CHAPTER 4

DOES INDONESIA HAVE EXPANSIONIST DESIGNS ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA?

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This paper had its origins in a talk I gave at the University of Papua New Guinea shortly after the September 1978 Waigani seminar, in which I attempted to answer various comments made there to the effect that Indonesia's foreign policies were inherently expansionist. It was a time of strained relations between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea because of several border incidents earlier in 1978, which were regarded by many people in Papua New Guinea as indications that Indonesia aspired to dominate and perhaps ultimately to annex the eastern half of the island.

Comments of this kind were usually based on three types of argument. According to one of these, the fact that the Indonesian government was putting pressure on Papua New Guinea to cooperate militarily with her in trying to seal the border against the Irianese dissidents seeking refuge in the east was to be seen as merely the first in a series of demands which, unless resisted from the outset, would culminate eventually in the complete subjugation of Papua New Guinea. We could call this the 'the thin end of the wedge' interpretation. My own belief was that Indonesia's objectives on that occasion were - and still are - merely limited ones to do with her way of handling the border-crossing problem; there was no reason to believe she had broader and more sinister designs for the ultimate annexation of Papua New Guinea as a whole. It is not surprising that many people in Papua New Guinea did not see it that way. It was understandable that many people in Papua New Guinea took a more sceptical and suspicious view of what was happening across the border and of Indonesia's intentions. They were uneasy about the whole record of Indonesian policy in Irian
Jaya and often not well informed of the motives behind her policies and actions. They felt strongly that the Melanesian inhabitants of Irian Jaya were their blood brothers, hence they were hostile even towards Indonesia’s limited goal of closing the border against OPM members taking advantage of the opportunities for easy sanctuary it provided. But that in itself was (and is) not an adequate reason for making the further inference that Indonesia has unlimited expansionist ambitions.

The second type of argument advanced by critics of Indonesia’s policies hinged on the proposition that her expansionist appetites had already been amply demonstrated by the seizure of East Timor, by her ‘confrontation’ of Malaysia in 1963-66 (referred to hereafter simply as konfrontasi) and by her earlier campaign to gain control of Irian Jaya over the years 1950-62. It is this second argument - about the conclusions to be drawn from the historical record regarding the supposedly ‘expansionist’ character of Indonesia’s foreign policies - which constitutes the central theme of this paper. If one looks only at this sequence of events, the three episodes involving the use of force around Indonesia’s borders, apparently directed towards the acquisition of territory, it is very easy to jump to the conclusion that they constitute evidence of territorial expansionism. Yet when we examine the motivations and political dynamics behind each of these episodes we find that however we define territorial expansionism, it has not been a significant causal factor. At this point, we should first define what ‘expansionism’ means as precisely as possible. I am interpreting it here to mean a desire to annex additional territory either

(i) for the sake of more lebensraum (living space) or resources (oil, copper, timber, etc.), that is for essentially economic reasons;
(ii) for the sake of demonstrating the national power so as to intimidate neighbours;
(iii) because of an ideology of national greatness, power and vigour, as in the case of Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany;
(iv) for irredentist reasons (to recover parts of the national territory which have been lost in the past), or
(v) because of a belief that the nation has a historic mission to reestablish its ancient or mythical boundaries, as in the case of Russian pan-Slavic movements in the late 19th Century.

None of these motivations has played any significant part in shaping Indonesia’s foreign policies since independence, with the possible exception of the last two (and I would even query those). I will later give some attention briefly to this last possibility, however, for several
articles have been written, with titles like 'The Potential for Indonesian Expansionism' (Gordon 1963-64) to explain her foreign policy objectives in the 1963-66 konfrontasi episode, and these have gained wider circulation than they deserve. They were based primarily on the Indonesia Raya, or 'Greater Indonesia', theory - that is that the country's leaders have constantly nurtured irredentist aspirations to redraw their national boundaries in accordance with the historic boundaries of ancient empires like Majapahit. In my study of the causes of konfrontasi, however, I found this theory utterly erroneous and irrelevant.\footnote{For a fuller discussion of the Indonesia Raya theory and the Malaysian propaganda use of it, see Mackie (1974:21-4, 326-7 and the references cited therein).} It is equally irrelevant as an explanation of the invasion of Timor, although the Timor affair did indeed revive many of the old fears that Indonesia has an ominous appetite for additional territory because it was not easy to understand her motivations according to any clearly discernible explanation. It is even less relevant, I think, to Indonesian thinking about Papua New Guinea, for reasons I will outline later in the paper.

I will say something more about the lebensraum argument at the end of this paper, because people in Australia and Papua New Guinea frequently misinterpret the significance of Indonesia's 'transmigration' programme as if it represented part of an expansionist drive to shift people from overcrowded Java to other parts of the archipelago, or beyond. It is easy to draw the further inference that population pressure will in due course require her to look beyond her national boundaries for more land; yet such an inference would be quite erroneous. Anyone who is at all familiar with the history and workings of the transmigration programme is likely to find this an extremely far-fetched proposition, for reasons I will set out below. In saying that I do not deny that the social and demographic consequences of large-scale immigration of Javanese into Irian Jaya are likely to create serious tensions there between the newcomers and the indigenous population. Understandably, people in Papua New Guinea with Pan-Melanesian sympathies will also be disturbed by the consequences of those tensions. But to assert that the transmigration programme represents an expansionist drive to gobble up more territory as a means of solving Java's population pressures is to exaggerate beyond the bounds of probability.

