# INDONESIAN NATIONAL SECURITY DURING THE SUHARTO NEW ORDER (1965 – 1998): THE ROLE OF NARRATIVES OF PEOPLEHOOD AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF DANGER

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## Introduction

The Suharto New Order regime (1965-1998) and in particular, the powerful Indonesian military, were obsessive about countering internal sources of threats. Its comprehensive national security doctrine was geared towards ensuring a safe, stable domestic social, political and economic environment to guard against internal threats considered just as, if not more important than external threats.

It would be tempting and easy to dismiss the Suharto New Order regime and military's stress on internal threats as a cynical and self-interested scheme to maintain control over its population and ultimately, to retain political and economic power. While such motives may be at play, various scholars of International Relations have also noted that many states in the developing world have been far more concerned about *internal* rather than external threats to their national security.[1] Scholars of Indonesian national security have also complicated and muddied the picture of a voracious and self-interested regime preying on its own people by pointing out that various experiences arising during their state-building period between the late 1940s and mid-1960s greatly influenced the way in which Indonesian policymakers perceived their security concerns.[2]

In this paper, I begin from the premise that a fuller and richer understanding of the regime's stress on internal sources of threats to its national security requires an analysis of its relationship with these past experiences during its state-making period. Specifically, I ask: what was the role played by these past experiences in the regime and military's emphasis on internal threats as the most important source of danger to Indonesia's security? What was the role of the state-making process in the conceptualization of national security? How and why did these internal sources of threat become so important? Why were communists considered the most critical threat to Indonesia by the regime and the military?

Following a small but significant body of literature that emerged in the discipline of International Relations between the late 1980s and mid-1990s regarding security and postcolonial states, I argue that the processes associated with state-making were critical

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1   In the discipline of International Relations, national security is traditionally theorized as the absence of *external* attacks and threats, military or otherwise, to a state.

2   Anwar 1998; Said 1991; Sebastian 2006; Kingsbury 2003.

to the internal security concerns of New Order Indonesia. However, I also argue that state-making processes, as discussed in this literature, are insufficient for explaining the hold that these internal sources of threat and in particular, communism, have had on the military over a long and sustained period of time. Rather, these threats have remained important long after they have posed as a credible source of danger due to the processes related to nation and identity-making or to use Rogers Smith's phrase, people-making, during state-making.[3] Specifically, narratives important to constructing a sense of peoplehood during New Order Indonesia did not only produce a common identity but also, played a major role in constructing and reproducing internal threats which were considered a danger to their survival as a state.

The rest of this paper proceeds in three parts. The next section engages critically with arguments regarding the relationship between security and state-making in the developing world, highlights the limitations of a static as well as Eurocentric theoretical conception of the state for this analytical framework, and argues for the need to incorporate people-making to overcome these limitations. Section three begins by outlining the national security concerns of New Order Indonesia and prevailing explanations for these concerns before proceeding to argue that the dominant narrative of Indonesian peoplehood had a critical role in constructing and producing communists and other internal threats as the most dangerous to the national security of Indonesia. The final section summarizes the paper's conclusion.

## Theorizing the Relationship between Security, State-Making and People-Making in the Developing World

### State-Making and Security

The state, usually defined as "relatively centralized, differentiated, and autonomous organizations successfully claiming priority in the use of force within large, contiguous, and clearly bounded territories"[4] was the main form of political organization adopted by colonies after achieving independence in the postwar period. Instead of taking these states as unproblematic and established facts in theorizing about security like much of the literature in International Relations, several scholars have rightly made the condition of these postcolonial states an important variable for understanding security.[5] Ayoob in particular, made the simple yet crucial, and up to then, overlooked observation in mainstream International Relations that many postcolonial states may have possessed juridical sovereignty after decolonization but were in reality, still states

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3    See Smith 2003. I will use the term peoplehood and related, people-making for the rest of the paper as I agree with Smith that they better encapsulate forms of 'imagined community' which go beyond the nation. It allows for the inclusion of 'political peoples' as forms of 'imagined community' which is more relevant for states like the United States where national identity is also based on civic ideals. I would argue that Indonesia also belongs to this category. See discussion in section 3.

4    Ayoob 1995, 24.

5    Ayoob 1995; Azar and Moon 1988; Job 1992.

in the making. Many, like their counterparts in western Europe centuries before, were in fact, engaged in violent and messy state-making processes like creating political and economic institutions, maintaining order, extracting resources to support war-making, policing and routine administration, expanding and consolidating political authority over contested territories and populations, establishing territorial integrity, and defeating domestic rivals.[6] In other words, these newly independent postcolonial states were engaged in a process where internal challenges to political authority and territorial boundaries were endemic. However, they also faced greater difficulties, violence and insecurity because their state-making processes, unlike those of European states that had taken place over centuries, were being compressed into a very short time period. For Ayoob, these conditions explain the prioritization of internal rather than external threats to their security in these states.[7]

While Ayoob's work has made significant contributions to our understanding of how state-building is related to the insecurities of states in the developing world, I argue that there are limitations to his theoretical framework which come from an overly sharp distinction between state-making and people-making. This distinction in turn, arises out of a conceptualization of the state that is both narrow and Eurocentric.[8]

Specifically, Ayoob argues that state-making should take precedence in explaining security in the developing world as states have historically predated the emergence of nation-states which he defines as people who "share a strong linguistic, religious and symbolic identity."[9] Based on examples from Europe, he argues that nation-states only emerge when the state already exists rather from nationalism or nation-building. This order, he writes, is no different for the developing world where state-making has to be prioritized since reaching a consensus for the basis of a nation in fragmented societies can be contentious and require for more time than is available.[10]

