritage, taking their land and plundering their economic resources, he set up a Free Aceh Movement (GAM) with the objective of assuring "the survival of the people of Aceh-Sumatra as a nation," by re-declaring Aceh as an independent state in 1976.⁴⁰ Kell also highlights the policy that the central government takes in response to the movement, in which the government adopts a policy of "Shock Therapy" through various military operations, as well as by

³⁹Lukman Thatb, *Political Dimension of 1976-1992 in Aceh, Indonesia and Asia* (Klang: Penerbit University of Kuala Lumpur, 1996), 27.

⁴⁰Tim Kell, *The Roots of Aceh Rebellion, 1959-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesian Project, 1995), 61-64.

Evidently, none of the above mentioned works explain the issue of Aceh in the light of the theoretical framework of national integration. Some of them have overemphasized the historical aspect, which is descriptive in nature. Though there are also those who have emphasized the political base, yet they have focused on the causes of the rebellion, rather than on the impact of the government response on the masses and movement itself. Thus, they have skipped asking questions such as what sort of political response does the central government have to curb the movement and what sort of side-effects does it have on the civilian victims. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct an investigation on the recent developments of Acehnese aspiration for complete separation from Indonesia. It is hoped that this study could be the first contribution to the study of the issue of national integration, with the case of Aceh in Indonesia.

METHODOLOGY

In the process of completing this study, the researcher has used a historical analytical method. The historical approach is necessary for examining the historical development of the inclusion of Aceh into Indonesia. It is also necessary to apply the analytical method for analyzing the impact of the policies of violence that the central government has enforced in Aceh. Concerning the concrete research strategy, the study has examined the relationship between Aceh and Indonesia through the historical and political development before the enforcement of military operation in Aceh, and the political condition during the post-military operation.

Therefore, the data for this analysis are derived from major sources of non-survey data, namely press reports and standard biographical publication for the elite

backgrounds and other government and non-government sources of aggregate data. Semi-structured interviews, analysis of students congress and recommendations of various conferences and written works are also used.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter I deals with the introduction and theoretical framework, as the navigator that should direct the study towards its stated objectives. Chapter 2 discusses the historical background of Aceh as our case of study, with the emphasis on the position of Aceh in the Indonesian perspective. Its purpose is to show the relationship that existed between Aceh and the Republic of Indonesia in the past. Chapter 3 discusses the genesis or the possible causes of the Acehnese rebellions, referring specifically to the *Rind Islam* rebellion that demanded autonomy from the Old Order regime. Chapter 4 traces the root of the conflict which initiates the birth of GAM during the New Order regime, Chapter 5 highlights the type of policy adopted by the regime to silence the Insurgency and investigates the impact of the policy on the Acehnese attitude towards the GAM vis-a-vis the Indonesian government. Finally, Chapter 6 sums up the discussion and provides recommendations for solving the problem of national integration, keeping in view the case of Aceh in Indonesia.

CHAPTER 2 ACEH IN THE INDONESIAN PERSPECTIVE

Sukarno, in his efforts to strengthen the concept of Indonesian unity, expounded that "the national state is the only Indonesia in its entirety, which existed in the time of *Shrivijaya and Majapahit*, and *which now too we must set up together*"⁴ Likewise, Dr. Henry Kissinger, the former US secretary of State, correctly wrote "Indonesia was nothing but a geographic expression until the Dutch found out it was more efficient to unite the islands of Indies under a single administration" " from these two quotations, one may ask: was Aceh under the influence of these two ancient kingdoms, the Shrivijaya and Majapahit? Was there any other civilization that had touched Aceh and left a deep impact on the later generation of Acehnese? Then what were the factors that led Aceh to join Indonesia, were there any threats towards their state? These questions have been neglected and none of the Acehnese or Indonesian historians have ever critically analyzed the factors behind the inclusion of Aceh and the benefits that Aceh would gain by joining Indonesia. It is, therefore, necessary to provide in brief a historical and political background of Aceh, so as to have a clear picture of why, the once loyal, Acehnese revolted against the central government, from the 1950s until the present time.

HISTORICAL, BACKGROUND OF ACEH

Aceh is a region located in the tip of the North Sea of Sumatra Island, which covers an area of 57,365,57 km², including more than a hundred small islands stretching

"sec Grani Brice, "Indonesia" quoted in Christian Drake. *Nationat Integraton in Indonesta: Pattern and Politics*, 19.

⁴¹ Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Pottce* (Washington D.C: **n.np**, 1967), 256

along its Western Coast. At present, Aceh's population is 4 million^o residing in ten regencies: Sabang, Proper Aceh, Pidie, Aceh Jeumpa Bireun, North Aceh, East Aceh, Central Aceh, West Aceh, South Aceh, Southeast Aceh, Aceh Singkel, and Simeulu. It was in this region that a great Muslim Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam flourished.⁴⁵ Aceh was the first region to receive Islam, and from here, it began to flourish all over the Southeast Asian region.

Aceh was unknown to the world until the coming of Islam in early, seventh century AC, until then only one-third of its area was under the influence of the Buddhist kingdom Shrivijaya that was located in Palembang^o. Meanwhile, the Hindu kingdom of Java, Majapahit which was at its zenith in the late fourteenth century,⁴ was not able to influence Aceh which eventually was growing stronger and extended its control over the Malacca straits. The Acehnese Sultanate had not only become a strong rival of the Majapahit," but it had also sent some Muslim missionaries to Java that marked the beginning of the Islamization of Java and as the turning point of the Muslim sultanate in Java to replace the decaying Hindu Majapahit kingdom."