A third type of argument, which one most frequently encounters
among radical critics of the Indonesian government, is one I will call the ‘analogy with fascism’ argument - that is, the proposition that expansionism tends to be an inherent structural characteristic of military or authoritarian or avowedly fascist regimes. Hence, since Indonesia undeniably has a highly authoritarian, army-based government, there is a prima facie presumption that her foreign policies are expansionist and aggressive in much the same way as were Mussolini’s or Hitler’s or those of pre-war Japan, either because of a militaristic and imperialist ideology or because of more complex socio-political power drives. This kind of analogy is absurdly far-fetched, however. The Suharto regime may be authoritarian and in some respects indeed repressive, but to call it ‘fascist’ is a sheer misuse of that term. Yet this kind of hypothesis has some affinities with what might be categorized as ‘diversionist’ or ‘instability’ theories about the dynamics behind Indonesian foreign policies, which also achieved quite wide currency at the time of the konfrontasi episode and cannot be dismissed entirely out of hand.

Closely akin to this approach is one of the more plausible (but misleading) explanations of the Suharto government’s foreign policies, put forward in 1976 by Rex Mortimer (Mortimer 1976) which could almost be called a ‘neurosis theory’ of Indonesian national self-assertiveness. I will return to this below, but it is worth noting that Mortimer himself had abandoned it by 1979.

Before we go any further, however, we need to look more closely at the particular episodes which are commonly held to be evidence of Indonesia’s ‘expansionist’ appetites. From these it will become clear that the motivations behind Indonesia’s policies on those occasions were by no means the same as those implied by the word ‘expansionism’ as specified on page 66. And it is of particular significance that all three episodes relate to the last stages of the ending of colonial rule. The withdrawal of the metropolitan powers, Netherlands, Britain and Portugal, and the process of decolonization was in all three cases a messy one, often indefensible on a strict reading of national or international law (as also was the founding of the colonial empires). But the process of decolonization is now complete in this part of the world. Indonesia has no basis for claims to Papua New Guinea - and no desire for it or sense of need for it - as she had in two of those three cases.

The Irian Jaya claim

The basis of the original Indonesian claim to Irian Jaya is so well
known that it is hardly necessary to go into it at any length. Indonesia maintained that as the successor state to the former Netherlands East Indies her national territory should embrace the whole of what had formerly been the Netherlands East Indies, including Irian Jaya which had previously been considered an integral part of the former colony (albeit one of the most neglected and little-developed parts). The Dutch insistence on retaining possession of what they called 'Dutch New Guinea' at the time of the 1949 Round Table Conference negotiations leading to Indonesian independence, for reasons of Dutch domestic politics and wounded *amour propre*, created a deadlock which was broken only by the unsatisfactory compromise decision to postpone further negotiations on the issue until 1950. In the course of those negotiations neither side would budge - and as the *status quo* favoured the Dutch, they clung on grimly to their colony until mounting Indonesian pressures, military as well as diplomatic and economic, coupled with declining international support for the Dutch, finally compelled them to surrender their hold on the colony in 1962.

The rationale behind Indonesia’s case was perfectly straightforward: her claim to Irian Jaya derived from the central principles of nationalism and anticolonialism upon which her revolution against the Dutch had been fought. To abandon the claim would have been to deny those principles at a time when the very unity of the fragile new state depended on maintaining the principle of nationalism as paramount in the face of potentially secessionist regional dissident movements. Indonesians believed that in pursuing their claim to Irian Jaya they were merely trying to gain control over territory that should have been recognized as rightfully theirs from the outset. The Dutch were thought to be holding on to West New Guinea for no better reason than to use it as a base from which they could subvert and fragment the new Republic of Indonesia especially by stirring up trouble in the Moluccas and other eastern islands of the archipelago. The Dutch tried to deny Indonesia’s claim by stressing the racial differences between Indonesians of Java or Sumatra and the Melanesian inhabitants of West New Guinea, but Indonesians regarded this as irrelevant, since they themselves were ethnically a heterogeneous bunch and they did not regard racial affinities as the determining criteria of their nationhood.

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2 The best account of the early stages of the Irian Jaya campaign is Bone (1958); for the final stages, see Mackie (1974:98-103).
Indonesians of all political persuasions were united in support of the claim to Irian Jaya. (The strongest initial proponents of the claim were, in fact, the most pro-Dutch and conservative group of leaders at the Round Table Conference negotiations, the Federalists, not the Republicans.) No one ever publicly denied the rightness of this claim, as far as I know, although there were major differences between the parties about the most effective tactics for pursuing the claim. As time passed the more radical parties became increasingly militant in the prominence they gave to this issue and the lengths they were willing to go to press it, whereas the more anti-communist, pro-Western parties and opinion leaders clung to the belief that moderation and persuasion would induce the Dutch to make concessions. This did not happen, however, and the latter group were outmanoeuvred by the radicals in 1957 when, after several efforts to win support in the UN had failed, the radicals seized the initiative, at President Sukarno’s instigation, and ‘took over’ all Dutch plantations, business enterprises and banks in Indonesia and nationalized them soon after. But the Dutch merely dug their toes in harder and it took the threat of military invasion of Irian Jaya in 1961-62 to force them (largely at the instigation of the US government) to abandon the struggle and negotiate a compromise settlement.