This separation of state-making from nation- or people-making is problematic as it is rooted in an overly strict conceptualization of the state. First, this conceptualization places the state apart from society and such a separation is difficult to uphold as soon as questions regarding how the structural features of the state are determined arise (Mitchell 1991 p.84). Theda Skocpol and Eric Nordlinger, scholars who have done much to bring 'the state back in' to the study of Political Science, have admitted the need to turn to society-centered explanations for such questions.[11] Fundamentally, the state is situated firmly within a broader web of "institutions, identities, and relationships" which provide it with context and ultimately, give it meaning.[12]

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6   Ayoob, 1995, 22-23.

7   Ayoob 1991, 263.

8   I thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting that engaging specifically with state-making processes in Asia may be a fruitful path to undertake.

9   Ayoob 1995, 24.

10  Ayoob 1995, 26.

11  Mitchell 1991, 84.

12  Boyd and Ngo 2006, 26.

Second and relatedly, this conceptualization of the state also ensures that the issue of legitimacy, one of the core components of the modern state, has been taken as a given by Ayoob rather than being integrated into the analysis of the state. Doing so has allowed Ayoob to acknowledge and argue that the problems of security for states in the developing world do arise out of the lack of legitimacy but critically, without investigating its sources. The legitimacy of the modern state comes, of course, from its people and citizens who are bound together as a community of sentiment. Ayoob's discussion of the relationship between security and state-making is limited precisely because the issue of legitimacy and the relationship between the state and its people has been bracketed away.

Third, this conceptualization of the state is based on the European experience as well as the assumption that the Western state form has been universally adopted through appropriation or from imposition by external powers during colonial rule. However, studies have shown that states in other parts of the world may not have undergone the same processes of formation and with the same consequences as in Europe. Boyd and Ngo, for example, argue that state-making experiences in Asia do not only differ from Europe's but also within Asia itself. Though some have adopted the contours of the state which have become familiar in the post-1945 period, their formation and evolution have been influenced by "very different historical experiences, ideational and institutional legacies."[13] Japan for example, evolved out of indigenous traditions and western norms while China's process has been influenced by a struggle over territoriality, sovereignty and citizenship. Others like Malaysia are more accurately about "the search for the nation as the state seeks to invent its foundations. The heterogeneity of Malaysian society with the variety of potential nations is such that the legitimacy of the state is always likely to remain fundamentally in question."[14] Overall, state-making processes in Asia have not been focused only on maintaining autonomy but more fundamentally on matters of "territoriality, citizenship, sovereignty, and nationhood."[15]

Thus, the construction of a sense of peoplehood and identity are a critical part of state-making as they give meaning and purpose to a state. As Richard Boyd and Ngo Ting-Wak point out:

> "the construction of the state as a modern commonwealth remains not only incomplete, in the absence of a community of sentiment and identity co-extensive with the territory and reach of the state apparatus, but also precarious and contested, as problems of marrying the newer state forms with indigenous traditions and institutions of public power remain unresolved."[16]

They should therefore, be taken into consideration or incorporated in any analytical framework about the impact of state-making on security in the developing world.

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13  Boyd and Ngo 2006, 17.
14  Boyd and Ngo 2006, 18.
15  Ibid.
16  Boyd and Ngo 2006, 26.

In the next section of the paper, I focus on narratives - one of the main mechanisms through which identities and a sense of peoplehood are constructed[17] - and the pathways by which they can influence conceptualizations of national security.

*Narratives, People-making and Security*

A narrative, which connects separate events causally together by a specific plot or storyline[18], is one of the main mechanisms in people-making and can be important in the conceptualization of security in two interconnected ways. First, narratives construct a sense of peoplehood through a story regarding origins and life history which can in turn, guide people "to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories …."[19] Second, a sense of peoplehood and identity is usually also constructed against an oppositional 'Other' in these narratives. These oppositional 'Other' may very well become the 'threat' or 'enemy'. Each of these specific pathways will be discussed below.

Narratives based on certain historical events have been critical to the construction of a sense of identity and peoplehood for many states.[20] For example, American identity has been constantly constructed and indelibly marked by dominant stories regarding the principles and ideals of its founding through history textbooks, the national monuments that dot Washington, D.C., movies as well as other cultural sites. In the postwar period, Germany's role in World War II and the extermination of six million Jews did not just lead to serious 'soul-searching' but was particularly important in how Germans understood their past and envisioned their future as a political community and as a people.[21] Recently, observers have noted that stories stressing the humiliation that China experienced in its encounters with the West and Japan during the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth have accompanied the emergence of a more belligerent form of Chinese nationalism.[22] In Israel, the Holocaust has been a central part of how Israel understood itself not only as a victim but as a redeemer of this victimhood.[23]

In all these states, certain events have played an important role in these narratives regarding how these states and their people came into being. It is critical to understand that "events do not have an objective meaning" but rather, have been "made meaningful and intelligible by actors who locate them within an overarching narrative that provide a link between an interpretation of the past and image of the future."[24] In these narratives,

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17  Barnett 1999, 12; Smith 2003.

18  (Somers and Gibson 1994, 59.

19  (Somers and Gibson, 1994, p.38-39).