"The Acehnese are also divided into three ethnic groups, those who live **in the coastal area, and** the other two groups who live in the mountainous central and southeastern **region known as Gayo and Alas**. They speak different languages from that of the people of the coastal area. According to **the late A. Basmy**, an Acehnese historian, those highlanders are the original Acehnese.

"Lukmanliatb, *The Roots of the Acehncse Struggte* (Haug t. Inept of Political Scyence UKM, **1996**), 154

"Christyine Crake, *National Integration in Indonesia Pauern anti Pohitics*, 20.

"*Thud* ,

"Jon M. Reihardy, *Foreign Pohen and Ivanonat Integration The Case of Indonesia* (New Haven: Yale University Souyh Easi Asia Syudies, 1971), 14.

"°However. the influence of Hindu and paganism cannot be illuminated **completely** from the way of life of the Javanese. For the civilization that Hindu once brought to the Javanese **had become** the pride of the past generation. It is obviously reflected in the later political development in Indonesia.

The first kingdom that declared Islam as a state religion was located in East Aceh, the kingdom of Pereulak in 1258.⁵⁰ In Pase, North Aceh, there was another kingdom under the King *A^{climb} SiIri* who embraced Islam and assumed the title of Malik al-Salih. He then married the princess of the Pereulak kingdom and fathered two sons, Malik al-Zahir and Malik al-Mansur. According to kinatuta, the crown was inherited by Malik al-Zahir (1298-1346) after the death of al-Salih. He loved to have discussions with the learned persons, such as theologians, jurists and his court was frequented by poets and men of learning. In addition to that, he was such a great general and made war against the infidels of the surrounding countries until they submitted and paid tribute.⁵¹

The Sultan Malik al-Lahti established the first Islamic educational institution at the Mosque of Pase (today Lhokseunyawel). The institution was patronized by the Sultan himself who also participated in the studies. As mentioned above, Ibn Batuta witnessed the way how the Sultan loved knowledge and encouraged people to study. Consequently, Pase evolved to be the center for Islamic studies and also the meeting place for Islamic scholars and theologians from the world of Islam, including for instance Qadi Amir Sayyid from Shiraz (Iran), Taj al-Din from Isfahan and Amir Daulasa from the Sultanate of Delhi, India. It was reported that even Ahmad Allah ibn

"*Mewvrh*" is an Acehnese word which means "You Highness", see M Arifm Amin, *Marisa Dalam Timasan Setaran Bangsa* [Manisa in the Lume of National History] (Medan: U.D. Rahmad, 1984), 12-13.

"S, Q Payrmi, *Istam Came to Malaysia* (Singapore n.p. 1964), 9.

"I. A. R. Gihb, Ibn Rama: *Travels in Asia and Africa* (London n.p., 1929), 274, 302.

"Ismail Iliand, "The Earliest Center of Islamic Studies in the Malay World," in *Islamic Herald*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Kuala Lumpur (Feb, 1986), 1114.

goods and an assortment of goods from China.: Trade was taking place on the West Bank, the *tiwmpung larva* that acted as the main commercial center. Meanwhile, on the east bank where Penajong was located, traders set up shops and residence. Five kilometers inland from the mouth of the river was the capital of Aceh (C)arussalatn, which was referred to as Banda Aceh Darussalam or Kutaraja⁷ connoting abode of peace, where the Sultan's palace was located,

The Sultan was at the apex of the political system, as the source of all political, judicial and economic power. He appointed all the *orangkaya* (merchant-official)⁶¹ and the *Ulrobalangs* (the aristocrat/ territorial chief). Aceh was divided into many *minis* (territories) that included a number of mosques. The *Ulrobalang*, who was originally the chief military commander in the respective *nrukrm*, ruled each *mukmm*. During the reign of Nur al-Alain Nagiyat ad-Idm Svah, *mukmi* was grouped into three federations. Each federation was controlled by a *!aughma Sagi* (Sago), and their title was followed by the number of *mukmr* that had been placed under him, such as *Pangluna Sag*: of the XXH, XXV and XXVI *nrukmi*. Moreover, the *Panglrrnn Sagi* of the XXH was the most powerful and was referred to as *Panghma Palembang*. There were other *nutknns* which were directly under the control of the Sultan and other *Uleebalangs*, while in other newly opened territory by the immigration of the Acehnese, the Sultan appointed a family member to be the head of these principalities in order to have full control over them.^o The *Ceuehnk* (the Chief) was the leader of a

"Ihud. 8.

"Kutaraja, at present refers to Banda Aceh.

Orangkaya was the title owned by rich merchants, court officials and members of nobility.

"Mid, 9.

village which comprised of many *mcunasah*³ as the smallest community with a *Teungku Imum*" as its leader. Therefore, the cohesiveness of the Acehnese community, absolutely depended on the compromise and tolerance among those *Tetmgku Imams*.

Concerning the revenues, not all were sent to the Sultan, but they were also shared by the *orangkrma* and *Llcr'ba/ang.s*, who were directly controlling the port. As the former were growing wealthy and powerful due to the economic prosperity, Sultan Iskandar Muda, began to check them. He seized their weapons, forbade them from building their house of bricks and stones, and went to the extreme of executing many of them. In order to strengthen his power, the Sultan codified the commercial regulation. It was during his reign that the royals had full control over all important ports of the West and East Coast which by then marked the zenith of the Sultanate Aceh Darussalam.^o After his death, Iskandar Muda, was succeeded by his son-in-law Iskandar Thani t 1036-1641¹ who later was succeeded subsequently by four other Queens. During whose reign the struggle for power became profound, leading to several attempted coups. Consequently, the Sultanate began to decline and ended