It is misleading and ignorant to assert that ‘expansionism’ was a factor in the Indonesian campaign for West Irian, either in respect of the arguments used or of the basic political dynamics which impelled Indonesia. Even though Sukarno resorted in 1962 to an undeniably aggressive, confrontative political strategy for putting pressure on the Dutch, we need to distinguish his methods from his motivations and objectives. The style of the campaign in its final stages was certainly highly emotional, the political atmosphere almost feverish; the issue lent itself to a form of mobilization politics which President Sukarno and the Indonesian Communist Party exploited very effectively for their own domestic advantage and in which the army leaders found themselves badly outmanoeuvred. The lesson was not lost on the army leaders, however, and when the conflict with Malaysia loomed up a year or so later they took good care not to lose the political initiative on an issue with strong nationalist appeal and so they played an important part in getting the campaign of konfrontasi against Malaysia started. But that turned out to be a very different story.
Konfrontasi

Indonesia’s ‘confrontation’ of Malaysia in the years 1963-66 provides the strongest ammunition for advocates of the expansionist theory, but an explanation given in these terms alone is seriously misleading, for the basic dynamics of the campaign have to be sought elsewhere. Indonesia never asserted any claim to the territory of the northern Borneo states whose incorporation into the Malaysian federation she was protesting; her argument was that the project was a neocolonialist strategem, master-minded by the British to enable them to maintain their interests there, and that the people of Borneo and Singapore were being steamrollered against their will into the wider Malaysian federation. There was a good deal of evidence in favour of that proposition, although I believe that overall the pro-Malaysia case was much stronger on nearly all accounts. The whole episode was a curious, half-hearted affair, a mixture of threats, propaganda, low-level border raids and reconnaissance incursions into Sarawak and Malaya, attempts to ferment domestic opposition to the Malaysian government, coupled with diplomatic and economic pressures which seemed to have a variety of objectives and motivations, few of them at all clear to outside observers.

Konfrontasi was very much a personal campaign of President Sukarno’s, although both the Armed Forces leaders and the PKI supported it enthusiastically in the early stages (though much less wholeheartedly later on, when the costs and risks were greater). And it undoubtedly served a variety of purposes which Sukarno found convenient - for example, maintaining an atmosphere of crisis and external threat, so that calls for national unity and solidarity with the leadership were more easily justified; simplifying the job of balancing left and right wing forces in the government and in the country; enabling him at times to divert attention from pressing domestic issues by stressing the primacy of the conflict with neocolonialist enemies at home and abroad; providing apparent justification for his ideological doctrines of inevitable conflict between the ‘New Emerging Forces’ and the old established forces of neocolonialism and imperialism. There is something to be said for explanations of the campaign in terms of its ‘diversionary’ value, at a time when the national economy was in

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3 I have summarized the strengths and weaknesses of the various interpretations of this episode in Mackie (1974:1-11, 326-33 et passim).
decline and political tensions mounting, but they too tend to be grossly oversimplified, although in a more refined form there is something in them. 4

Konfrontasi was, in a very real sense, an extension into the foreign affairs sphere of the basic instability of Indonesian domestic politics at that time. Yet on several occasions when he had to make difficult choices in domestic politics, Sukarno did make them and on several occasions he scaled down the intensity of confrontation when circumstances made it prudent for him to do so. So the diversionary theory cannot be carried too far. A more fundamental element in the explanation of the whole affair is the relevance of the ideological factor. The struggle against Malaysia served, in effect, to validate the doctrine of the New Emerging Forces, while at the same time that doctrine created the imperative to engage in the struggle, for otherwise the ideology would have been hollow and meaningless. All Sukarno’s speeches on the issue stressed the ideological factor, never the Indonesia Raya theme or the appeal to historic greatness.

In short, the whole episode was very much an outgrowth of the rather singular combination of political and ideological circumstances prevailing in Indonesia in the early 1960s. The only sense in which it could be categorized as ‘expansionist’ was in terms of the style and methods adopted, not the objectives or motivations - for example the generally assertive, sometimes truculent claims made by Sukarno for the universality of his doctrine of the New Emerging Forces as applying to all Third World countries. But would one categorize German or Italian foreign policy today as inherently expansionist just because Hitler and Mussolini pursued assertive, truculent claims and methods (and, indeed, specified external objectives) in the decade before 1945? It must, indeed, be admitted that if Indonesia had succeeded at that point in the decolonization process in overthrowing the Malaysian federation, she would undoubtedly have been cock of the roost in Southeast Asia. Sukarno certainly aspired to a leadership role, not only in that region but in the Third World generally (though without much success, in the final analysis). But the explanation for this impulse is better seen in terms of what Kahin (1964:260-261) has called ‘the powerful, self-righteous thrust of Indonesian nationalism’, derived from the sense of pride in their revolutionary struggle for independence and from their opposition to colonialism and neocolonialism, than in terms

4 The best exposition of the ‘diversion’ theory is given by Donald Hindley (1964).
of ‘Greater Indonesia’ doctrines or an ideology of territorial expansion reminiscent of Mussolini’s or Hitler’s demands for *lebensraum*.