20  On narratives and stories in the construction of identities, see a body of literature ranging from the work of IR scholars like Barnett 1999, Dunn 2003, Ringmar (1996), Mattern (2005) to that of political scientists like Rogers Smith 2003, and sociologists like Tilly 2002 and Somers 1994. On the 'return' of memory in the social sciences, see Klein (2000).

21  See Zehfuss (2002) for the impact of this identity on German foreign policy in the 1990s.

22  Gries 2004.

23  Zertal 2006.

24  Barnett 1999, 13.

a series of events are interpreted and cognitively connected together in causal and associational ways in an overall plot that provide communities with larger significance and meaning through "some understanding of its origins and its life history."[25] The establishment of such a narrative "constitutes one of the most important mechanism by which a nation constructs a collective identity."[26]

First, the construction of a sense of peoplehood or identity is important for understanding why "certain practices and actions are possible, while others are not."[27] Without eschewing the pursuit of interests as an important reason for action, I argue, following Alexander Wendt, Erik Ringmar and others that "it is only once we know who we are that we can know what we *want*."[28] Identity, because it provides us with ideas of who we are, provide a basis for seeing the world. As Roger Brubaker argues:

> "It furnishes a mode of vision and division of the world, to use Pierre Bourdieu's phrase, a mode of social counting and accounting. Thus it inherently links identity and interest – by *identifying how we are to calculate our interests.*"[29]

It therefore precedes the definition of interests "and the formulation of particular actions in certain situations or interest areas"[30] as identity may "makes some action legitimate and intelligible and others not so."[31]

At the same time, identity which is inextricably linked to the notion of difference "since knowing who one is requires recognition of who one is not,"[32] is also defined and constructed against an Other.[33] It has been well documented that binary oppositions in the construction of the Self against an Other often result in conflict and violence[34] as the boundary-making and categorization process can "lead to the emergence of prejudicial attitudes towards the outgroup and discrimination against them"[35] or the perception that they are threats.[36]

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25  Ibid.

26  Barnett 1999, 12.

27  Goff and Dunn 2004, 244.

28  Ringmar 1996, 13; and Wendt, 1999.

29  1998: 291.

30  Ringmar 1996, 13.

31  Barnett 1999, 10.

32  Phoenix 1998, 859.

33  While this insight that identity is constructed against an Other is an extremely important component for understanding the overall puzzle of how identities are constructed and maintained, it is important to recognize that identities are sometimes but not always oppositional. See Hopf 2002.

34  Hopf 2002, 264.

35  Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero 2007, 748.

36  Mercer, 1995; Rothbart and Korostelina; Bar-Tal 1998; and Kelman 1999.

Second, through providing "a collective understanding of how to understand the past, situate the present and act toward the future"[37], these narratives do not only construct a sense of peoplehood but they can also help actors to make sense and meaning of their daily experiences and the world around them.[38] While they may not determine actions directly, narratives can influence actors by making it more likely that they will do X rather than Y.[39] In the area of security, research has demonstrated that narratives may play a role in prolonging conflict. In Israel for example, the master narrative of Israeli identity has been drawn together by the fundamental theme of security and this has in turn become a pervasive part of both its political, security and cultural discourses and practice.[40]

In summary, this section of the paper has discussed the connections between state-making and security, proposed the need to extend state-making to include people-making and provided a discussion of narrative as a mechanism and means by which peoplehood and threats are constructed. In the next section of the paper, I discuss how internal threats dominated the Suharto New Order's conceptualization of national security through this analytical framework first by outlining the specific threats which they feared, various explanations which have been posited, and finally, a discussion of the role played by a specific narrative of peoplehood drawn together by the Indonesian military in sustaining and replicating the fear of communism and other internal threats as the most dangerous to Indonesia.

## State-Making, People-Making and Security in Indonesia

*National Security and the New Order: Various Explanations*

During the Suharto New Order (1965-1998), Indonesia's security was defined in explicitly domestic terms, as revealed by the regime's comprehensive security doctrine, *Ketahanan Nasional* or National Resilience. In the words of President Suharto:

> "National resilience encompasses ideological resilience based on a nation's own identity, which receives the full support of the entire nation, economic resilience capable of meeting the nation's own basic needs, social resilience which ensures the feeling of solidarity and harmony among the peoples, and an appropriate military resilience to face aggression from outside."[41]

It was, as described by Ali Murtopo, Suharto's leading strategist, a doctrine that was directed at:

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37  Barnett 1999, 8.

38  Hammack 2011, 313.

39  Barnett 1999, 14.

40  Bar-Tal, 1998; Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; and Hammack 2009, 52.

41  Suharto quoted in Anwar 1998, p. 478.

"the creation of an all embracing national order or system that would embody the capability of the nation to defend itself and at the same time to foil any threat from within as well as from without to its security and its continued existence." [42]

In its embrace of national identity, political stability, and social and economic progress, this was a national security doctrine that was therefore critically concerned with all aspects of national life.[43]

Particularly important for the New Order regime and the Indonesia military was to secure Indonesia against real and imagined threats in the form of 'security disturbing mobs' and communism. By the end of 1965, the latter in particular, became synonymous with an insidious, pervasive evil that had to be obstructed and eliminated. For example, hundreds of thousands of Indonesians who were accused, whether rightly or wrongly, of having ties to communism were imprisoned.[44] Others lost their jobs, spouses and other personal and professional relationships because they or even members of their family were suspected of being influenced by communism or having personal involvement in the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI).[45] Besides securing Indonesia against these threats through imprisoning and killing the suspects, Suharto, other members of his regime and the military also reminded Indonesians incessantly to remain vigilant against the dangers of the insidious, pervasive and evil danger of communism that threatened the security and very survival of the country.[46]