**East Timor**

Even less, in my opinion, can the campaign to incorporate East Timor be categorized or explained as simply a manifestation of expansionist appetites. Indonesian motivations in that unhappy affair are murky and complex, not at all as easy to identify with precision – or to defend on legal and moral grounds – as in the previous cases examined. But it is not difficult to discern the major factors impelling the Suharto government to become involved in the way it did and one of the most striking features to be noted was Suharto’s reluctance to use troops there. Certainly there could be no claim here, as there was in the case of Irian Jaya, on the ground that this territory had been part of the former Netherlands East Indies. Nor was it possible after April 1974, as it might have been prior to the overthrow of the Salazar-Caetano regime in Portugal, to make a case on the grounds of liberating East Timor from colonial rule of a singularly miserable, debilitating character which had left the colony poverty-stricken and neglected.

The fundamental consideration was probably one which could not easily or delicately be put into words. This was that the Portuguese colony was an historical anachronism, just as Goa in the midst of India had been before 1961. Sooner or later it would have to be liberated – though neither in Portugal nor Australia were voices being raised on behalf of independence or self-determination for the Timorese before 1974 – and most Indonesians who ever gave any thought to the matter probably assumed that sooner or later it would become part of Indonesia by a process of natural attraction to independence. The people were, after all, ethnically akin to those in the rest of Timor and they had been separated from them politically only by the Dutch-Portuguese rivalries of the 17th to 19th centuries, not by their own volition. No one in Indonesia ever gave much thought to the question of when and how East Timor should be decolonized, and the general assumption seems to have been that the people of East Timor would of course want to join their Indonesian brothers in enjoying the fruits of independence. Few Indonesians knew that they could not even speak the same language or that Portuguese propaganda had implanted widespread fears of an Indonesian takeover long before 1974. It is probably not far-fetched to imagine, however, that if the Suharto gov-
ernment had mounted a campaign to assist in the liberation of East Timor from Portuguese rule prior to 1974, justifying this on the ground that it was also helping to overthrow Portuguese colonial rule and help the freedom fighters of Angola and Mozambique it would almost certainly have won widespread international support and left the Fretelin leaders no option but to side with Indonesia. Suharto must have subsequently regretted that he had been too cautious and restrained to embark on such a course, for once the revolution of April 1974 in Portugal had occurred the ball was at Fretelin's feet, not Jakarta's. To claim that Indonesia's attitude towards Timor was grasping or covetous or expansionist seems, in the light of these circumstances, simply to ignore the historical background.

The Indonesian case has, in general, been argued mainly on the ground that the people of East Timor wanted incorporation into Indonesia, that the Timorese party favouring incorporation, Apodeti, had substantial popular support but was severely handicapped by the strong anti-Indonesian propaganda campaign earlier maintained by the Portuguese colonial authorities and later by Fretelin. It is highly doubtful that Apodeti really did have very widespread popular support initially, but that is not very surprising in view of the sustained anti-Indonesian propaganda to which the population had been subjected for years previously by the Portuguese. During early 1975 the Indonesian government tried to cooperate with the Portuguese in devising a political formula based upon consultations (mujawarah) between the Portuguese authorities and the three major Timorese parties, which would have resulted, they hoped - with the aid of a little 'gentle pressure' - in a decision to seek incorporation in Indonesia. But the outbreak of fighting between the UDT and Fretelin factions in July wrecked any hopes of this and soon resulted in the military victory of the Fretelin forces, which were by that time the faction most strongly committed to an independent East Timor and the most uncompromisingly anti-Indonesian. (UDT had by that time swung over towards a pro-Indonesian stance.) This created a situation in which the Indonesian government had to choose whether to acquiesce in a Fretelin victory and the establishment of an independent, strongly anti-Indonesian regime in East Timor, or to intervene militarily in the civil war there. The Suharto government opted for the latter choice, sending in Indonesian troops covertly in October-November and then invading overtly in December.5

The legal and moral rights and wrongs of these actions are a mat-
ter of controversy which would take too long to assess thoroughly here. But the question of Indonesia’s underlying motivation is a quite distinct question. Why did the Indonesians feel it mattered so much to them to prevent East Timor becoming independent? Their military intervention did no good to Indonesia’s international reputation and appears to have been costly to her armed forces in both lives and resources. Why, then, could they not have acquiesced in a Fretilin victory?

I suspect that the basic answer boils down to the proposition that as time passed Indonesia’s key policy makers simply found themselves more and more committed by their own rhetoric and their initial policies to the ultimate incorporation of East Timor; hence they either had to press on towards that goal at any cost or accept a humiliating defeat which might have been seriously damaging to their own domestic political prestige and influence.

Another factor was certainly their fear that East Timor might become a nest of communist influence, ‘another Cuba’ on her doorstep. The charges that Fretilin leaders were communists or pro-Chinese may have been wildly exaggerated, but some Fretilin leaders were speaking in a way which certainly justified that suspicion. Even if the charges were false, it was obvious that an independent East Timor would have had to look overseas for economic assistance and perhaps also political support from some quarter, since the economy was hardly viable and the political structure rudimentary - and China or Vietnam or Russia seemed to be the most likely candidates for such a role. Moreover, the possibilities that even a non-communist independent East Timor might provide a haven for Indonesian communist exiles outside Indonesian control was alarming enough to the Jakarta authorities, for it would be hard to prevent their infiltration from there into other parts of the archipelago.

A second consideration frequently mentioned was the fear of secessionist sentiment in other parts of eastern Indonesia if East Timor were to succeed in maintaining an independent existence. The effect on the Indonesian side of the island would have been disturbing, to say the least, and perhaps elsewhere too. Ever since the 1950s when regionalist movements threatened the territorial integrity of the young

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5 I know of no good account of the Indonesian side of the Timor affair. A useful survey of events in Timor, stressing the role of the Portuguese, is Nicol (1978). A strongly anti-Indonesian, pro-Fretilin version is given by Joliffe (1978).
nation, Indonesia’s leaders have been sensitive to the dangers of seces-
sonist sentiments in the outlying regions of the archipelago. I doubt if
there is currently as much risk of secessionism or territorial disintegra-
tion as is often suggested, for the centralizing tendencies of the last two
decades have been very powerful. But it is probably true to say that
Indonesia’s national unity is still a rather brittle creation, which might
not stand up to any serious blow to the authority of the central govern-
ment. If any part of the archipelago were able to defy Jakarta’s author-
ity on a major issue and get away with it, the chain reaction elsewhere
could be quite disastrous. That kind of consideration probably exerted
great weight on the minds of the Indonesian government’s policy mak-
ers throughout the Timor affair.

Another background consideration that was also important was
the inclination to believe that Apodeti really did represent the true
voice of the Timorese people. Indonesians referred to Fretilin, not
ever without justification, as the ‘Eurasians’ party’, as a coterie of
part-Portuguese, urban, educated leaders with no substantial follow-
ing among or rapport with the bulk of the village population. They
inevitably compared them with a similar group of first generation lead-
ers of the anti-colonial movements in Indonesia, most of whom later
drifted away from the mainstream of Indonesian nationalism; in fact,
Indonesia’s Eurasians had tended to be either pro-Dutch or highly
ambivalent towards the nationalist cause during the struggle for inde-
pendence, so their nationalist credentials were suspect. In the cir-
cumstances Indonesians were highly sceptical that the Fretilin leaders
could really represent the true voice of East Timorese nationalism.
Their suspicions of Fretilin were later exacerbated by the collusion of
two left-wing Portuguese officers, Majors Mota and Jonatas, in
advancing the Fretilin cause during 1975, which was reminiscent of
Dutch patronage of the ‘puppet’ Federalists in 1948-49. UDT, on the
other hand, had initially spoken out in favour of maintaining Por-
tuguese rule and against immediate independence, so it was clearly a
‘reactionary’ rather than a ‘progressive’ force like Apodeti. So the his-
toricist caste of mind with which Indonesians approached these mat-
ters would have inclined them towards Apodeti even though it could
show little positive evidence of substantial popular support. This is not
to say that they were right in that assessment; it is, however, to point
out the basis of Indonesian perceptions of the matter, which is what we
must be concerned with in a matter like this.

Finally, we should notice certain aspects of the Indonesian domes-
tic politics of the Timor episode which indicate, I believe, that whatever Indonesian motivations may have been - and they were certainly tangled - they were by no means expansionist in a crude sense. The initial reaction of the foreign minister, Adam Malik, in mid 1974 was, indeed, distinctly 'dove-ish'. He went so far as to assure Jose Ramos Horta, a Fretilin leader, that Indonesia made no claim to East Timor and would seek close relations with it 'after independence'. This early view was soon modified as anti-communist leaders of the intelligence forces in Jakarta began to express concern at what they saw as a drift towards the left in Timor, paralleling the course of the revolution in Portugal in its first year. But Suharto regarded the Portuguese government as the key factor determining the course of events in Timor and did not allow this group of officers to determine Indonesian policy, so long as he could hope that a political-diplomatic strategy would work towards Indonesia's ends. But after the outbreak of the civil war in Timor in July-August it became increasingly difficult for him to deny the arguments for military intervention or cling to any hope that a political solution would work. Thus the determination of policy finally fell into the hands of the military leaders, for by this time Indonesia was too deeply committed to the goals it had set to back away.