Securing Indonesia against these threats were also at the forefront of the military's justification of its role and policies in areas like Aceh and Papua where there were separatist insurgents.[47] In East Timor for example, the possible presence of communism and security disturbing mobs, whether in 1975 or in the last months leading up to the 1999 referendum, evoked the same response to contain or eliminate the danger that they posed to Indonesia's security and unity through the use of the New Order's standard 'internal operations'. In 1975, the threat posed by the potential presence of communism to Indonesia's security and its "prolonged and continuing struggle for national unity and stability" [48] were considered so great by Suharto and his key advisers that they were willing to invade East Timor in order to contain it despite the consequences of such an action on Indonesia's own support for the principle of self-determination and

42  Murtopo quoted in Sebastian,2006, 11.

43  Anwar 1998, 478-8.

44  Cribb 2001, 237; Heryanto 2006, 35; and van Der Kroef 1976, 463.

45  Goodfellow 1995, 26; Heryanto 2006, 36.

46  van Langenberg 1998, 128.

47  Drexler 2008; Roosa 2007, 103; Aspinall and Chauvel 2007.

48  Cablegram to Canberra. 14 August 1975. "Portuguese Timor" [NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, xi], Doc 166 in Way (ed.).

its international image.[49] Communism and Freitlin, the East Timorese resistance party, continued, in the 1990s, to be perceived as threats to Indonesia with the attendant consequences. The 1991 Santa Cruz massacre was understood as the inevitable outcome of demonstrations that had been deliberately organized and engineered by Freitlin to incite disturbances and disorder.[50] In 1999, the demonstrations for East Timor's independence were viewed as the result of devious manipulation by 'security disturbing mobs'. Once again, the military adopted procedures to counter what were considered internal security problems rather than real demands for independence from the East Timorese.[51]

There are three broad possible explanations for this obsession against internal threats. The first takes a rationalist position regarding the motivations and behavior of the regime's top policymakers while the second and third place greater credence on state-making during Indonesia's early years as a state as the source of this obsession. The first, essentially a rationalist and instrumentalist explanation argues that the constant invocation of communism and other internal threats was a tool used to repress political dissent, maintain its legitimacy and remain in power.[52] However, I argue, following Ariel Heryanto that it was not merely a political tool.[53] Such arguments are weakened by the implicit assumption that witch-hunts are a means of transforming a weak state into a strong one through the terrorization of a population.[54] Besides requiring immense state strength in order for them to be effective, they do not necessarily benefit the state in long-run and have in fact, been counter-productive.[55] Moreover, its perpetrators also depend on collaborators and therefore, the active participation of victims in their own victimization.[56]

A second possible explanation for the emphasis on internal threats lies in state-making processes in the early years of Indonesia statehood just as Ayoob had described in his general argument about the sources of insecurity for postcolonial states. Indonesia's early years as an independent state were marked by frequent challenges to its institutions, state boundaries as well as a fundamental lack of agreement regarding the basis of its peoplehood. These challenges to the state were rooted in disagreements

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49  See also Cribb 2002, 231; and Anwar 1998, 32 on this fear and the response it engendered. See also Record of Conversation Between Tjan and Taylor. 10 March 1975. [NAA: A10463, 801/13/11/1, viii], Doc 109 in Way (ed.).

50  See "Lupakan masa dulu dan lihat ke masa depan," *Angkatan Bersenjata*, 28 Desember 1991; "Dua Jenderal Diganti Karena Peristiwa Dili," *Editor*, no.16, 4 January 1992; and Tanggungjawab Saya': Wawancara dengan Warouw," *Tempo*, 21, 42 (1991): 39.

51  For more on the nature, scale and scope of intelligence activities undertaken by the Indonesian military, see chapter 2 of Sebastian 2006 as well as Tanter 1991).

52  For example, anti-communism reached a peak in 1988 when there were divisions within the ruling elite.

53  This section draws heavily on Heryanto 2006. See also Bubandt 2005.

54  Heryanto 2006, 168.

55  Ibid.

56  For more, see Heryanto 2006, 168.

regarding the basis for uniting a vast and geographically fragmented archipelago of great ethnic and religious diversity into one people. Throughout the twentieth century, creating a sense of peoplehood out of all this diversity was a major preoccupation for the Indonesian elite. While they agreed on the basic principle of '*satu bangsa, satu bahasa, dan satu tanah air*' or 'one people, one language and one nation' which eschewed the use of ethnicity or religion, major fault lines in Indonesian society, as a means to form their model for Indonesia, this was insufficient to create further agreement on the *content and elements* which are based on the political character of Indonesia that would form the basis of the Indonesian state and people.

Since the early twentieth century, there have been three competing projects to create a sense of peoplehood which would ground the Indonesian state.[57] These three - the Islamists, the communists and the nationalists - each assigned different meanings to the Indonesian people, representative institutions and "political agendas to define its character and political goals."[58] Even after the attainment of juridical statehood in 1949 however, these groups were unable to reach fundamental agreements regarding the basis of the Indonesian people. Instead of the security of its territorial and institutional existence, these disagreements resulted in frequent internal challenges to its state boundaries, institutions, and regimes. There were for instance, armed rebellions in many parts of the archipelago ranging from the communist-inspired Madiun uprising of 1948 and the Islamist revolution generally known as *Darul Islam* on the island of Java to others waged by the *Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia – PRRI) on West Sumatra, and the *Piagam Perjuangan Semesta Alam* (Universal Struggle Charter – Permesta) in North Sulawesi.