It is worth remembering that if Suharto failed to prevent the emergence of an independent East Timor once the Indonesian government had started to work for its incorporation, he would have been highly vulnerable to the charge that this kind of thing would never have happened in Sukarno's days. Paradoxically, it was precisely because Suharto's foreign policies were so different from Sukarno's unassertive, low-keyed, committed to good-neighbourly relations with the ASEAN countries, and quite sensitive to world opinion, that he found himself subject to criticism from the former radical-nationalist fringe of the political public in Indonesia that he was not sufficient of a red-blooded nationalist, that he was subordinating the country's interests too much to the goal of presenting an image of moderation and responsibility to the Western creditor nations. Political comment within Indonesia was distinctly muted in 1974-75, for the crackdown on dissentient opinion following the 'Malari' riots during Prime Minister Tanaka's visit in January 1974 was very severe. But precisely because the regime had been shaken by the mild expressions of criticism that occurred in late 1973, there was a good deal of nervousness about arousing fresh criticism over new issues. It is hardly surprising, in those circumstances, that there was almost no overt opposition to the gov-
ernment’s policies on Timor, even though there seems to have been nothing like the widespread popular support for the campaign that there was over Irian Jaya. In 1975, moreover, the development of the Pertamina crisis was creating new difficulties for the government and making it even less willing to run risks of leaving its flanks exposed to critics of any hue, whether radical or nationalist. The fact, too, that the Timor crisis occurred soon after the communist victories in Indochina, when the generals in Jakarta were most sensitive to what they perceived as communist threats to the region, must have helped to strengthen the hands of the hardliners and undermine the advocates of moderation. But it was anti-communism that was the decisive motivating force, not a diffuse espousal of expansionist objectives.

**Conclusion**

Are we justified, then, in concluding that ‘expansionist’ elements have played no part at all - or very little - in the shaping of Indonesia’s policies towards her neighbours? I am inclined to answer: ‘Yes; the primary motivating forces behind her foreign policies could not be described as expansionist in any substantial respect’. One could even go further and list a series of opportunities Indonesia has *not* taken since 1945 which, if she really had been determinedly bent upon expansion or aggrandizement of her influence over her neighbours, she could easily have exploited to her advantage - for example the situation created by the race riots of May 1969 in Malaysia, the Muslim insurgency in the southern Philippines, to mention only the most obvious.

It is possible that there may be more elaborate definitions of ‘expansionism’ that could be applied to the Indonesian case, but I have not yet encountered any that was at all convincing. The nearest thing to such a theory is Rex Mortimer’s 1976 article (Mortimer 1976) in which he put great emphasis on the country’s potential instability and the inherent weaknesses or incapacity of its government, seeing various factors in that situation which were ‘nudging Indonesia towards a more assertive regional role’. Mortimer explicitly recognized that Indonesia was ‘not an actively expansionist power’, but he portrayed her leaders as bordering on the neurotic (the article is studded with words like ‘hysterical’, ‘obsessive’, ‘tense’, ‘hypersensitive’ and ‘frustrated’) in their preoccupation with their country’s regional influence, particularly in the aftermath of the communist victories in Indochina in
the previous year. Hence he regarded them as intensely concerned with the stability of Papua New Guinea also.

Mortimer's theory is vulnerable on three main grounds. First, Indonesia's 'regional role' since 1965 has not been at all 'assertive' or 'obsessive', as it was under Sukarno. Quite the opposite. Secondly, the emphasis on the 'hysterical', 'neurotic' character of Indonesian politics is grossly exaggerated. Thirdly, in the years that have passed since that article was written, the course of events has simply not borne out the predictions Mortimer then made. Instability has not significantly increased in Indonesia, her government has responded rather sensibly and coolly to the emergence of a powerful Vietnam as a potential rival for political influence in Southeast Asia, not hysterically at all, while its handling of relations with Papua New Guinea has not conformed with the pattern adumbrated in that article. One might justifiably ask whether the underlying theory was wrong, or whether the data was erroneous - or both?

Mortimer's account of Indonesia's lust for regional dominance does not rely directly on the analogy-with-fascism argument, although both rest upon the assumption that authoritarian regimes are potentially unstable (because by definition unrepresentative - although it is questionable whether more representative political systems are significantly more stable), so there is likely to be some sort of link between the politics of domestic instability and the politics of external assertiveness, particularly if frustrations over the failure of domestic policies really are generating neurotic attitudes and irrationality. But that has not been the case of Indonesia in the 1970s. Her leaders have felt they have been achieving results, despite all the criticisms that have been directed at their policies. Their actions seem to me to betoken a good deal of confidence (within the authoritarian framework of the political system, admittedly) rather than a sense of insecurity and hysteria.

Before concluding, I want to comment briefly on the 'Indonesia Raya' theory of Indonesian expansionism and offer some guesses about the likelihood of a recurrence of that stream of foreign policy thinking. I had to examine the influence of these doctrines closely in 1964-65 when I was trying to analyse the causes of konfrontasi and I have discussed the matter more fully in my book on that subject (Mackie 1974). Advocates of the 'Indonesia Raya' theory of expansionism, like Bernard Gordon, relied mainly on two sources of evidence. One was writing and speeches of the Indonesian politician-poet-historian, Mohammed Yamin, who was a great advocate of 'Indonesia Raya' and
inclined to wax eloquent on the theme of Indonesia's historic greatness in the days of Srivijaya and Majapahit, when Indonesian language, trade and cultural influence allegedly extended as far afield as Madagascar to the west and Cambodia to the north. Yamin was a maverick, non-party minister in several of Sukarno's cabinets and had a certain affinity of temperament and style with Sukarno, insofar as both were romantics and rhetoricians with a strong sense of Indonesia's historic destiny. He played an active part early in the campaign to recover Irian Jaya. But neither he nor his ideas played any great part in the konfrontasi campaign, for Yamin died shortly before it began to develop and Sukarno never made use of the historic appeal to 'Indonesia Raya' themes in his speeches on the subject of Malaysia. Nor did any other Indonesian public figure try to step into Yamin's shoes in order to exploit the theme for its political mileage, a rather significant piece of evidence which advocates of the 'Indonesia Raya' theory overlooked. Presumably there was not much mileage in it. Yamin was very much sui generis and his political influence depended more on his proximity to Sukarno than the intrinsic appeal of his doctrines (Mackie 1974:21-23).

The other piece of evidence used in support of the 'Indonesia Raya' theory was the debate that took place in June 1945 in the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence on what the future boundaries of independent Indonesia should be. Yamin played a prominent part in this debate, arguing that 'the areas which should be included in Indonesian territory are those which have given birth to Indonesian people; the motherland of a people will be transformed into the territory of a State'. Thus Indonesia should consist not only of the former Netherlands Indies, including West New Guinea, but also the whole of Timor and North Borneo and Malaya, including the four northern states of Malaya which the Japanese had transferred to Thailand. Sukarno supported Yamin's formulation (although on rather different grounds) against the more cautious arguments of realists like Mohammed Hatta and Haji Agus Salim; and the Yamin-Sukarno view carried the day when it came to a vote. But the debate had no practical consequences, for when the Indonesian leaders proclaimed the independence of their country in August 1945 they were so hard-pressed by events that they neglected even a commitment they had earlier given a group of Malayan revolutionaries to include Malaya in the anti-colonial struggle. Twenty years later the Malaysians quoted the 1945 debates extensively for propaganda purposes as evidence of Indone-
sian territorial ambitions (Department of Information, Malaysia 1964) but that assertion does not really stand up to serious critical scrutiny.

It is not inconceivable, of course, that at some point in the future another Yamin or Sukarno will emerge in Indonesia and try to exploit nationalist sentiments on the basis of an appeal to historic greatness. The teaching of Indonesian history and Indonesian patriotism in the schools, military academies and indoctrination courses almost certainly continues to incorporate some elements of Yaminesque fantasy about the past which could in appropriate circumstances be nurtured as the basis for a kind of revivalist movement. But one could say that of most countries in the world. Patriotism, they say, is the last refuge of scoundrels. Logically, however, the weakness of theories about expansionist tendencies which are based on predictions about how a country might one day react is that they can neither be confirmed nor refuted by testable evidence. That being the case, they are virtually useless.

My own guess is that Indonesia, like China and Vietnam, will continue to be concerned to ensure that developments she considers adverse to her interests will not occur around her immediate peripheries. She will also, no doubt, seek to play a prominent part in the politics of the ASEAN region. But these are perfectly legitimate objectives, provided they are pursued by legitimate means. They are not in themselves evidence of a desire for aggrandizement of either power or territory. There may indeed be aspects of Indonesian nationalism and of the style of Indonesian politics which outsiders find repugnant or frightening, but to infer that this is evidence of aggressive intent is to oversimplify absurdly. One could easily imagine a state of political instability developing, in which Sukarnoesque policies of militantly radical nationalism and assertive foreign policies could conceivably recur, the implications of which could be alarming for Australia and Papua New Guinea. But the dynamics of that kind of politics entail something very different from the dynamics of crude ‘expansionism’.

It has been put to me that even if my rejection of the appropriateness of the term ‘expansionism’ is accepted, we can hardly be surprised that many people in Papua New Guinea feel apprehensive about their country’s future when they contemplate Indonesia’s foreign policy

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6 An intriguing recent manifestation of this sort of subterranean survival of ‘Indonesia Raya’ sentiment is Rahasia (1975).
record. For she has on several occasions had no compunction about resorting to force and pursuing policies which could be described as both interventionist and aggressive. Moreover, her governments have been inclined to claim that what happens in neighbouring countries is a matter of direct concern to them. And they might do so yet again if there were to be a collapse of governmental authority in Papua New Guinea in circumstances which Indonesia regards as entailing some potential threat to her control over her eastern islands. Particularly if Indonesia herself were to subside back into an era of political and social instability reminiscent of the late Sukarno era, the possibility of a reversion to more assertive, interventionist foreign policies could not be ruled out of consideration.