Crucially, these disagreements and challenges were also visible in the political arena. Despite the broad consensus among the political elite regarding the basic constitutional features of the country and a largely secular nationalist orientation of the state that had been put in place by 1950, it was only a temporary solution[59]. The sidelining of the interests and goals of Muslims groups and communists in favor of the objectives mostly of secular nationalists, merely postponed the need to resolve fundamental issues regarding the basic characteristics of the Indonesian nation and state."[60] As a result, the communists and Islamists took part in the Constituent Assembly which had been assembled to draft the country's permanent constitution as well as the 1955 national elections which was focused on the fundamental question of the basis of the state.[61] Instead of ameliorating matters, participation only widened the gulf between Islamists and the nationalists.[62] For most of the 1950s, each of these groups was represented by

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57  Cribb 2001, 226.

58  Cribb 2001, 226; and Bertrand 2004, 30.

59  Cribb 2001, 227.

60  Bertrand 2004, 34.

61  Bertrand 2004, 35.

62  Bertrand 2004, 37.

its own political party and social institutions.[63] In the process, the different streams of Indonesia became increasingly separate from each other with the "nations-of-intent still contest[ing] the idea of Indonesia."[64]

As predicted by Ayoob's argument regarding security and state-making, these armed rebellions and contentious political battles which threatened Indonesia's territorial integrity, institutions and security did arise from internal sources. However, Ayoob's framework is unable to explain why these fears escalated instead of abating during the New Order regime when the state faced few challenges, even from insurgent groups, which had the military hardware to challenge its very existence.

The third set of explanations, posited by scholars of the Indonesian military and Indonesian security policy, is better placed to address the continued emphasis on these internal threats even after they no longer existed. Here, the stress is on lessons learned by the military from its experience with events like the War of Revolution (1945-1949), the Madiun uprising of 1948, secessionist movements and regional rebellions, and the attempted coup of 1965 which shaped their understanding of what constituted the gravest threats to Indonesia.[65] Anwar, for example, argues that these events left an indelible lesson regarding the problems of uniting such a diverse population spread across an archipelago of islands.[66] A critical part of the lesson also lies in the connections which were made between the political instability from these events and the potential dangers to the survival of the state which could ensue.[67] In addition, it is also argued that these events were accompanied by specific images of those who were responsible for threatening Indonesia's survival.[68]

These insightful accounts regarding the pivotal role of these historical events in the New Order's conception of national security are however, incomplete as the significant question of *how* these experiences influenced security concerns for a sustained period of time have been left mostly unexplored. In particular, closer attention needs to be paid to the mechanism by which these events became part of the New Order and military's understanding of threats to Indonesian security.

In the next section, I discuss the longevity and persistence of fears regarding communism and internal threats by examining the way in which these events became entangled in the process of people-making during the New Order. Specifically, I begin by situating these historical events in a particular narrative of Indonesian peoplehood underpinned by the theme of danger which was produced by the Indonesian military and replicated across a range of sites across the country. This is followed by a discussion of how the narrative both situated Indonesia in a constant state of danger

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63  Cribb 2001, 228.

64  Ibid.

65  See footnote 2.

66  Anwar 1996, 14.

67  Sebastian 2006, 29.

68  Sebastian 2006, 43-44.

and simultaneously constructed both Indonesian peoplehood as well as enemies which threatened their survival and security.

*Narratives of Indonesian Peoplehood and Internal Threats to National Security*

During the New Order, specific historical events were interpreted, organized and cohesively connected into a narrative regarding Indonesia's origins, life history and peoplehood.[69] More significantly, this narrative provided Indonesians with the means to "locate themselves within a shared or congruent storyline," and imagine themselves "within a constructed historical space, and a space that is distinct from the storyline that defines other nations and collective communities."[70] In so doing, this narrative was an important part of the process which constructed an identity for Indonesia that was based in turn on interpretations of historical events. Crucially, this narrative of Indonesian peoplehood which bound Indonesia's emergence as a state in the twentieth century with danger, also simultaneously constructed the dangers and threats that engendered the regime's national security concerns.

The next section turns its attention to this narrative, and how it constructed both an identity for Indonesia as well as security threats to the country. This will involve outlining the historical events that were a part of the narrative, the New Order interpretation of these events, and a discussion of the constructed Indonesian identity and security threats that emerged out of these processes.

Narrating Indonesian Peoplehood, Constructing Danger

The New Order narrative of Indonesian peoplehood promulgated by Suharto and the military was a constant in the everyday life of Indonesians.[71] It was told and retold in dioramas in a network of museums,[72] commemorative exercises held on national holidays, popular history books,[73] street names, films like *The Treason of G30S/PKI*,[74] courses like "History of the National Struggle" in Indonesian elementary and high

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69  See McGregor 2002; Zurbuchen 2005; Van Klinken 2005; Van De Kok et al 1991, Schreiner 2002; Schreiner 1997; and Reid 1997 for work on the role of history during the New Order regime.

70  Barnett 1999; 13.

71  McGregor 2002, 49.

72  The most prominent are *Museum Monas*, *Museum Monumen Pancasila Sakti* (Sacred Pancasila Monument), *Museum Pengkhianatan PKI* (Museum of PKI Treachery), *Museum Keprajuritan Nasional* (National Soldiership Museum), *Museum Waspada Purbawisesa* (Museum of Constant Vigilance). At the *Museum Monumen Pancasila Sakti* for example, there are there are 37 three-dimensional dioramas which portray scenes of communist cruelty during the 1965 coup as well as a series of earlier events involving them since 1945.

73  McGregor 2002; and Leigh 1991. *Sedjarah Singkat Perjuangan Bersendjata Bangsa Indonesia* (A Concise History of the Armed Struggle of the Indonesian Nation) was one of these texts.

74  *The Treason of G30S/PKI*, was not only compulsory viewing for students across Indonesia when it was first released but also screened annually on the state-owned television station, as well as all private stations, on the night of 30 September. For an analysis of this film, see Heryanto 2006. For the role of films in the New Order, see Sen 1988; and Sen and Hill eds. 2000.

schools,[75] stories regarding certain Indonesian heroes,[76] and even a walking pilgrimage (The *Napak Tilsas Panglima Besar Sudirman*) tracing the journey of one of their greatest heroes, General Sudirman, during his battle against the Dutch in 1948-49.

Critically, this narrative of Indonesian peoplehood was dominated by the overarching theme of threats to its survival as a sovereign state. Anchoring one end of this narrative was the very important four-year War of Revolution (1945-49) when Indonesians fought the Dutch who were determined to re-impose colonial rule on the archipelago after the end of World War II. In this narrative of their life history, Indonesia's success in battling and finally driving out their more powerful Dutch colonizers to emerge as a sovereign state and people was a seminal event. The emphasis that was placed on the success of their struggle against colonial rule was however, also accompanied by the equally significant theme of danger to this sovereignty and independence. Here, two episodes that occurred in 1948 represented this danger. The first was the Madiun uprising of September 1948 when communists proclaimed a rebel government in East Java at a time when the Dutch were preparing to re-conquer the archipelago.[77] The second episode revolved around the Dutch attack on 19 December 1948, their capture of Sukarno, Mohammad Hatta and the rest of the civilian leadership and the decision of the Indonesian army and its commander, General Sudirman, to engage in a guerrilla struggle instead of surrendering.[78] In both episodes, internal threats – first, by communists in Madiun, and shortly after that, the lack of resolve of civilian leaders during the Dutch attack of 1948 - almost jeopardized their heroic struggle for independence.

This overarching theme of threats to its survival as a sovereign state also dominated the New Order's interpretation of the 'Old Order' (1949-1965), the first fifteen years of Indonesia's independence. Between 1949 and 1965, governments formed and fell with alarming frequency and there were regional rebellions ranging from the 1948 Islamist revolution generally known as *Darul Islam* on the island of Java to others waged by the *Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia – PRRI) on West Sumatra from 1958-1961, and the *Piagam Perjuangan Semesta Alam* (Universal Struggle Charter – Permesta) in North Sulawesi from 1958-59.

Despite the obvious complexity of these early years of nation- and state-building, this period was summed up in history courses, textbooks and other sites as "The Age of Survival". Liberal democracy, the system of governance in place at that time, was described by a senior Education Department official during a 1984 guidance session for prospective teachers of the compulsory "History of the National Struggle" course as:

> "a system of government which was not in tune with the character of the Indonesian nation which gave rise to instability of government marked

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75  Leigh 1991.

76  Schreiner 2002.

77  Sebastian 2006, 33.

78  Six months after the attack, the Dutch withdrew their troops and began the negotiations which culminated in Indonesia's formal independence in 1949.

by constantly changing cabinets which made development very difficult. Divisions became apparent. Domestic security disturbances occurred."[79]

Besides the failure of liberal democracy, the narrative also focused on the regional rebellions and 'security disturbances' across the archipelago.[80] More importantly, this narrative stressed that Indonesia's existence as a state was neither safe nor secure during its first decade of independence. Instead, its survival and security continued to be threatened by domestic threats such as separatists, Islamic radicals and liberal democracy, a form of government that was alien to the traditions and national character of Indonesia.[81]

The last six years of the Old Order - Sukarno's Guided Democracy period - was similarly plagued by chaos and instability despite the implementation of the 1945 constitutional framework which provided for a strong presidency. In the New Order's narrative, the increasing turmoil and political factionalization of the period and the risk that it posed to Indonesia's unity was attributed not to the political system but to its incorrect implementation, the "corrupt[ion] by Sukarno's personal ambition and the persistence of ideologically driven party politics."[82]

In the narrative, the Old Order, depicted as a disastrous time in Indonesia's life history climaxes on the night of 30 September 1965, a night considered so important by the New Order that it was committed to the national imagination through a plethora of sites that included such prominent ones as its own national monument and museum complex, the *Monumen Pancasila Sakti* (Sacred Pancasila Museum), an annually screened movie, *The Treason of G30S/PKI*, and an annual commemoration day, *Hari Kesaktian Pancasila* (Sacred Pancasila Day).[83] As it was considered one of the most important events in Indonesia's history by the New Order, I shall discuss it in some detail.