These points can hardly be denied, yet there are several strong reasons for believing that Papua New Guinea is most unlikely to become a target for Indonesian aggression in such circumstances. All the other episodes we have been considering here had to do with the process of decolonization and the redrawing of the frontiers created by colonialism. The claims made to Irian Jaya and East Timor were to that extent *sui generis*. (*Konfrontasi* was also in part a response to the decolonization process, but in that case no claim was made to Sarawak or Sabah.) Neither in Irian Jaya nor in East Timor had the decolonization process been completed and international recognition through the UN achieved for a new and independent state; nor was there in either case much effective international support for such an outcome, for the principle of self-determination cannot always be sustained in the course of the decolonization process, as Bougainville and Papua Besena have discovered. But once the independence of a former colony has been achieved and recognized internationally, challenges to its sovereignty are quite another matter. Moreover, as time passes, the new map of the post-colonial world tends to achieve firmer acceptance. To that extent, the situation of Papua New Guinea is radically different from that of Irian Jaya and East Timor.

For ten years Papua New Guinea has enjoyed recognition, by Indonesia and the rest of the world, as an independent and sovereign state. So it would be extremely difficult and embarrassing for any Indonesian government to challenge its right to independence and full national sovereignty. President Suharto has visited Papua New Guinea, as have Indonesian foreign ministers and numerous other officials. The Indonesian government has clearly accepted the *status quo* there. Indonesians are not casting covetous eyes on Papua New
Guinea. They would be concerned if Papua New Guinea crumbled into anarchy or suffered any serious secessionist challenges, but it is probably true to say, as Mortimer argued, that they would prefer to see Australia intervene in that case to maintain the status quo, rather than intervene themselves. That is hardly a sign of expansionist ambitions. As anyone who has ever canvassed the matter in Jakarta will attest, Indonesian officials give very little attention to Papua New Guinea and basically just do not want to be burdened with additional problems, worry and expense in that quarter. Irian Jaya and Timor have already caused them more than enough already. They have required special financial allocations, which have been a cause of resentment in other provinces. Unless there is a reversion to quite serious instability and irrationality in Indonesian politics, as in the late Sukarno era (which seems an unlikely contingency, as of 1985), I see no reason for Papua New Guinea to feel vulnerable to annexationist designs in Jakarta.

Finally, something more needs to be said about the subject of the transmigration in Irian Jaya and the lebensraum argument - that is, its relationship to the problem of overpopulation in Java. It must be stressed that the solutions to Java’s population problem do not depend on transmigration programmes to the Outer Islands and the opening up of more land for Javanese farmers to settle on. The long-term solutions lie in the direction of effective family planning and the creation of off-farm job opportunities in Java itself. Since the birth rate in Java is now declining rapidly and non-farm employment is steadily increasing (although still not as rapidly as we might wish), there is a reasonable chance that these solutions will prove adequate over the next generation or so. Transmigration has been much discussed as an outlet for Java’s excess population since around 1900 - precisely because neither of those alternative solutions appeared feasible; only in the 1970s did they begin to do so. Yet Indonesia’s transmigration schemes never succeeded in shifting really large numbers out of Java until the last five or six years because of the sheer costs of opening up new land and resettling people. Part of the problem (until very recently) was also that it was difficult to persuade even landless and poor villagers in Java to move to the other islands, even just across the Sunda Straits to South Sumatra. Between 1950 and 1983, the total number of transmigrants, mostly to nearby South Sumatra, was only two million, that is, on average, 65,000 per annum. Considering that the annual increase of Java’s population has been nearly two million over the past five years, it can be seen that transmigration is likely to provide only marginal relief to
the basic problem of population increase there. Other processes and mechanisms are providing the more important solutions within Java. Even the quite substantial expansion of the programme over the last five years (with World Bank funding) has not radically changed this state of affairs. The rationale behind the programme these days seems to be as much to promote the opening up of unutilized areas in Kalimantan, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya as to relieve population pressure in Java, although in some districts it may do that to a small extent. I wish the Indonesian authorities could be persuaded that transmigration schemes involving Irian Jaya result in little real relief to the population problem and high costs in terms of the socio-cultural frictions entailed. But there is still an almost doctrinaire commitment to transmigration on basically Malthusian grounds. (See Arndt’s analysis below.)

Another serious demographic problem arising in Irian Jaya has derived, in fact, not from the government sponsored transmigration programme but from the spontaneous migration of Buginese and Moluccans in response to the opportunities they have perceived to earn a better living there. This is a response, in short, to pull-factors rather than push-factors. Relatively few of them are farmers making demands upon the land of the indigenes, as far as I am aware. There are reasons for concern over the political and socio-economic consequences of this flow of non-Melanesian immigrants into Irian Jaya, as Peter Hastings has frequently emphasized. It almost certainly means that in the course of the next few decades the Melanesian inhabitants of Irian Jaya will be outnumbered by ‘other Indonesian’ ethnic types. The tensions likely to be generated by this process will undoubtedly be a cause for concern in Papua New Guinea. But it hardly amounts to a process of crude territorial expansionism. There is no reason, in principle, why it cannot be stopped at the border (as it is, with minor exceptions, on Indonesia’s borders with East Malaysia and the Philippines), although that might become administratively more difficult if the population densities change dramatically. It is a process which will need to be carefully watched, analyzed and understood by the Papua New Guinea government - but it is not, in itself, evidence of sinister or immutable expansionist intent.