On 30 September 1965 or *G30S/PKI (Gerakan 30 September/PKI)*, the acronym by which it is known in Indonesia, six senior generals and one lieutenant of the Indonesian military were kidnapped by a small group of middle-ranking officers in Jakarta and later killed at a place which became known as *Lubang Buaya* (Crocodile Hole).[84] At some point during the night and for reasons that remain unclear, Aidit, chair of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) and President Sukarno were also present. Calling itself the 30 September Movement and announcing that it was representing the Revolutionary Council during a 7 a.m. government-run radio broadcast, this group explained that it had acted in order to pre-empt a *coup d'etat* by a group from within the right-wing and American-backed Council of Generals. Within hours however, this attempted coup collapsed after Suharto, who was little known at that time, took control.

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79  quoted in Bourchier 1994, 53.

80  Bourchier 1994, 54.

81  Bourchier 1994, 53.While I do not debate that this period in Indonesian history was clearly tumultuous, the examples highlighted and the issues that were marginalized were clearly directed at supporting this theme of danger.

82  Bourchier 1994, 55.

83  For more details on the complex and *Hari Kesaktian Pancasila*, see McGregor (2005).

84  This description of the events of 30 September 1965 draws heavily on Heryanto 2006.

In the months that followed, almost 500,000 members of the PKI and its affiliated organizations as well as sympathizers were killed across Indonesia.[85]

Despite the mystery and controversy surrounding the politically and historically significant issue of whom and which organizations were responsible for the events of the night and the pogrom, *G30S/PKI* was portrayed as a coup attempt by communists.[86] In events associated with the commemoration of Sacred Pancasila Day, dioramas and the bas relief at the complex at the Sacred Pancasila Museum, the kidnapped Indonesian generals were depicted as heroic figures who were tortured, sexually debased and mutilated by the PKI and members of the communist-aligned women's group, Gerwani before being killed and their bodies, dumped into a disued well.[87] Additionally, the real victims of the massacres, the Indonesian Communist Party and its political allies, were somehow made responsible for the huge scale of these killings in 1965-66 and the chaos and disorder of the period that followed.[88]

There are three major themes or threads present in the New Order's representation of what it has consistently portrayed as one of the most important events in Indonesia's history. First, the torture, unspeakable horrors and death associated with it epitomized the Old Order's instability and danger. Second, it was the "spontaneous, heroic, and interest-free" Suharto-led military counter-attack which "rescue[d] the nation-state not only from a communist take-over, but also from chaos, terror and social disintegration."[89] Third, the perpetrators were the evil and immoral communists who in 'betraying' the nation, seventeen years after Madiun, confirmed their anti-national, power-seeking and traitorous behavior. Hence, communists were not only villains in this tale but more importantly, the threat *extraordinaire* to the unity, security and survival of the fragile and vulnerable collectivity that was Indonesia.[90]

However, the horror and betrayal of this day, one of the worst in the nation's history ends with the dawning of 1 October 1965, the day of the coup's defeat in this narrative of Indonesian peoplehood. The most important date in the annual calendar of state commemorations, 1 October 1965, designated Sacred Pancasila Day, was, according to Suharto in a 1967 speech:

> "a day on which people's certainty in the truth and kesaktian of the Pancasila, as the only life view which can unite the entire nation and Indonesian people, was strengthened and instilled"[91]

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85  Heryanto 2006, 8.

86  Heryanto 2006, 7.

87  Drakeley 2000, 3; McGregor 2002, 42. For an analysis of the New Order's untruthful depictions of the sexual perversions performed by the Gerwani women, see Drakeley 2000; and Wieringa 1988.

88  van Langenberg 1990, 126-7.

89  Heryanto 2006, 9.

90  Goodfellow 1995; Heryanto 2006; McGregor 2002, 50; and van Langenberg 1990.

91  McGregor 2002, 44. On its importance in the annual calendar of state rituals, see Bourchier 1994, 54.

In other words, 1 October 1965 was depicted by the regime as the day that Indonesians rejected communism and confirmed Pancasila, the five principles of Indonesian nationalism first enunciated by Sukarno in 1945, as the basis of their peoplehood and their identity.[92]

The New Order regime (1965-1998), critically, situated itself within this overall narrative, by casting itself as the nation's savior from destruction at the hands of the communists, its restorer of order, truth and national unity, the 'guardian of Pancasila' and the authentic heir of the values and goals of the 1945 Revolution and their battle for independence. More specifically, this translated very concretely into upholding Pancasila as the philosophical basis of the state and nation which Suharto believed, would enable Indonesia to put away the ideological and religious conflict that had torn at its fabric in the past.[93] The New Order also situated its main goal of development (*pembangunan*) as just part of the process involved in fulfilling the original goals of associated with their battle for independence.[94] Moreover, the New Order also argued that the political system that it had created based on ideas of integralism paralleled indigenous structures of authority and modes of social organization found within traditional Indonesian families and orderly villages where social obligations were far more important than individual rights or constraints on the powers of government.[95]

As such, the authoritarian political structure built by the New Order regime was merely returning Indonesia to a system that was Indonesian in scope, content and practice. In other words, the regime was claiming that the New Order way of ordering Indonesia philosophically, politically and socially reflected the Indonesian character and was merely a restoration of the system to how it should be. In doing do, the regime was representing itself as the personification of what it meant to be Indonesian.[96]

Therefore, this was a narrative where a series of historical events were causally connected by the main theme of threats to Indonesia's survival from internal sources ranging from Islamists, advocates of liberal democracy to the most dangerous of all, evil communists.[97] Explicitly summed up as a "History of National Struggle"[98] this was a narrative of Indonesia's origins and life history which located Indonesians and Indonesian peoplehood within a constructed and distinct historical space where they

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92  The five principles are Indonesian unity, humanitarianism, Indonesian democracy through consultation and consensus, social justice, and belief in God. For a detailed discussion of these five principles, see Ramage 1997.

93  Bourchier and Hadiz 2001, 14.

94  Schreiner 1997, 110. The Suharto Government was also known as the 'Development Order' and its cabinets, 'Development Cabinets'. On a practical level, national development entailed achieving a higher standard of living for all Indonesians and in that process, a just and prosperous society (*masyarakat yang adil dan makmur*) which was also the fulfillment of Pancasila's fifth principle of social justice (*keadilan social*) (Bertrand 2004, 39).

95  Bourchier 1997, 160; Bourchier and Hadiz 2001, 8.

96   van Langenberg 1990, 127.

97   Van De Kok et. al. 1991, 84.

98   This was the title of a compulsory course on Indonesian history which all students had to take through all grade levels.

were in a continuous battle for survival against a range of internal dangers and threats. Critically, this was also a shared storyline where Suharto and the military had constructed the New Order regime itself as the essence of Indonesia – the repository of order, truth and national unity as well as the values and goals of their 1945 revolution – and simultaneously constructed communists, insurgents and separatists as its polar opposite. More importantly, the latter threatened the unity, sovereignty and security of Indonesia. As this Indonesian identity was constructed and produced through this narrative, so too were the groups which were considered a dangerous threat to the country's survival.[99]

This narrative of an Indonesia in constant danger, and the simultaneous construction of Indonesian peoplehood and internal threats to the collectivity across a broad spectrum of educational and cultural sites have in turn helped the military to make sense and meaning of their daily experiences and developments from Aceh and Papua to East Timor within the archipelago.[100] Therefore, the New Order's threat assessment and conception of national security did not just arise from state-building or the military's experience with specific events like the Madiun uprising of 1948, the regional rebellions of the 1950s and the 1965 coup. Rather, the inclusion of these events in the narrative of Indonesian peoplehood created a process where specific threats to Indonesian security in the form of communists, separatists, and extremist Muslims were sustained through its constant reproduction and ensured its longevity.

Finally, there is little doubt that it is tremendously difficult to provide a definitive assessment of the degree and level to which this narrative has been internalized by the military. However, many studies point have acknowledged and documented the ways in which these events have become one of the most important and consistent reference points for general and specific policies and the positions that they have adopted over a wide range of issues.[101] Besides the impact of the narrative on the military itself, there are also indicators that this narrative and in particular, the fear of communism which it has engendered had had become part of the conceptual discourse and language of Indonesia's secondary elites or common people, a language which reveal, as Idith Zertal argues, "the mentality of a given group, its self-image and conceptual discourse.[102] For example, even the end of the New Order did not put a death knell on the belief that communism was a security threat among most Indonesians.[103] Polls, newspaper headlines and letters to the editor were unremitting regarding the dangers of communism.[104]

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99  Both Bubandt 2005; and Heryanto 2006 allude to this connection but unfortunately, do not explore it.

100  Hammack 2011, 313.

101  See Sebastian 2006, Roosa 2007; Kingsbury 2003; Drexler 2003; Anwar 1998; and Said 1991.

102   Zertal 2005, 109. See Heryanto 2006 for an in-depth discussion of how anti-communism was part of the conceptual discourse of Indonesians. See also Roosa 2007, 2008 who argues that the military has constructed its own reality albeit one which is a fantasyland via various mechanisms including information culled from interrogation which have turned into official truth and knowledge. Drexler 2008 suggests that every day practices, institutions and politics play a role in perpetuating and replaying past patterns.

103  McGregor 2002, 409; Van Klinken 2005, 243; Zurbuchen 2005, p.15.

104  Heryanto 2005, 49. See p. 36 of Heryanto for more examples of the pervasiveness of this discourse.

**Conclusion**

This paper has been chiefly concerned with understanding and explaining *how* Indonesia's past experiences during its state-making period was linked to the New Order regime's stress on internal sources of threats to the country's national security. It has argued that the New Order regime's obsessive fear regarding internal threats to its national security was indeed borne of a difficult state-making process when its territorial boundaries, institutions and regimes were challenged. However, this was just the beginning and does not explain the longevity of these fears even after any real threats have dissipated from the scene nor its absorption into the conceptual discourse of the military, public intellectuals, journalists, civilian politicians and other members of the public. Rather, the cogency and power of these events on the national security discourse of the New Order is rooted in their convergence into a particular narrative of Indonesian peoplehood which bound its origins and life history together in a plot which about internal threats to its very survival as a people and a state. This narrative, found in various sites across Indonesia, forms one of the most important mechanisms linking these past experiences inextricably to the New Order's stress on internal threats to the country's security over decades.

In other words, state-making and people-making were important to the conceptualization of national security in Indonesia. These conclusions therefore support the relationship between security and state-making in the developing world posited by Mohammed Ayoob as well as the need to incorporate processes involved in people-making in order to derive a richer understanding of how and why certain entities or issues become security threats.[105] It also suggests that the content of narratives of peoplehood which ground a state cannot be dismissed if we are to understand how particular perceptions of threats are constructed and sustained, and how to overturn them in order for a less violent reality to be realized.

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105  This paper has left unexplored the issue that such a state-centred approach privileges the state at the expense of individuals. Since there are individuals who have been made less secure due to security policies in all three countries, I acknowledge and note this. Discussing it in any detail was however, beyond the scope of this paper.

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